

Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 4, 2010 3:30 PM

Scott Heyman Conference Room

Approved 9/1/10

Present: C. Chock, Vice Chair; F. Proto; W. Burbank; P. Pryor; P. Mackesey, Chair (arrived 4:13 p.m.)
Staff: J. Mareane, County Administrator; E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; S. Doyle, K. Borgella, K. Wilsea, J. Lacesse, Planning Department; J. Kippola, Administration; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk; C. Schulte, Water Resources Council
Legislator: M. Robertson, Chair
Guests: Cindy Kimble, Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance; Scott Wiggins, David Sparrow, Strategic Tourism Planning Board; J. McPheeters, Chamber of Commerce; Fred Bonn, Convention and Visitors Bureau; Brett Bossard, Community Arts Partnership, Dr. Scott Niven

Call to Order

Vice Chair Chock called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

Ms. Chock reordered the agenda to allow Ms. Mackesey to be present during items of interest.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to accept the minutes of July 07, 2010, as presented. MINUTES APPROVED.

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance

Ms. Kimble, President of the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, provided a brief history of the agency, key achievements, and proposed amendments to the investment structure and appointment of Board of Director members. She noted the agency has been in operation for 91 years and is considered one of the oldest regional tourism promotion agencies in the nation. The Alliance is made up of 14 counties and covers 9,000 square miles in the Central New York area, making it the largest region in New York State. In 2009 the Finger Lakes Region was the second best performing region in the State and brought in \$2.5 billion to the area. Ms. Kimble reviewed the key achievements for 2009 and to date in 2010. The amendments to the investment structure would make all entities as partners in the Alliance and allow flexibility in determining the level of participation and service desired. With regard to Board of Director membership, Ms. Kimble said that previously County Legislatures appointed members, with some members not familiar with the tourism industry. Having the ability to ask local tourism promotion agencies to nominate an individual for the Board of Directors will assist in maintaining the right balance of industry representation.

In response to the Committee's concern regarding the appointment process, Mr. Bonn said he would work closely with the County in the process. The Committee requested a review of the current appointment process and will revisit it at a future meeting.

Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Quarterly Report

Mr. Bonn reported on the impact of tourism in Tompkins County. He is continuing to work with New York State tourism leaders and speaking with State legislative representatives regarding the importance of maintaining the State Matching Funds program, however, it is unclear what the outcome will be. The Hospitality Star Program that focuses on customer service training and familiarization of

local points of interest has been a very successful collaboration between CVB, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and Workforce New York. Although the tourism industry has not fully recovered to its pre-recession level, the June figures show the trend is continuing to grow.

Chmura Economics and Analytics Profile of Visitors

Members received a written report providing visitor profile information for a one-year period. The survey included the following components: twelve month Intercept Survey; Household Survey completed in January/February 2009; Student Survey completed in April/May 2009; Innkeeper Survey completed Spring 2009; and Visitors Bureau Survey completed April through November 2009. Mr. Bonn noted the information confirmed perceptions that tourism efforts in the County are effective. The report outlines the demographics of the 843,000 visitors in 2009, including the lodging, where they are from, ages, reason for visit, places visited, and satisfaction levels. Mr. Bonn noted the high level of satisfaction in visits indicates a potential return to the area within 2 to 5 years and that the entire community adds to the good experience.

Ms. Chock spoke of Strategic Tourism Planning Board having a two-hour presentation of the Chmura Report with a great deal of detail provided. The full report can be seen at <http://www.visitithaca.com/media-services.html>. It will be a valuable tool to business partners for planning purposes, especially the private sector. Mr. Bonn said the 2011 marketing efforts will take into account information from this report.

Mr. Bonn said the spending patterns that had been down 11.4 percent, during a down year are returning to more normal spend patterns. In response to a question about whether other Finger Lakes Tourism Alliances have a similar report, he said some counties have expressed interest but there is none at this time. He noted the cost for this report was \$60,000.

In response to Mr. Burbank's question about any weaknesses or gaps in service, Mr. Bonn said although there were some comments about the Commons area, on the whole visitors felt they received value for the money spent. The report will provide the opportunity to refine the industry and strategic plans.

Resolution: Budget Adjustments - Tourism Program (DOC ID: 2130)

Ms. Kippola provided the members with a revised resolution. Ms. Kippola explained Room Tax revenues that exceed expenses are placed in the Room Tax Fund Balance, which can only be used for tourism promotion and tourism related activities. The Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) has decided to utilize some of the funds within the 2010 budget due to an increased demand in festival applications. The Community Arts Partnership (CAP) request is to assist the State Theatre selling tickets at the County Ticketing Center. Mr. Bossard said clients (the organizations providing the box office services) pay into the operation of the ticket center through fees based on the number of tickets sales, with the majority of revenue through customer fees at the time of purchase. For the current year, due to the transition period of installation of new software that will allow the State Theatre to sell tickets at the Ticket Center there is a small gap in funding that would normally come from each client organization. The grant will bridge the gap. There will be one ticket unit with CAP either subcontracting or using their staff; a ticket outlet will still be operated at the State Theatre.

It was noted the revised resolution was to remove the Finger Lakes Wine Center capital grant, which did not qualify for this program. The STPB has supported this effort for almost ten years and would like to assist in its completion. The request will be taken back and reviewed to determine the appropriate grant program. The Festival coordination strategic plan is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Frank Proto, Member
SECONDER:	Pamela Mackesey, Chair
AYES:	Mackesey, Burbank, Chock, Proto, Pryor

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Manual Policy 05-02, budget adjustments exceeding \$5,000 require Legislative approval, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That the Director of Finance be directed to make the following budget adjustments on the County's books:

SOURCE:	A908	Room Tax Fund Balance	\$88,000
APPROPRIATION:	6475.54400	Program Expense - Festivals Outreach	\$10,000
	6475.54621	Community Arts Partnership	\$ 8,000
	6475.54625	Tourism Capital Grants	\$10,000
	6475.54626	Tourism Marketing & Advert Grants.	\$15,000
	6475.54628	New Tourism Initiative Grants	\$30,000
	6475.54632	Tompkins County Chamber- Convention & Visitors Bureau	\$15,000

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee is authorized to sign all contracts and documents related to the non-grant appropriations.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

EXPLANATION:

- **Festivals Outreach:** Expand festival coordination outreach efforts, create long-term strategic plan to efficiently respond to Tourism Program festival grant requests
- **Community Arts Partnership:** CAP operates County's Ticket Center, and must recover costs as the State Theatre moves toward selling tickets at the Ticket Center
- **Grants:** Anticipated demand for Fall 2010 grant round
- **Tompkins County Chamber/CVB:** Increase 2010 marketing campaign to attract more overnight visitors

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Resolution (DOC ID: 2145): Accepting the County Administrator's Report Regarding Strengthening the County's Tourism Efforts and Authorizing a Senior Planner Position Within the Tompkins County Planning Department to Support the Strategic Tourism Planning Board and Coordinate the County's Tourism Activities

Mr. Mareane reviewed his report and recommendation regarding the proposed position, funded through Room Tax funds. The report confirmed the need for the position and details concerning duties and placement for the position, which was determined to be a Senior Planner housed in the Planning Department. It also indicated there is no need to fundamentally overhaul the current relationship between the County, Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB), and Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). The financial accountability concerns expressed can be resolved through plain language planning to make it easier to understand, and there should not be any reallocation of revenues until the tax revenues are returned to their pre-recession levels. Mr. Mareane recommended that a review of the position take place after a two-year period to determine its effectiveness.

A brief discussion followed with Committee members expressing differing opinions about whether to specify the position would exist only as long as it is supported through Room Tax funds. Mr. Marx said that the Planning Department could not absorb the additional position within his budget and he would prefer to have the resolution specify it is supported through Room Tax.

It was **MOVED** by Ms. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Proto, to amend the resolution to add the following language: “RESOLVED, further, That if is the expectation that as long as the position exists, it shall be funded solely by Room Tax funds.” A voice vote on the amendment resulted as follows: Ayes – 4 (Legislators Chock, Mackesey, Proto, and Pryor); Noes – 1 (Legislator Burbank). **AMENDMENT APPROVED.**

It was noted the position would have an estimated annual expense of \$90,000 to \$100,000. Mr. Proto questioned whether the chosen position of Senior Planner would appropriately describe the work to be completed. He recalled a previous job description for this position and noted the local law regarding the Room Tax specifies what the funds may be used for. Ms. Chock reviewed the job description and believes it would fit the original description and need. Mr. Mareane said there is limited use of the Room Tax funds by law and that it must be used for tourism. To amend the position description or title would require Civil Service action. In response to Mr. Proto’s question of how STPB felt about the recommendation, Ms. Chock and Mr. Sparrow indicated they were extremely favorable.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [4 TO 1]
MOVER:	Pamela Mackesey, Chair
SECONDER:	Carol Chock, Member
AYES:	Pamela Mackesey, Will Burbank, Carol Chock, Pat Pryor
NAYS:	Frank Proto

WHEREAS, Tompkins County levies a Hotel Room Occupancy Tax (“Room Tax”) to provide the means to enhance the local economy through the promotion of tourist activities, conventions, trade shows, special events and other directly related and supporting activities, and

WHEREAS, the County created the Advisory Board on Tourism Development in 1989 and subsequently restructured that Board to create the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) in 1998 to identify, develop, and promote arts, cultural and tourism opportunities; improve the connection among tourism and visitor service providers; improve the efficiency of visitor services delivery and program development; and advise the Tompkins County Legislature on the distribution of Room Tax revenue for both “product” and marketing activities, based on adopted short- and long-term tourism development strategies, and

WHEREAS, the role of the STPB has grown alongside the growth in Room Tax revenue, with the Board now responsible for all “Product Development” activities, which account for 40% of all Room Tax revenue net of administrative costs, and also for tourism marketing activities other than those undertaken by the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and

WHEREAS, although the STPB has fulfilled its mission with great skill and vision, it has relied largely on a dedicated volunteer board for tasks normally and more appropriately assigned to professional staff, and

WHEREAS, recognizing that its administrative responsibilities were limiting its ability to fully realize the more strategic elements of its mission, the STPB requested the County consider how to provide professional staff assistance and allocated \$100,000 to support the cost of such assistance in each of its last two budgets, and

WHEREAS, in responding to the STPB’s request and also in seeking stronger accountability over the spending of Room Tax funds, the Legislature’s Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee asked the County Administrator to exercise his powers under Chapter 150 of the County Code governing the Room Tax to assess the needs of the County’s tourism program and make

recommendations to the Legislature, and

WHEREAS, after undertaking a review that included discussions with STPB members and other stakeholders, the County Administrator has issued a report that shall be made a part of this record. The report found the responsibilities of the STPB and its members exceed what can reasonably be expected of a volunteer advisory board and recommends the hiring of a professional staff person to assume the administrative burdens now carried by the Board, allowing the Board to focus on more strategic issues and opportunities, and

WHEREAS, the County Administrator's report enumerates the several recommended duties of the staff person, including but not limited to facilitating the development of a five-year (2011-15) strategic tourism plan, exploring new sources of funding, generating and pursuing ideas about new initiatives to increase tourism activity, evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs to ensure these activities are resulting in the highest return on the County's Room Tax dollar, managing product development contracts for grant compliance, reviewing budgets and reports, and serving as a single point of contact for all Room Tax -related matters, and

WHEREAS, the County Administrator has recommended the position be placed in the Department of Planning in the title of Senior Planner and made accountable to the Commissioner of Planning, who shall direct the work activities of the staff person and ensure the continued involvement of the STPB in the development and oversight of the County's tourism programs, and

WHEREAS, the position and related supervisory costs will be fully supported by Room Tax revenues allocated for this purpose, and

WHEREAS, the County Administrator has recommended that an objective performance evaluation of this initiative be undertaken two years after its commencement to determine whether the anticipated benefits of adding a professional staff person have been realized; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality and the Budget and Capital Committees, That the Tompkins County Legislature accepts the findings and recommendations of the County Administrator's report and authorizes the designation of a position at the level of Senior Planner within the Planning Department, funded by Room Tax revenue, to support and coordinate the County's tourism program,

RESOLVED, further, That if is the expectation that as long as the position exists, it shall be funded solely by Room Tax funds,

RESOLVED, further, That funding for this position and related expenses for the balance of 2010 shall be provided through a budget adjustment as follows:

From:	Room Tax Account	6475.54400	Program Expense	\$25,000
To:	Planning Department Account	8020.51000609	Senior Planner	\$19,575
	Planning Department Account	8020.58800	Fringes	\$ 5,425

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Resolution (DOC ID: 2134): Funding of Community Celebrations Grants

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Pamela Mackesey, Chair
SECONDER:	Pat Pryor, Member
AYES:	Mackesey, Burbank, Chock, Proto, Pryor

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

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has 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

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Committee, That the following grants are approved:

Town of Lansing	2010 Lansing Harbor Fest	\$1,200
Town of Ithaca	Rededication of Veterans' Cemetery	\$ 300

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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Planning Department

Resolution (DOC ID: 2081): Endorsing the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy

Ms. Borgella said the Committees suggested revisions to the document have been completed. Mr. Proto expressed concern that the energy strategy component, if implemented, would cost \$4.1 million dollars over the next ten years. Although some of the funding may come from the Federal or State governments he feels some pieces of the strategy cause concern. He also noted that at the Planning Advisory Board it was stated implementation of the component would require aggressive work.

Mr. Proto said as Chairman of Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) he is concerned about the items listed in Section 5, particularly the expansion of the Way-to-Go program. He said discussions are ongoing about how to more economically run the program and also about the 211 program. He also said some individuals are not comfortable with all the strategies such as one north/south and one east/west major bike/hiking boulevards. It appears this piece came from ITCTC plus work done by one or two individuals. The transportation piece has far-reaching implications and said TCAT has the major transportation responsibility in the county. If the energy strategy is recommended it puts the County on a path with funding implications that, at this time when facing financial difficulties, causes apprehension. He would like to be certain Mr. Mareane has a chance to review the document and respond on the financial implications.

Ms. Mackesey asked how the information for the transportation portion was obtained. Ms. Borgella said work was done primarily with ITCTC and using their long-range transportation plan.

Ms. Pryor would like to see the plan move forward. She sees the strategy as a supporting document for grant opportunities for its various sections. Although she is sensitive to the fiscal implications and recognizes that if accepted it would then move to implementation, she would also like to have Mr. Mareane review the document.

Commissioner Marx agreed to meet with Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) staff to review their concerns.

It was MOVED by Ms. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Proto, to table the resolution to the next meeting. Ms. Chock said the resolution notes there are no immediate financial implications and that to implement action would require a vote; if it was not feasible at that time Legislators could vote against action. Mr. Marx said the document provides a road map of what would be required to achieve the stated goal. It does not say all action should be at the County's expense and funds would be sought through grants and collaborative efforts. He noted he has not heard of any concerns from Mr. Mareane who is aware of the strategy and that today was the first he heard of these concerns from members of the Committee.

A voice vote on the motion to table the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 2 (Legislators Proto and Pryor); Noes – 3 (Legislators Burbank, Chock, and Mackesey). MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Proto will not support the resolution due to his concerns on the transportation portion of the document and the desire to speak to staff at ITCTC and the TCAT Board.

Ms. Chock said the document would be used as a strategy as pointed out by Mr. Marx.

Ms. Pryor is reluctant to vote against the strategy and asked if it is possible to delay action to allow Mr. Proto's questions and concerns to be addressed. Mr. Marx said he would like to have it move forward to pursue funding for the segments as well as have it a supportive document for grant applications.

By consensus, the resolution was withdrawn from the agenda at this time. Mr. Marx noted the document strengthens what TCAT is attempting to do. RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Legislature in December 2004 and amended in 2008 with an element addressing energy and greenhouse gas emissions, established the policy to "Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by at least 2 percent of 2008 base year emissions per year to reach, at a minimum, an 80% reduction from 2008 levels by 2050," and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the development of a "5-year strategy to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10% of 2008 levels, including a detailed plan for County government to achieve that same target," and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy contains interim actions toward achieving the community 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal by reducing emissions 20% from 2008 levels by 2020, and

WHEREAS, the County Planning Advisory Board has endorsed the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy and recommends that the Tompkins County Legislature also endorse it, and

WHEREAS, there are no financial implications associated with endorsing this Strategy, implementation of many aspects of the Strategy would have financial implications that would be reviewed by the Legislature at the time of implementation, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature, endorses the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy, dated July 20, 2010.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Resolution (DOC ID: 2143): Making a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance in Relation to Resolution No. of 2010: Authorizing a Contract with the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to Implement Flood Hazard Mitigation Program Projects

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Pamela Mackesey, Chair
SECONDER:	Pat Pryor, Member
AYES:	Mackesey, Burbank, Chock, Proto, Pryor

WHEREAS, in Resolution No. of 2010, the Tompkins County Legislature would authorize the County Administrator or his designee to execute a contract with the Tompkins County Soil and Water District to implement projects identified through the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program, and would also be authorized to execute other agreement necessary for the County to implement, monitor and protect the projects funded through this program, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature has reviewed and accepted as adequate an

Environmental Assessment Form with respect to that action, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That Resolution No. ___ of 2010 is an unlisted action,

RESOLVED, further, That the County Legislature hereby makes a negative declaration of environmental significance in regard to Resolution No. ___ of 2010.

SEQR ACTION: Unlisted

(Short EAFs on file in the office of the Clerk of the Legislature)

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Resolution (DOC ID: 2141): Authorizing a Contract with the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to Implement Flood Hazard Mitigation Program Projects

Mr. Doyle noted the applications went through the technical committee review process. The resolution will cover seven projects in four watersheds and seven jurisdictions. Mr. Doyle is seeking three actions associated with the projects: (1) recommendation of the negative declaration resolution; (2) recommendation of the resolution authorizing the contract with Soil and Water Conservation District; and (3) authorization to use \$12,000 from the 2009 funds for a project identified on Taughannock Creek to complete the watershed assessment.

Mr. Proto believes there needs to be a discussion regarding the selection process for projects by the technical committee. The three-week timeline of notification to municipalities and the deadline given does not provide an opportunity for the public to weigh in. Mr. Doyle said this is the last year for the designated funding. The technical committee is reviewing the program and will be presenting a report in the near future.

Mr. Proto spoke of removing the proposed Fall Creek Agricultural Buffer project, noting that since it was recommended the individual who is purchasing the property has decided to seek the Federal and State funding available through the Conservation Reserve Program. Mr. Doyle disagreed and felt since it is a large area there could be benefits from both programs, therefore, should be included pending additional review. A discussion followed, with Mr. Proto stating the landowner would not have to sign an agreement and have additional benefits such as fencing if he chose the Conservation Reserve Program. Mr. Doyle said there are opportunities that both programs would be beneficial, particularly due to the size of the area and noted the County could not do any work without the landowner's approval.

In response to Ms. Chock's questions, Mr. Doyle said the resolution does not obligate the County for any 2011 funds, and all but one town has had the County complete flood hazard mitigation projects.

It was MOVED by Mr. Proto to remove the Fall Creek Agricultural Buffer Extension from the approved project listing. FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND. Mr. Proto is expressed disappointment the County is considering spending funds when there are Federal funds available to do a more extensive project on this property.

It was noted that the East Enfield Creek at Upper Treman Buffer project may include the removal of two mobile homes.

Mr. Burbank was excused at this time (5:35 p.m.).

Ms. Mackesey asked for clarification on the Fall Creek Agricultural Buffer; Mr. Doyle said there would be a review of the project and a determination what would best complete the mitigation work. If it is not necessary for the County to supplement the Conservation Reserve Program the project would be removed. He also explained the County would have a permanent maintenance agreement that would be

associated with the property. Mr. Proto said there should be conversations with Soil and Water Conservation staff about the Conservation Reserve Program and it being a more suitable program. Mr. Marx said Mr. Schutt is on the technical committee that approved the project and had not brought up the possibility of the Conservation Reserve Program until this time.

Ms. Chock clarified approval of the resolution authorizes moving forward on the projects, however, if there is new information that changes how the project should be handled it could be removed.

Mr. Proto again stressed the need to have additional public outreach about the projects.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Pat Pryor, Member
SECONDER:	Will Burbank, Member
AYES:	Pamela Mackesey, Carol Chock, Frank Proto, Pat Pryor
EXCUSED:	Will Burbank

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature re-established the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program in 2006, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature provided funding for the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program in the amount of \$25,000 in 2010, and

WHEREAS, the Technical Committee for the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program has identified several projects to be funded through the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District is prepared to undertake the projects identified by the Technical Committee, and

WHEREAS, the projects identified for implementation will be protected through the use of a Riparian Buffer Protection Agreement where appropriate, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature has reviewed and accepted as adequate Environmental Assessment Forms with respect to these projects, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, That the County Administrator or his designee be authorized to execute a contract with the Tompkins County Soil and Water District, in an amount not to exceed \$25,000,

RESOLVED, further, that the County Administrator or his designee is also authorized to execute other agreements necessary for the County to implement, monitor and protect the projects funded by the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program.

SEQR ACTION: Unlisted
(Short EAFs on file in the office of the Clerk of the Legislature)

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Authorization to Spend 2009 Funding

It was MOVED by Mr. Proto, seconded by Ms. Mackesey, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to authorize spending \$12,000 of the 2009 funding to complete the Taughannock Creek Watershed Assessment. MOTION CARRIED.

Resolution (DOC ID: 2138): Amending Membership of the Water Resources Council

Mr. Proto said Ms. Schulte is a member of the Water Resources Council nominating committee. Extensive work went into reviewing the history regarding the seat and the consistent vacancy.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Frank Proto, Member
SECONDER:	Pamela Mackesey, Chair
AYES:	Pamela Mackesey, Carol Chock, Frank Proto, Pat Pryor
EXCUSED:	Will Burbank

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) was established by Resolution No. 181 of 1997, and the membership of the WRC was restructured by Resolution No. 57 of 2000 which created nineteen voting members, including an Economic Development seat, and

WHEREAS, the Membership of the WRC was expanded by two At-Large voting seats by Resolution No. 211 of 2000, and terms were changed from two years to three years by Resolution No. 49 of 2001, and

WHEREAS, the WRC conducts an annual membership campaign and occasional special campaigns, and has had no candidates approved for the Economic Development Seat since it was vacated in 2004, and

WHEREAS, the Nominating/Membership Committee of the WRC examined options for this seat and recommended that the seat be changed from an Economic Development seat to an At-Large seat, to be filled with a person with expertise in a field appropriate to the Mission of the WRC, and that recommendation was approved by the WRC at its meeting on July 19, 2010, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, that the Economic Development seat of the WRC is changed to an At-Large seat.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Commissioner's Report

Mr. Marx said he will speak of how programs affect his budget during program reviews. He reported an application Environmental Protection Agency Showcase Community grant, involving EcoVillage and other community partners to show how to develop and identify their models for use within the community. In addition, he is working on another grant application for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant to develop a focus area plan to do design studies, and impact analysis of outcomes, and energy alternatives. This grant also involves the Health Department, Office for the Aging, Youth Bureau, and Human Rights Commission for the housing aspect.

Mr. Marx expressed concern regarding the State's Purchase of Development Rights Program, which funds agreements for agricultural development. Last year the program was cut from \$22 million to \$10 million, and this year discussions are to spend only \$5 million this fiscal year for the program and utilizing the balance elsewhere in the budget. There are \$70 million of projects the State agreed to fund, however, the State is not spending the money. Tompkins County has two farms, one in Lansing and one in Dryden, who have waited since 2006. He noted the landowners have paid the out-of-pocket expenses associated with the application. In Albany discussions are that only 2-3 projects may be funded. He has contacted Assemblywoman Lifton's office seeking assistance.

In response to Mr. Proto's question, Mr. Marx said the entities responsible for oversight would not receive any funding until a project closes. The program was to be a dedicated fund; when approved farmers anticipate this income to cover the costs of application and to maintain their property, and now may not see it.

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.