

Minutes

Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee Tompkins County Legislature

Regular Meeting

April 9, 2007 3:30 PM Legislature Chambers

Members Present: Martha Robertson (Chair), Pam Mackesey, Frank Proto

Members Excused: Jim Dennis, Tyke Randall

Other Legislator Present: Kathy Luz Herrera

Staff: Fernando de Aragon, ITCTC
Joan Jurkowich, TCPD
Jeanne Leccese, TCPD
Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning & PW
Julia Mattick, Workforce Investment Board
Kathy Wilsea, TCPD

Visitors: Jon Bosak, TCLocal
Tim Fahey, Cornell Univ.
Roxy Johnston, Water Resources Council
Ken Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County
Joe Turcott, TCAT Inc.

1 The meeting was called to order at 3:35 PM by the Chair, Martha Robertson.

2 Environmental Quality and Sustainability

a) Planning for Energy Descent – Jon Bosak gave a presentation on TCLocal, their mission and background. Estimates for peak oil production range from 2005 to 2030, and TCLocal points out the projected shortfall and shows the need for change. While oil and natural gas will always be available, increased costs will affect all goods, employment patterns and the cost of food. Tompkins County will actually be in one of the best positions due to our climate, water, rail and water transportation, tolerant and highly educated workforce, and agriculture assets. TCLocal sees the role of County government as: keeping initial changes to a low cost, promoting greenhouse gas reduction synergies, encouraging alternative energy, encouraging land use planning, promoting household self-sufficiency (especially food), developing a plan to address the future, and commissioning studies for policy recommendations.

3 ITCTC

a) **Resolution:** Appropriation of 2007-2008 Budgets for the ITCTC -- Moved by Pam Mackesey, seconded by Frank Proto. Fernando de Aragon explained that such a resolution is needed every year because the fiscal years of the county and federal governments differ. Resolution passed 3:0.

b) **Resolution:** Affirming ITCTC Recommendation to Increase the ITCTC Staff Director's Salary – Moved by Pam, seconded by Frank. Frank suggested it's time to provide background information on ITCTC for new legislators. Resolution passed 3:0.

c) Transportation Projects in the next TIP – Fernando de Aragon said the TIP contains projects that have funding assigned. The new TIP has lots of bridge maintenance, which are expensive projects. Frank said in the last 6 to 8 weeks, the TCAT board was made aware of projects in the TIP draft. They were mobility management, project administration, and short-term transit. These three raised consternation at TCAT. Kathy Luz Herrera said TCAT is a partnership, and there was concern about these showing up as County projects. Fernando will check to see how these were submitted to TIP – by County Administration, Social Services, or Finance – and follow up.

d) Ithaca Car Share Update – Fernando said insurance is proving to be an obstacle, and is being addressed.

4 Water Resources Council

a) Annual Report – Roxy Johnston, WRC First Vice Chair, briefly reviewed the report. She pointed out that WRC serves as the water quality coordinating committee for Tompkins County. She provided handouts on the Pledge for Clean Water, which the Education Committee is working on with other agencies, and Water Week, which will be celebrated May 5th at the Farmers Market. She said WRC appreciates the staff support of Kathy Wilsea as Secretary and Kate Hackett as Coordinator, as well as the volunteer efforts of Frank Proto as Chair. She referred Pam to the Health Department for better information about the Source Water Assessment Program. Martha Robertson asked for a copy of the wetlands report when it is done. Roxy said the community input meetings will begin soon for the monitoring plan being developed for the south end of the lake. Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance resulted from a group of Soil & Water Conservation Districts banding together for sharing of resources and knowledge, and has resulted in many collaborative projects.

5 Tompkins County Planning Department

a) **Resolution:** Authorizing Submittal of an Application for NYS Wildlife Grants Program Funds (Federal Fiscal Year 2005) to Conduct a Unique Natural Areas Habitat Inventory and Assessment – Joan Jurkowich said this is a new grant opportunity for something TCPD already planned. Part of the matching funds come from the TCPD budget item for studies by consultants in areas for which staff does not have expertise. The grant project will document locations of Species of Greatest Conservation Need, focusing on Unique Natural Areas sites, and the information will be used to update the UNA directory. This is a three-year grant. Resolution moved by Pam, seconded by Frank, and passed 3:0.

b) Housing Strategy – Ed Marx said he has been discussing this with community groups and seeking their endorsement. It may develop on two tracks, with the City, Town of Ithaca and Town of Lansing providing early endorsement and action, while Ed keeps working with other municipalities and groups. The strategy was crafted by a Planning Advisory Board committee from the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment study. Frank asked if there is any evaluation of the secondary mortgage market in Tompkins County. Ed thought maybe it should be mentioned in the homeownership program's client education program.

c) Commissioner's Report – Ed welcomed new Planner, Jeanne Leccese, who started 4/2. Ed is working with the City, Town of Ithaca, and Town of Ulysses on a Route 96 Corridor Study. They expect to put out a Request for Proposals in May. Ed is working with the Village of Lansing to preserve some Cliffside property that is part of a proposed subdivision. The Cornell/Town of Ithaca Transportation GEIS mitigations will soon be proposed to the public.

6 Workforce Investment Board – Postponed.

7 Environmental Quality and Sustainability

a) Ken Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Ken provided an overview of survey results, showing lots of potential for savings through behavioral and structural changes, and many ongoing local efforts. The surveys showed great need for trusted contractors. He reviewed the points in his handouts.

b) Tim Fahey, Professor, Cornell Dept. of Natural Resources – Tim said he had a group of graduate students examining ways to reduce carbon emissions. They have worked on comparing carbon footprints for five or six cities for similarities and differences. They produced research papers on wind farms, and Tim pointed out that NYS Ag & Markets has guidelines established. The students also are exploring how local zoning can prohibit or discourage landowners from cutting timber, thus retaining forestlands and controlling greenhouse gas emissions. They evaluated net costs of public transit, and noted TCAT already has wide range of routes. Transit use would increase here if parking becomes more difficult. Tim characterized Tompkins County as light years ahead of neighboring communities, and he will send copies of the research papers to Martha Robertson.

8 Committee Administration – a special meeting will be set up at 5 PM on April 17 (prior to the next Legislature meeting) to address postponed items.

- a) Community Arts Partnership update – Postponed.
- b) ICLEI membership fees – Postponed.
- c) Committee Goals and Calendar – Postponed.
- d) Approval of Minutes from 3/12/2007 – accepted by consensus with no changes.

9 The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Dept.