

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM
125 East Court Street

MINUTES

Members Attending:

Name		Representation
Mina Amundsen	P	At-Large
Martha Armstrong	E	Economic Development
Michelle Berry	E	At-Large
Todd Bittner	E	Natural Environment
Will Burbank		Planning Committee
Dick Coogan	E	Local Planning (non-urban)
Sue Cosentini	P	Business
Rick Couture		Education
Fernando deAragon	P	Transportation
John Gutenberger	E	Education

Name		Representation
Dave Herrick	P	Facilities/Infrastructure
David Kay		Local Planning (urban)
Gay Nicholson		At-Large
Monika Roth		Agriculture
Kathy Schlather	P	Human Services
John Spence	P	Housing
Rob Steuteville	P	Built Environment Design
Scott Whitham	E	Cultural & Historic Pres.
Andy Zepp	P	Land Pres/Public Land Mgmt
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>

Others Present – Joan Jurkowich (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & Community Sustainability), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by the Vice Chair, Andy Zepp. There were no changes to the agenda.

Accessing the Housing/Transportation Affordability Index (<http://htaindex.org>) – PAB member Rob Steuteville said he feels this is one of the most useful planning tools created. It covers 80 to 90% of the USA and drills down to Census blocks in different areas. When the index was created, affordability was considered by location, with no consideration for transportation costs. Transportation became a factor in the last ten years as gas prices increased. The index now factors more information into transportation costs. John Spence asked if it provides information that could direct future development, and Rob said yes, because so many factors are included. He showed how to use the maps, which appear as side-by-side graphics, one for housing data and one for transportation data. He summarized by saying it is a dramatic tool which shows correlation with density.

TCPD Work Program – Joan Jurkowich and Ed Marx provided information for the draft document that was distributed with the agenda. Ed commented that more and more aspects of the Work Program are being guided by the strategies that have been developed from the Comprehensive Plan. In the update of the CompPlan, the plan will be reviewed and action items will be updated. Joan pointed out that we now have several years of data in the Indicators of Success documents, and it will all be analysed. Maybe at the next PAB meeting there will be discussion on what membes feel should be included in the CompPlan update. Ed said the Climate Showcase Communities project will have an outreach component this year.

Updates on Projects and Programs – Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Plan: The plan has been submitted to NYSERDA for two levels of review – details and big picture. Ed is not sure what to expect, as this is the first draft plan in NYS. He now believes the grant program will be part of the regional funding opportunities and part of the mid-year application for funding. Although parameters are not established yet, we do know a grant application can't be for extra funding for existing programs and must have positive greenhouse gas implications. Joan pointed out our "region" has no clear leadership to apply for funding and shepherd concepts to completion. We may continue to work with the consortium that was created for the purpose of developing this plan. Fernando De Aragon said he is encountering the same problem with regional transportation efforts. Ed expects Cleaner Greener to begin with a group of demonstration and pilot projects for others to follow.

Comments on Proposed City of Ithaca Zoning Changes: Height Limits in Downtown and MLK/State Street Corridor: TCPD staff has made preliminary comments. This proposal from the City doesn't match the Downtown Ithaca Alliance strategy, and the City's CompPlan is not complete. Several County properties would be affected by the zoning and three of them have solar panels. Ed feels the City needs a policy on solar access because, without that, property owners will be reluctant to use solar panels that may ultimately end up in the shade. The City needs analysis of how square foot volume corresponds to demand, and how it affects other parts of the City, and this analysis is not appropriate before completion of the CompPlan. They also need visual and transportation impacts analysis. Under the proposed zoning, Restaurant Row (Aurora Street) would neighbor areas with 100 foot height limit allowed, which might encourage tear down and rebuild of Restaurant Row, and leave the sidewalk dining in the shade. The City's Planning and Development Committee sent the draft zoning back to staff for changes. TCPD will have an opportunity for formal review. Fernando estimated the City's CompPlan process will take another year. Dooley Kiefer encouraged TCPD contact with the City Planning Department for regular dialog.

Commissioner's Report – Ed reported that staff assembled a 2012 accomplishments list:

- Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Plan: completion of draft document
- Conservation and Development Focus Areas Strategies completed and endorsed by County Legislature
- 20-Year Capital Plan Update adopted by County Legislature
- Climate Showcase Communities: Issues RFP for Biggs project, and two partners broke ground
- Housing Fund had two successful rounds for 165 affordable housing units
- 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan completed and adopted by County Legislature
- Provided staff support for \$213,000 in Tourism Grants
- Conservation Reserve Fund implemented for Shindagin Hollow project with Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Interns completed analysis for Solar, Wind and Biomass capacity
- NYS Purchase of Development Rights Bensvue project in Lansing closed
- Staff comments were sent to DEC on the sGEIS for gas drilling
- County green energy projects advanced

Staff submitted extensive comments to DEC on high volume hydrofracturing. The Sustainability Center is expected to open by the end of February. The Department is recruiting to fill the vacancy caused by Leslie Schill's resignation.

Announcements – Sue Cosentini provided an update on Aurora Pocket Neighborhood, said they are currently drywalling all three units. A blower door test and thermal imaging were conducted for one unit, with better than expected results. They are using air source heat pumps, which are inexpensive and the pump can reverse for air conditioning. The building envelopes are a bigger investment than the heat pumps. Solar panels will provide electricity to operate the heat pumps. EcoVillage at Ithaca is using similar insulation, and electricity at EVI will come from giant photovoltaic arrays. All of the Aurora Pocket Neighborhood units are sold. Sue's next project is being designed with more solar power, as it becomes increasingly affordable. Dooley asked if neighbors' trees might shade the solar panels, and did Sue secure assurances from her neighbors? Sue said she did not, but she doesn't expect tall development in Fall Creek. Ed pointed out we need to begin considering vegetation in planning, and what energy sources work in different locations. The orientation of Biggs and EVI will take advantage of solar access.

Kathy Schlather announced the annual Homeless Count will take place for 1/25/13, 7 AM Friday to 7 AM Saturday. Surveys can be conducted in the two weeks around the date to ask where target citizens were on the Count date.

John Spence announced Better Housing for Tompkins County recently received three NYS Homes and Community Renewal grants: \$150,000 Access to Home for ramps, etc., \$300,000 HOME rehabilitation, and \$187,000 NYS Affordable Housing Corporation for large rehabilitation projects.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on April 24, 2013.