

1 05/27/15

2 **PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**  
3 **Wednesday, May 27, 2015**  
4 **SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**  
5 **125 East Court Street**

6 **MEETING MINUTES**

7  
8 **Members Attending:**

Name		Representation
Mina Amundsen	P	At-Large
Martha Armstrong	P	Economic Development
Todd Bittner	P	Natural Environment
Carol Chock	E	Planning Committee
Dick Coogan	P	Local Planning (non-urban)
Sue Cosentini	P	Business
Fernando de Aragón	P	Transportation
John Gutenberger	A	Education
Dave Herrick	E	Facilities/Infrastructure
David Kay	P	Local Planning (urban)

Name		Representation
Gay Nicholson	E	At-Large
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Kathy Schlather	P	Human Services
Rob Steuteville	A	Built Environment Design
Andy Zepp	A	Land Pres/Public Land Mgmt
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<b>Others Present</b>		
Ed Marx	P	Commissioner of Planning
Katie Borgella	P	Deputy Commissioner
Joan Jurkovich	P	Planning Administrator
Jennifer Turner	P	Administrative Assistant

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11 **Also in Attendance:**

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13 **Call to Order & Changes to the Agenda** – Martha Armstrong called the meeting to order at approximately  
14 9:10 AM.

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16 **Approval of Minutes from March 25, 2015** – Dick Coogan made the motion to approve the minutes from  
17 March 25, 2015 seconded by Dave Herrick. March meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote. Final  
18 minutes will be available on the Planning Department website: [www.tompkins-co.org/planning/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/) under  
19 advisory boards. Comments on the summary are expected next week.

20  
21 **Comprehensive Plan Summary**- Ed Marx opened the discussion on the proposed Comprehensive Plan  
22 Summary by providing background on the draft including ways that it may be used such as a possible  
23 training tool for local planning boards.

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25 Members discussed the specific components that tie together throughout the summary. Emphasis on  
26 infrastructure and walkability and affordable housing, and the link to public transportation were noted as  
27 important components within the land use section of the summary. Including text boxes in the individual  
28 sections were discussed as a way to connect different aspects within the plan. Regional coordination was  
29 discussed as an essential factor in the clarification between county and municipal roles. Members suggested  
30 including a more clear explanation regarding factors for determining key economic sectors in the summary.

31  
32 **Communication Strategy Discussion** – Ed Marx introduced the idea of creating a Tompkins County  
33 Planning Department online newsletter that would be circulated via email to local planners and other  
34 interested parties on a monthly basis. Board members discussed posting a brief three sentence opener or  
35 headline on each topic for new work and upcoming projects that would link to another website for more  
36 information. Suggestions to include information on national stories or headlines related to the work within  
37 Tompkins County and information reinforcing the results of studies conducted were made. Members  
38 discussed using a more marketable approach in order to draw the attention and educate the general public on  
39 the work of the Planning Department. Including language in the newsletter that would aim to reconfirm the  
40 overarching principles of the Comprehensive Plan was noted. This was suggested in order to convey the

41 purpose for actions and how recent projects or short term goals coincide with the long range goals of the  
42 county. Discussions centered on whether there would be capability of tracking user interest of topics on a  
43 per click basis, and including areas for feedback from readers or a brief survey semi-annually.  
44

45 **Upstate Revitalization Initiative/ CFA Proposals** – Ed Marx reported on the Upstate Revitalization  
46 Initiative, noting that consolidated funding application round is open and that proposals are due July 31<sup>st</sup>.  
47 Regional plans for the initiative are due October 15<sup>th</sup>, awards will be announced to the winning regions in  
48 late fall. It was reported that a different process in the CFA round offers a slightly modified application for  
49 projects that would be part of the winning regional competition if the applicant wins. A project would then  
50 only be funded if it is included as a regional program. He went on to report on the prerequisites that a  
51 community will now have to meet in order to be considered for funding within some components of the  
52 Cleaner Greener program. Examples such as the adoption of the streamlined solar permitting, streamlined  
53 electric vehicle charging permitting, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program, Green Fleet, Green  
54 Building policies, and completing the greenhouse gas emissions inventory as well as setting a goal were  
55 noted. Tompkins County was discussed as having met the threshold to apply for funding by having  
56 completed 4 of the 6 prerequisites.  
57

58 Ed went on to report on the Planning Department’s submission of preliminary white papers to TCAD for the  
59 Upstate Revitalization program for the 5 year funding cycle. Submissions for 21st Century Energy included  
60 investments in the region to advance energy systems in line with initiatives of the Public Service  
61 Commission. Local projects could include expansion of Heat Smart Tompkins, and further expansion related  
62 to energy efficiencies at the Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport facilities. Agri-culinary tourism strategies,  
63 destination trails, the creation of a regional forestry initiative, and destination trails were noted as possible  
64 initiatives for the Cleaner Greener program. Destination Trails is an initiative that proposes regional build-  
65 out of area trails as an attraction for visitors. Meetings with State Parks, and both the City and Town of  
66 Ithaca are underway regarding the Black Diamond Trail and the trails to Varna and Brooktondale that would  
67 be extensions to South Hill and East Hill Recreation Ways as well as a trail head at Jennings Pond for the  
68 Finger Lakes Trail. The City of Ithaca has submitted a white paper for urban revitalization through Centers  
69 of Innovation, identifying four areas where urban investment in development is being focused. Key areas of  
70 interest were noted as the Commons, College town, Emerson Chain Works, and the waterfront district. The  
71 Department of Transportation relocation was noted as another possibility for a project within urban  
72 revitalization or another longer range project. An energy work-group meeting will take this Friday in  
73 Binghamton.  
74

75 **Commissioner’s Report** – Ed Marx reported that the New York Prize micro-grid feasibility study  
76 application has been submitted for the proposed micro-grid system that aims to produce local energy  
77 generation that would allow an area to become independent of the grid. Key facilities that will be covered in  
78 the event of an outage were noted as County critical facilities such as the Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport,  
79 Tompkins County Health Department, Public Safety Facility, and the Tompkins County Department of  
80 Emergency Response. The Business and Technology Park and healthcare campus will also be included in the  
81 microgrid. NYSERDA has approved 40 projects, and has hired a separate consultant that will be conducting  
82 an analysis on the cost benefit on all of the projects. The micro-grid system was discussed as including  
83 Photovoltaics, combined heat and power, as well as bio-fuel and other alternatives to natural gas. A micro-  
84 grid kick-off meeting will be scheduled in the next few days; completion of the study is expected in the next  
85 eight months. • The tax foreclosure properties at the Ithaca Falls have been held out of the tax foreclosure  
86 auction by the City of Ithaca for consideration as additions to the natural area. They have requested that  
87 Tompkins County waive the county taxes. The Government Operations Committee has approved the request,  
88 to be followed by the approval of the Legislature. • The Tompkins County Planning Department submitted  
89 comments on the City of Ithaca’s Comprehensive Plan draft. Areas for collaboration were noted. Climate  
90 adaptation and hazard mitigation related to threats with flooding and the increased frequency of flood events  
91 in the region, and more efforts related to the encouragement of alternative energy were the two key areas  
92 suggested for increased focus. Recommendations in the City’s plan that would work well with Tompkins  
93 County’s plans were noted as infill, mixed use development, housing needs, health and wellness, stormwater  
94 management, and water resource protection. Carbon tax on demolition, a downtown center for the visual and

95 performing arts, and local ownership of the power-grid were noted as not a priority from the Planning  
96 Department's perspective.

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98 **Recruitment of New Members** - Ed Marx reported on an upcoming press release set to go out seeking  
99 applications for vacancies of At-Large, Cultural and Historic Resources, Housing, and Higher Education  
100 seats on the Planning Advisory Board. A broad approach to solicitation will be taken, although member  
101 recommendations are welcome. Application review will take place prior to appointment by the Legislature.  
102 The press release will be sent out to members of the board and can be shared. It was noted that the At-large  
103 seat should be filled by someone that brings a different perspective, knowledge base, and or diversity to the  
104 board.

105  
106 **Announcements** – Monika Roth announced that the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan update is  
107 available on the website and encouraged board members to provide feedback. A short presentation of the  
108 plan will be presented at the county board meeting on Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Tompkins County Public  
109 Library, and a public hearing will be July 7<sup>th</sup>. • Todd Bittner announced the approval for grant funding by the  
110 Tourism Program for a comprehensive trails website. • Sue Cosentini announced the workshop on bio-char  
111 and mushrooms that she and Sean Dembrosky of Edible Acres will be hosting on Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup> from 12:00  
112 to 2:00PM at Cornell Cooperative Extension's Education Center. • Fernando DeAragon reported on the  
113 delays with the grant funding by NYSERDA for the vehicle charging stations. He noted that the contract may  
114 be signed in the next few weeks; the expected timeframe for the project is one year and will include the  
115 analysis of all 5 proposed locations. Fernando went on to announce Rideshare's Zimride program has been  
116 purchased by Enterprise Rental Car Company, and noted his optimism for regional partnerships.

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118 **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:28 AM.

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120 Respectfully submitted,

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122 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant  
123 Tompkins County Planning Department

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125 Minutes adopted by PAB on July 22, 2015

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