

MINUTES

Approved 5-13-09

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

APRIL 8, 2009 3:15 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: P. Mackesey, Chair; M. Robertson; C. Chock; W. Burbank
Excused: F. Proto
Staff: P. Younger, J. Kippola, County Administration; E. Marx, J. Jurkowich, J. Leccese, S. Doyle, Planning Department; Monika Roth, Debbie Teeter, Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board; D. Mengel, Department of Social Services; F. DeAragon, ITCTC, K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Legislator: M. Koplinka-Loehr
Guests: T. Ashmore, *The Ithaca Journal*; B. Bossard, Community Arts Partnership; Fred Bonn, Convention and Visitor's Bureau; D. Sparrow, Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Call to Order

Chair Mackesey called the meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from February 17, March 11, and April 7, 2009

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present to approve the minutes of February 17, March 11, and April 7, 2009. MINUTES ADOPTED.

Appointments

It was MOVED by Ms. Chock, seconded by Mr. Burbank, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend appointment of the following individuals:

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Richard D. Adie, Hotels, Bed and Breakfast Representative, term to expire December 31, 2011
Deborah L. Teeter, Agriculture Representative, term to expire December 31, 2011

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of the Committee to defer appointment of the Culture representative on the Strategic Tourism Planning Board until the next meeting, at which representatives of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board Subcommittee would explain the nomination process.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Burbank, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend appointment of the following individuals:

Environmental Management Council

Andrea Turner, Seat No. 2, term to expire December 31, 2009
Spring Buck, Seat No. 3, term to expire December 31, 2009

It was MOVED by Ms. Chock, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend appointment of the following individual:

Homeownership Program Oversight Committee

Edward Marx, Commissioner of Planning

Housing Fund Program Oversight Committee

The Committee was informed that after soliciting membership for the Committee via a press release and notices to municipal officials and ad hoc housing groups only one applicant, Heather Filiberto, former Planning Department employee and present Empire Zone Administrator, expressed interest. Ms. Mackesey said she and Ms. Robertson would also like to be part of this Committee.

Following a lengthy conversation, during which Ms. Leccese and Mr. Marx stressed it would not be beneficial to wait until Cornell University and the City of Ithaca appointed their committee members. Mr. Marx would like the meetings of this group to start the beginning of May. He understands that Cornell University plans on making their selection within the next few weeks. Ms. Robertson believed it would be beneficial to have Ms. Filiberto as a member of the committee, with Mr. Marx as an ex-officio member.

Mr. Burbank would feel comfortable with Ms. Mackesey, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Filiberto, and as ex-officio member, Mr. Marx on the committee.

Ms. Chock strongly recommended delaying the vote to provide her time to contact some individuals she felt would make a positive contribution to the committee. She also expressed concern that in appointing two elected officials may place the County at a disadvantage due to the expertise available at Cornell University. Ms. Mackesey stressed that as Legislators many resources are available to provide assistance should any questions arise. She does not believe it is appropriate to wait until others make a choice of membership. Ms. Chock expressed a desire to contact some individuals that may be interested in serving.

A consensus was reached to delay any action on the appointments until April 21st, when a brief meeting would occur prior to the Legislature meeting.

Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFBP)

Ms. Roth provided the United State Department of Agriculture 2007 County Profile census report indicating there has not been much change in the number and size of farms, and there was an increase in the Market Value of production from \$41,908,000 in 2002 to \$60,185,000 in 2007. She noted that although there had been an increase the market is now down. The largest item is dairy, followed by field crops. The report indicated the sale of fruits and vegetables has improved over the past several years. She said they are doing more work with individuals starting farming operations as well. The AFBP plans on completing additional analysis of the report. It was noted the County is ranked number one for sheep and lamb farming.

It was explained there is a concern regarding prices for dairy. Due to the increased demand overseas for the product additional cows were raised. The demand has now subsided and as a result there are too many cows. Presently, there is not a market for organic dairy production. It was noted we have one of the largest organic dairies in the state. Ms. Roth is working on a map to indicate organic farming in the County. It was noted the age of farmers has not significantly changed. Although there are younger farmers, there is also those that are undertaking farming as a second career. Overall it appears the farming market is relatively stable at this time.

In terms of government pay, it is the larger commodity crops such as corn, soybeans, etc., that receive the bulk of government pay, although there is some dairy emergency funding available to dairy farmers. If the market is high less government pay is provided as it is a support program. The decrease in government pay is the result of fewer farmers undertaking large crop farming.

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Ms. Teeter reviewed the written work plan provided to the members of the committee. The plan indicated the AFBP work plan includes policy outreach, promoting agricultural economic development, and agricultural education and awareness. She also noted the AFBP has decided to amend its membership to include associate members and at the next meeting will be bringing the amended bylaws to the Committee for approval. On May 7th there will be a training session for mainly municipal officials on Planning for Agriculture to provide tools to promote and protect agriculture.

Ms. Chock requested to receive material in advance of the meeting to allow time to review its contents.

Planning Department

Oil and Gas Drilling Follow-Up

Mr. Doyle followed up on the memo previously provided relating to the scoping document, noting it was thought there were five sections the scope did not address. In reviewing the document one thing that was noted that was the staffing, enforcement, and inspection of the money operation, which was removed from the scoping document as it was not an environmental SEQR based issue. He would encourage working through the legislative process to advocate for a bolstered enforcement program as it covers many of the issues. With regard to the fracking fluid disclosure, at the time the final scope was produced it was not covered within the scope as it is covered through the New York Officers Law/Freedom of Information Law and the level of disclosure was not known at the time the document was produced. At the time the document was produced it was not known if the formulas utilized in the fracking fluid would be available through the use of Freedom of Information Law.

Ms. Robertson requested a resolution be prepared regarding the staffing issue noted by Mr. Doyle. She spoke of her concern that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation laying off approximately 340 staff members. She also expressed concern regarding the opinion that a request for formulas used in the fracking process be handled through a Freedom of Information request, that it would be too cumbersome a mechanism. Ms. Chock expressed her belief that any resolution should be forwarded to the Federal government as well. Ms. Mackesey clarified the companies were originally provided an exemption in the Clean Air/Clean Water acts to perform the drilling; it is a broad deep problem with the drilling. Ms. Chock said that although she is not pleased it would be at our own expense, she believes the County, as well as all municipalities, need to pursue whatever it needs to ensure it is prepared with regard to the drilling, including base-line information on water.

Mr. Marx said Mr. Mareane is in the process of working with appropriate staff to discuss the issues of what the County government has authority over, including roads, Board of Health, emergency responders, etc. He indicated the discussion today are items at the State level that do not fall in the GEIS documents that are of concern to the Legislature.

Update on Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Marx provided a brief overview of highlights of the County's Comprehensive Plan. He said the most interesting concept is nodal development, which has become a focal point for discussions in the local community. Some corridor studies have happened along Route 13, 366, and 96. The communities in these areas are interested in learning more about nodal development. He said nodal development is an important broad theme in the plan as it will assist in determining the pattern of development including housing, jobs, energy, and transportation in the county. Mr. Marx is pleased it is receiving attention and discussions are ongoing. He believes there is a need for different incentives necessary to make it work,

working with developers, communities, and other businesses necessary to ensure appropriate development that would be successful and preserve natural resources.

Mr. Marx explained another area of the plan relating to the rural areas of the County, noting there is a lot of discussions regarding localized agriculture utilizing diversity of commodities that may be supported locally. In addition, the energy opportunities in rural areas such as wind, biomass, etc. may be evolving as well. He was pleased to see the number of farms in upstate New York has increased, which may indicate stabilization. Purchasing of development rights that assists in helping farmers stay in business by getting value out of the land while maintaining it as agriculture. He said it has been very successful working with communities as it brings money into rural economies.

With regard to the protection of natural resources there has been a lot of progress including the monitoring plan for the southern basin of Cayuga Lake, conservation planning looking at natural feature focus areas, stream buffers, and an inventory of scenic resources. He said the review is providing the ability to take a pro-active protection of the resources working with partners and local municipalities.

Other areas of the plan include transportation, with the county working with Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council in updating the long-range plan this year. Another partner closely working with the County is Tompkins County Area Development in developing an economic plan that reinforces key elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The most recent part of the plan is the Energy Greenhouse Gas Emissions element fits naturally with all the other components, particularly nodal development and rural revitalization.

Tourism within the County fits into all elements of the plan including nodal development a it would provide a base for tourists to work from when coming to the area for cultural events as well as to see the scenic and rural areas of the County.

Mr. Marx said the Comprehensive Plan is undergoing a five-year review and a document with recommendations would be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Robertson noted the importance of the County's Comprehensive Plan and how it influences local municipal planning boards; often elements contained in the County's plan are carried into the local planning.

Commissioner's Report

Mr. Marx reported on the following items:

1. Economic Development Loan – there are some issues that will be discussed at a special meeting of the Committee in the near future.
2. Biggs Building – at this time the County Administrator has contracted with an appraiser to determine the market value of the land and buildings. The appraisal will be completed as separate parcels to best determine what to do with the property. Within the next two months discussions with the Town of Ithaca will occur to determine interest or concerns they may have for the area.
3. Energy Tax Mechanism – a new concept developed in Berkley, California, is the idea of financing energy efficiency improvements to homes and businesses through a tax mechanism. It is like a loan that stays with the property rather than property owner. The municipality would provide the funding and an assessment made on the tax bill to pay off the loan. This initiative

would keep the cost of improvements with the housing unit and the energy reductions more than offset the cost. He is having discussions with Mr. Mareane and Mr. Squires regarding the topic.

With regard to the Energy Tax concept, it was noted the loan would require disclosure in the event of a sale. Ms. Chock also spoke of the current tax credit on energy improvements and thought it too would be a good incentive. Ms. Robertson agreed on the tax credit concept as presently the homeowner has to spend out-of-pocket funds, the initiative would provide the funding upfront. In response to Mr. Burbank, Mr. Marx believed it could potentially be used for solar energy products.

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

RESOLUTION NO. __ - FUNDING OF COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS GRANTS

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Burbank to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Chock asked if a process was in place to request a report from recipients of the grant. Ms. Kippola said that as of 2008 the requirement of a report was put into place and that as of this time she believes all reports have been submitted. There are five questions on the report that require completion. A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Proto). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has a grant program for community celebrations using funds drawn entirely from Room Occupancy Tax, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has requested and reviewed grant applications for recommendation to the Tompkins County Legislature through the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee with the advice of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That the following grants are approved:

Town of Danby	2009 Danby Fun Day & Parade	\$ 900
City of Ithaca	2009 GIAC Community Festival	1,000
City of Ithaca	2009 Pumpkin Jam & Scarecrow Jubilee	400
City of Ithaca and Town of Dryden	2009 Greater Ithaca Area Quilt Show	500
City of Ithaca	Juneteenth 2009	1,000
Town of Lansing	2009 Lansing Youth Fishing Derby	400
Village of Trumansburg	2009 Main Streetscape Completion and Street Dance	1,000
Town of Newfield	2009 Newfield Old Home Days	1,400
Town of Lansing	2009 Harbor Festival	1,400
Town of Groton	2009 Annual Halloween Celebration	200
City of Ithaca	Latino Heritage Month Celebration 2009	1,200
Town of Enfield	2009 Enfield Harvest Festival	1,400
Town of Dryden	Marking Bethel Grove	400
City of Ithaca	2009 West End Festival	1,400
Town of Groton	2009 Happenin' in the Hamlet	700
Town of Ithaca	2009 Ithaca Celebrate Agriculture	1,400
Village of Groton	2009 Groton Olde Home Days	1,200
Town & Village of Dryden	2009 Dryden's Old Home Days	<u>1,400</u>
		\$15,940

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or designee shall be authorized to sign any documents related to the aforementioned projects.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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RESOLUTION NO. - APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT - COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Bossard explained the Light in Winter request was not provided for under this program; it was determined the award it would be entitled to under this program would not be very significant and recommended it apply through another tourism grant.

Ms. Mackesey, on behalf of Mr. Proto, noted funding has been provided for multiple years and asked if there is an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the awards. Mr. Bossard said a consultant has been provided to undertake on-site fiscal review of all applicants, which would track the use of the funds.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Robertson noted information on ticket sales for the State Theatre would be beneficial as there is some confusion on when and where they would be available. She then spoke of return on investment, she believes how much tourism each applicant has should be considered when making grants. The ones most in need of funding may not be as successful to bring in tourists. With regard to the Haunted History, it is for living historical events and would take place in various times of the year, including Cornell University graduation.

Ms. Robertson noted she is a member of the Sciencenter advisory board, however would not receive any benefit from the grant.

Ms. Chock noted the program is to support the larger-budget organizations that provide for a year-round draw for tourism. Ms. Robertson spoke of the original intent was to provide start-up, she would like to know how it has developed to the present on-going awards. Mr. Bossard said in the fall of 2008 the guidelines were revised and approved by the Committee. Ms. Robertson requested an explanation be provided.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Proto).

WHEREAS, Community Arts Partnership (CAP) recognizes that the local arts and cultural community is a valuable and unique asset, and that a need exists to harness the power of the arts to develop tourism growth, and if strategically managed, that would stabilize and develop these assets to better serve tourists through well-planned marketing efforts, and

WHEREAS, CAP was appointed to create a comprehensive arts marketing plan and develop and implement a plan for financial and operational development and capacity building of arts and cultural entities, and

WHEREAS, the arts and cultural community could better position itself in the marketplace to attract more visitors to and enhance visitors' stay in Tompkins County, thus generating more dollars into the local economy, and

WHEREAS, funding exists within the Room Tax Occupancy budget for the Arts and Cultural Stabilization Plan program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That, with the advice of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, that the following Arts and Cultural Organization Stabilization Grants be awarded in 2009:

<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	2009
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Hangar Theatre.....	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$32,500	\$37,500	\$24,000
Cayuga Chamber Orchestra.....	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$22,000	\$23,275	\$18,700
Kitchen Theatre.....	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$39,680	\$34,000	\$22,400
The History Center.....	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$23,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$23,200
PRI/Museum of the Earth.....			\$20,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$18,000
(State Theatre).....	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$37,000	\$16,000
Light in Winter.....					\$22,000	
Cayuga Nature Center.....						\$28,000
Sciencenter.....						<u>\$10,000</u>
Grants Total	\$125,000	\$140,000	\$158,000	\$179,180	\$213,775	\$160,300

RESOLVED, further, That Community Arts Partnership is paid an amount up to \$18,000 (10 percent of program) for administrative evaluation and oversight services,

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee is authorized to sign any agreements with the recipients and Community Arts Partnership pertaining to this program.

SEQR TYPE: TYPE II-20

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RESOLUTION NO. - FUNDING OF NEW TOURISM INITIATIVE GRANTS

It was MOVED by Ms. Chock, seconded by Mr. Burbank. Mr. Sparrow said the funds would be to cover personnel for the initiative to move forward. Previous financial support from the State had been lost but has heard it is being restored, although it is not known if it would come through. Mr. Bonn will be in Albany next week and will try to determine when funding might be received. The support provided by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board allows flexibility to cover soft costs; other funding is restricted to capital costs. A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Proto).

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has a grant program for New Tourism Initiatives using funds drawn entirely from Room Occupancy Tax, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has requested and reviewed grant applications for recommendation to the Tompkins County Legislature through the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee, with the advice of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee, That the following grant is approved:

Finger Lakes Wine Center Start Up Cost Assistance \$10,000

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or designee shall be authorized to sign any documents related to the aforementioned projects.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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RESOLUTION NO. - FUNDING OF TOURISM PROJECT GRANTS

It was MOVED by Ms. Chock, seconded by Ms. Robertson, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. It was noted it was uncertain if Light in Winter would have fewer entertainers as the award was less than requested. This grant program was the only one that the event would meet criteria. A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Proto).

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has a grant program for Tourism Projects using funds drawn entirely from Room Occupancy Tax, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has requested and reviewed grant applications for recommendation to the Tompkins County Legislature through the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee with the advice of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That the following grants are approved:

Light in Winter Festival	2010 Light in Winter Festival	\$9,000
PRI- Museum of the Earth	2009 Forest Journey Exhibit	\$9,000
Cornell Coop. Extension	2009 Green Buildings Open House	1,625
Downtown Ithaca Alliance	2009 Downtown Ithaca Holiday Festival	\$7,500
Cayuga Wine Trail	2009 Greyhound Wine Tour	\$3,000
Social Venture	4th Annual Finger Lakes International Dragon Boat Festival	<u>16,400</u>
		\$46,525

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or designee shall be authorized to sign any documents related to the aforementioned projects.

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Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Ms. Kippola answered the questions individuals previously had regarding appointment to the Culture seat. It was noted one individual was presently on the Board. The Committee was informed that Ms. Monagan's background was thought to be an asset to the board, with many ideas of grassroots marketing. *Action on the appointment will occur at the next meeting following a discussion with a member of the nomination committee.*

Convention and Visitor's Bureau Quarterly Report

Mr. Bonn provided a written report to the Committee outlining events and the financial outlook during this period of economic downturn. The current market indicates a significant decline in travel as does the balance of the State and nation. As of February, there have been declines in the past six months with a decline of 19.7% in January, and in February a decline of 16.4% compared to last year. A national report indicates a decline of 21%. With regard funding, revenue from the State has decreased from \$75,000 to \$61,000 and it is believed to remain at a flat level next year.

The Visit Ithaca website is presently being redesigned and is set to launch in June. He spoke of the year-long study on tourism to assist in determining how to develop programs that would provide the greatest draw.

Mr. Bonn reviewed various programs that are scheduled. Those committed are being contacted to determine if modifications to their reservations/events are required due to the economic situation. Many businesses are restricting business travel at this time.

Mr. Burbank asked for clarification on the intercept survey. Mr. Bonn said individuals would go to various locations such as state parks, farmers market, Ithaca Commons, Main Street in both Trumansburg and Groton, and ask questions (length of stay, activities, experience, expense, etc.) that would provide data. This survey should detail tourism income and the strongest market segment. This survey provides the baseline for the survey.

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Ms. Robertson spoke of how having data regarding business or personal reasons would be helpful in determining whether certain proposals have merit.

Mr. Bonn spoke of the Winter Recess event being very successful and well received, however, it was 428 room nights; this was only 2 percent of the total room nights for the month of February. He explained that due to the economic downturn there are reductions in commitments for events through 2011. Another factor noted was that not only is occupancy down, the actual room rates have decreased in order to compete for business.

Mr. Bonn reviewed various articles highlighting the Tompkins County/Finger Lakes areas.

Ms. Robertson suggested the Chili Cook Off provide advertising regarding advance ticket sales.

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk