

**Facilities and Infrastructure Committee  
Special Meeting  
January 15, 2008  
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, Chair; D. Randall; D. Kiefer (arrived 4:12); K. Luz Herrera; P. Mackesey  
Staff: E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; D. Squires, Finance Director; S. Whicher, County Administrator; A. LeMaro, Facilities Director; J. Wood, County Attorney; C. Nelson, Public Works Administrator; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature  
Guest: T. Ashmore, Ithaca Journal

**Call to Order**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. She stated the purpose of the meeting was to bring forward resolutions regarding the proposed Health Department Building.

**Addition(s) to or Withdrawal(s) from the Agenda**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne stated the agenda item dealing with the proposed Lansing Sewer district and potential inclusion of some Airport Property is being postponed to the January 17, 2008 meeting.

**Health Department Resolutions**

**RESOLUTION NO. – MAKING A NEGATIVE DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE IN RELATION TO RESOLUTION NO. 10 OF 2008, APPROVING THE ACQUISITION (PURCHASE AND LEASE) OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 55 BROWN ROAD, VILLAGE OF LANSING, NEW YORK FOR USE BY THE TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Randall.

Ms. Herrera said she believes further discussion and review should be completed, particularly with regard to any potential addition at the site and what environmental impacts they may have. She expressed concerns relating to the elimination of adequate conference room area and will not support the resolution.

Ms. Mackesey said she will support the resolution and does not believe potential additions are applicable at this time and that the present building will support the Health Department programs.

Mr. Randall indicated that considering a future addition does not necessarily indicate an immediate need. The building review has indicated that it will fit the immediate and future needs of the Health Department without an addition at this time. He will support the resolution.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne inquired who is the authority for the negative declaration. Mr. Marx noted there have been some amendments to the Environmental Assessment form; it does indicate Tompkins County is the authority. He reviewed the amendments suggested (Part II, C1 and C7) by Ms. Kiefer, stating they are not substantive and are to clarify certain aspects.

Ms. Kiefer arrived at this time.

Ms. Herrera again strongly objected to the resolution, expressing her opinion that it is premature to do so. She believes the additions will be taken into consideration and that the present environmental assessment does not take this possibility into account. She believes the process needs to be clearer and that better comparisons be made of how the project will proceed.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked whether the building use by the Health Department for programs, particularly with the use of various chemicals and/or medications, should be considered during the negative declaration process. Mr. Marx indicated that as defined by the State Environmental Quality Review, there would not be any significant impact; the building would primarily have the same office use, and the handling of medical waste would be completed in the same manner as at the Health Department's present location.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 3 (Legislators Kiefer, Mackesey, and Randall); Noes – 2 (Legislators Herrera and McBean-Clairborne). RESOLUTION APPROVED.

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 10 of 2008 would approve the acquisition (purchase and lease) of property located at 55 Brown Road in the Village of Lansing, New York for use by the Tompkins County Health Department after vacating its present location in Biggs Building B at 401 Harris B. Dates Drive, Ithaca, NY, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature has reviewed and accepted as adequate a Short Environmental Assessment Form, which finds no significant impacts associated with the Action, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, That Resolution No. 10 of 2008 is an Unlisted action,

RESOLVED, further, That the Tompkins County Legislature hereby determines that the acquisition of property at 55 Brown Road in the Village of Lansing for use by the Tompkins County Health Department will not have a significant negative impact on the environment, requiring no further environmental review,

RESOLVED, further, That the Tompkins County Legislature hereby issues a "Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance" in accordance with SEQRA for Resolution No. 10 of 2008.

**SEQR ACTION:** (Short Environmental Assessment Form and Negative Declaration on file with the Clerk of the Legislature.)

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**RESOLUTION NO. – APPROVING THE ACQUISITION (PURCHASE AND LEASE) OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 55 BROWN ROAD, VILLAGE OF LANSING, NEW YORK, FOR USE BY THE TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Randall.

Ms. Kiefer spoke of having read the lease/purchase agreement and having a subsequent meeting with Deputy County Attorney Stephen Flash, to discuss language she believes is appropriate for the lease, specifically that Cornell University would not have objections to energy-efficient modifications to the existing building or future additions that are not presently in the Cornell University land-use criteria. She said Mr. Flash had indicated he would contact Cornell University to inquire if the amendments were acceptable, however no response has been received. Mr. Wood also said he did not believe there would be any objection to the inclusion of language indicating a desire to consider energy-efficient options.

Ms. Herrera strongly objected to the resolution, stating she believes there is a great deal of information that should be provided before the project moves forward, particularly a full comparison of the true cost of the Brown Road building to the originally proposed new building at the Biggs site. She expressed concern that the process has been flawed and is rushed and could have consequences in the future as a result.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne noted there are other Legislators who may have questions regarding the direct cost and full needs of the Health Department, and there are others who believe all their concerns or questions have been addressed. She would like to respect the fact that individuals may have questions, as well as those who would like to vote. She too has additional questions and therefore will not support the resolution.

Ms. Kiefer said she has looked at the lease as well as had conversations with Cornell University staff members regarding her concerns and is reasonably assured to the point of being comfortable supporting the resolution. She noted that her initial desire was to provide a new building for the Health Department; however, when faced with the possibility to save taxpayers significant money and address and advance our ability to address problems at the Public Safety building, she will support the resolution to bring it forward to the full Legislature.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne noted that at this time it is unknown whether it will truly be a savings to taxpayers, or if so, how much of a savings it represents.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 3 (Legislators Kiefer, Mackesey, and Randall); Noes – 2 (Legislators Herrera and McBean-Clairborne). RESOLUTION APPROVED.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Health Department needs to be relocated from its present site at Biggs Building B, 401 Harris B. Dates Drive, Ithaca, NY, due to the building's deteriorating condition and estimated renovation costs, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department Building Committee, a special Legislature committee, was charged to bring to the Legislature a set of location choices for a new Health Department building, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department Building Committee forwarded a set of location choices that recommended the construction of a new building across from the Biggs building site, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature decided to select the property owned by Cornell Real Estate and located at 55 Brown Road in the Village of Lansing, New York as the preferred site for the relocation of the Health Department, and

WHEREAS, a new committee, the Health Department Building Construction Committee comprised of stakeholders including Legislators, Health Department managers and staff, and Public Works staff responsible for the renovation/construction and maintenance of the building was created by the Legislature and charged with the responsibilities of taking part in selection of a design team, working with that team to ensure that the building meets the needs of the programs, staff and public who will use it, working within the adopted administrative policies regarding space standards, working within the established budget in the County Capital Program, moving the project forward to the design and renovation/construction phases needed to accommodate the Health Department's needs, and ensuring that the building will be energy efficient, cost efficient, and in accordance with the County's commitment to sound health and environmental standards, and

WHEREAS, legislative actions required and recommended by the Health Department Building Construction Committee to accomplish its charge must be brought to the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee for action and, as appropriate, forwarding to the Legislature, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department Building Construction Committee has reviewed the consultant's building evaluation and conceptual floor plans and has reported to the Facilities and

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Infrastructure Committee that after renovations/construction and/or additions, the facility will be adequate to meet the present and future needs of the Health Department, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, That the building at 55 Brown Road be acquired (purchase and lease) for the amount of \$3,000,000,

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee is authorized to execute all contracts or agreements necessary to accomplish the acquisition.

**SEQR ACTION:** Unlisted (Short Environmental Assessment Form and Negative Declaration on file with the Clerk of the Legislature.)

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Mrs. McBean-Clairborne suggested that Mr. Marx, Mr. Wood, and Mr. LeMaro find out the estimated costs associated with additions if required at the Legislature meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature