

Minutes

Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee Tompkins County Legislature

Regular Meeting

August 13, 2007 3:30 PM Courthouse Conference Room

Members Present: Martha Robertson (Chair), Jim Dennis, Pam Mackesey, Frank Proto, Tyke Randall

Member Absent: Pam Mackesey

Staff: Jackie Kippola, T C Administration
Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning & PW
Dwight Mengel, Public Transportation
Leslie Schill, TCPD
Kathy Wilsea, TCPD

Visitors: Fred Bonn, Convention & Visitors Center
Dick Charsky, Community Arts Partnership
Gary Ferguson, Ithaca Downtown Partnership
Joseph Gaylord, Ithaca Downtown Partnership
David Sparrow, Wine Center
Stuart Stein, Strategic Tourism Planning Board

1) Call to Order & Agenda Changes -- The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by the Chair, Martha Robertson. Prior to the meeting, Jackie Kippola and Dwight Mengel had submitted by email new resolutions for consideration. Paper copies were available.

2) Tompkins County Planning Department

a) Commissioner's Report – Ed Marx reported that the Homeownership Program's first case for a new house purchase is encountering some unresolved issues, so criteria are being developed. Planning Department staff has provided comments on an annexation proposal to the Village of Trumansburg and Town of Ulysses, at the request of the municipalities. The Route 13/366 Corridor Study is almost ready for public review. Ed attended a meeting last week with City of Ithaca Common Council members and the developer that has been selected for Southwest Park. He was encouraged by the developer's comments and expects positive results. Cayuga Green Phase II is now underway. Tompkins County has facilities on both sides of the site, so will stay in touch. Relocation of the NYS Department of Transportation site away from the waterfront was a COMCAP project. This involved a lot of work at the Planning department, and DOT assured us we would be reimbursed for "hard costs". We submitted expenses of \$110,000 and in June received a response that NYS is willing to pay \$2,680. Ed met with the Governor's regional representative and the deputy secretary of DOT, and will report on any progress. Ed introduced Leslie Schill, the new Senior Planner for the department.

3) Strategic Tourism Planning Board

a) **Resolution:** Award of Tourism Capital Grants from Room Occupancy Tax Fund – David Sparrow, Gary Ferguson and Fred Bonn, members of the Wine Center board of directors, were introduced. They hope to begin construction this fall and open in spring 2008. Mr. Sparrow said the Wine Center will handle some retail sales, but selections will only be available on a 60-day rotating basis. Items will be representative of what is available, which will promote regional sales. Staff of the center will make referrals to local stores. Martha requested that someone from the project talk with Doris Nitsios, owner of Sam's Liquors, which is the closest retail shop to the proposed center. There will be no discounts on quantity sales, and additional bottles cannot be ordered from the Wine Center. Jackie Kippola will provide paper copies of the business plan. An RFP is being prepared for "exhibitry", which will be a display system for history and photos.

Martha presented an idea for consideration: While in Germany, her son found a shop where one could select a designer gift bottle and have it filled and sealed at the store. She thought that could combine the work of local artists with the local wines. Resolution moved by Jim Dennis, seconded by Frank Proto, and passed 4:0.

b) Resolution: Approval of Amendment to Contract with Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce – Tourism Promotion 2007-2008 Special Projects – Addition to agenda. Background information was provided with the agenda. Resolution moved by Frank, seconded by Jim. Tyke offered help of BOCES class in construction of kiosks. Resolution passed 4:0.

c) Pony Sculpture Update – Jackie Kippola explained the metal sculpture at the west end of the Commons is on loan from the artists. The Chamber of Commerce has received a request to help purchase it. The City has public art parameters, but other municipalities do not. Outreach materials are being developed for the towns and villages, including background, checklist and sample resolution. Initial contact will be through TCCOG. STPB will present the materials to PDEQ at the September or October meeting. Jackie said any agreement that the County would enter into would include a hold harmless clause.

d) Community Arts Partnership Update – Dick Charsky said he is enjoying the interim directorship of CAP and provided handouts on 2007 programs. A new Director will probably be named in September following a careful selection process. Dick reviewed the status of the stabilization grants, which have provided financial stability and organizational strength; the program will now move on to the capacity building phase for most involved agencies. Dick attended the NYS Council on the Arts recently and described our room tax program, which impressed other attendees.

4) Ithaca Downtown Partnership

a) Presentation and Discussion on possibility of Tompkins County rejoining Partnership – History of the program and roles of property owners were provided by Joe Gaylord and Gary Ferguson, and handouts were provided. The importance of IDP relates to downtown Ithaca being the major small business center, the County seat, and an area with a goal of density. The County's most diverse businesses are in the City; it is a center for arts and entertainment, and is considered the emotional and social heart of the community. It was suggested that the County rejoin IDP and participate financially with a contribution of \$10,000. County membership contributions – which got up to \$11,000 or \$12,000 -- were started when the new public library opened and the Woolworth's site came off the tax rolls. Jackie Kippola will help Gary work within the County budget process with the proposal. Frank pointed out that when the County was a member of IDP, we also had the Commercial Center Revitalization Program for rural communities. The Commons, other City spots, and rural communities all qualify for Beautification grants from room tax money.

5) Public Transportation

a) Resolution: Authorizing 2007 Section 5307 Federal Transit Administration Grant for TCAT and Tompkins County – Moved by Jim, seconded by Tyke. Amended to correct numbers in chart. Passed by vote of 3 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention. Frank abstained because he is on the TCAT board of directors and they did not approve this specific resolution.

b) Resolution: Sponsoring Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc. (TCAT) for New York State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) Program – Moved by Tyke, seconded by Jim and passed 4:0.

c) Resolution: Resolution Authorizing New York State DOT Master Mass Transportation Capital Project Supplemental Agreement #1 for 2007 – TCAT, Inc. – Per request prior to the meeting, the draft provided with the agenda was separated into parts 1 and 2. Dollar figure amended in resolved clause. Moved by Jim, seconded by Tyke and passed 4:0.

Addition of Resolution: Resolution Authorizing New York State DOT Master Mass Transportation capital Project Supplemental Agreement #2 for 2007 – TCAT, Inc. – This is the portion removed from draft of prior resolution, and pertains to the construction of the City Center Project which needs to be a separate construction contract per NYSDOT. Moved by Jim, seconded by Frank and passed 4:0.

d) Report: Implementation of Tompkins County's Job Access/Reverse Commute Program in 2007 & 2008 – Dwight Mengel provided a handout. He is in the process of coordinating Social Services/Public Transportation programs. An intern worked at ITCTC this summer to find out what grant programs are available and how they match our needs. There are currently applications in for seven programs. Some of the programs being addressed are ridesharing (an internet program that matches carpoolers), mobility needs, subscription van to extend TCAT rural routes, work-related TANF transportation, RideWise consumer education program with Cooperative Extension, one-to-one resolution of problems, work with employers, and attempts to get pre-tax designation for bus pass expenses.

7) Committee Administration

a) Approval of Minutes from 7/9 and 7/17 – Minutes of 7/9 moved by Tyke, seconded by Frank, amended and passed 4:0. Minutes of 7/17 moved by Tyke, seconded by Jim and passed 4:0.

6) Environmental Management Council

a) Primer on Wind Energy – This item was postponed because speakers were not present.

b) **Resolution:** In Support of the Enfield Energy Wind Project – Resolution moved by Frank, seconded by Jim. Discussion ensued about need for financial analysis and other specifics about the state of the art of wind energy, this project in particular, and how projects in other areas are proceeding with technology and funding. Committee members asked staff to look for examples of how other counties are using and/or investing in wind energy. It was suggested that perhaps such a project could be appropriate for support from the IDA. Motion withdrawn and resolution tabled. Jackie Kippola pointed out that Tompkins County purchases energy through MEGA in a competitive bid process.

7) Committee Administration (Continued)

b) Reschedule October and November Meetings – Since regular meeting dates fall on holidays in October and November, October 18th and November 15th were selected. Kathy Wilsea will contact Pam Mackesey about her availability.

8) Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5: 20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Dept.