

1 03/25/15

2 **PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**
3 **Wednesday, March 25, 2015**
4 **SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**
5 **125 East Court Street**

6 **MEETING MINUTES**

7
8 **Members Attending:**

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

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

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11 **Also in Attendance:** Debbie Teeter, Cornell Cooperative Extension

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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 January 28, 2015** – Gay Nicholson made the motion to approve the minutes
17 from January 28, 2015 seconded by Dick Coogan with an abstention made on behalf of David Herrick.
18 January meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote. Final minutes will be available on the Planning
19 Department website: www.tompkins-co.org/planning/ under advisory boards.

20
21 **Tompkins County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan** - Monika Roth reported that Tompkins
22 County received funding to update the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan; the last update was
23 completed and approved by the state in 1998. The State’s interest in updating the plan will be to focus on
24 target properties for farmland protection and the more recent interest in economic development strategies that
25 tie into the regional plans for economic development. Monika encouraged members of the Planning Advisory
26 Board to provide feedback on the draft.

27
28 Debbie Teeter provided an overview of the “Strategy” section of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection
29 Plan. She went on to report that in 2013, agricultural sector focus groups were created to include small
30 groups of farmers working in dairy, livestock, horticulture, and equine sectors. From the information
31 collected, 6 major themes or goals were created and from those strategies and action steps were developed.
32 The 6 themes were noted as agriculture economic development, local foods, land use policy and regulation,
33 agricultural awareness, environmental quality, and future farmer workforce issues. Public meetings have
34 taken place in order to get feedback from farmers and to better prioritize the strategies and action steps.

35
36 Discussions centered on the continued need for education on agricultural district laws and farmers perception
37 of barriers in relation to zoning. Zoning overlay districts, good land management practices, and focus on
38 environmental standards were noted as a priority of the plan. Members questioned the nature of the proposed
39 outreach in educating farmers. The proposed trainings were discussed as a bi-annual workshop that would

40 involve town and county officials and Agriculture & Markets. The workshops will provide an overview of
41 agriculture district laws in relation to local laws; a question and answer section would be included. It was
42 noted that by including town agricultural plans and having active agriculture committees, farmers may be
43 able to focus more on agricultural strategies rather than on avoiding violations.

44
45 Key concerns of land access issues in Tompkins County were discussed as the prices per acre have increased.
46 Members suggested including land accessibility education as well as outreach to the general public.
47 Including sector profiles with in-depth descriptions and highlighting representative operations was suggested.
48 Members discussed larger-scale CAFO farming and expressed concerns that those operations may drive costs
49 for local farmers with smaller operations. Smaller scale land needs are currently being addressed by the
50 Finger Lakes Land Link, a website that coordinates people that are looking for or offering land.

51
52 The succession plans for farms and what determines growth were questioned. Expansions through rented
53 land and family to family or non-relative transfers were discussed. Key issues included the hiring and
54 acquiring of land, labor regulations and land use issues. Members suggested strengthening the climate
55 challenge and outreach related to invasive plants in order to make both more recognized amongst farmers
56 and the community.

57
58 Members questioned whether migrant workers and wage issues are addressed in the plan. Global conditions
59 over the next few decades and the concern of human population were discussed. Members noted the
60 importance of keeping good farm land in use and suggested organizing a land bank in order to hold land until
61 a farm buyer is located. Quality of life and health issues were discussed out of concerns for land owners that
62 live downwind from farms.

63
64 A meeting will take place with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Planning Advisory Board members
65 who had volunteered to be actively involved in the review: Todd Bittner, Mina Amundsen, and Dave
66 Herrick. An updated Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan draft will be available at Agriculture and
67 Farmland meeting on April 22nd.

68
69 **Smart Energy Communities and Other Energy Work Updates** – Ed Marx reported on the discussions
70 that have taken place between the City and Town of Ithaca, Tompkins County, Cornell University, and
71 Iberdrola regarding projects requested by the Public Service Commission for demonstrating the elements of
72 the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) process. The pilot project of a smart energy community would
73 demonstrate deployment of distributed energy systems in efforts to reduce carbon emissions as well as
74 energy demand reductions through smart metering. The utilities over the next few years will be submitting
75 plans to the Public Service Commission on how these changes will be made. Ithaca is currently being
76 considered by NYSEG as a possible location for the demonstration. Invitations went out to Cornell
77 University, the City and Town of Ithaca, and Tompkins County to a session in Utah sponsored by the Rocky
78 Mountain Institute, where eleven teams from around the country worked with a team of experts to
79 conceptualize their ideas and accelerate the change in electrical generation and distribution in the country.

80
81 Ed went on to report on the request for qualification that Tompkins County put out to hire a consultant to do
82 an application to the NY Prize, New York State's microgrid competition. An application will be submitted
83 for potential microgrid implementation in the area near the airport. The purpose of the microgrid would be
84 resiliency to keep critical facilities operating in the event of an outage. Several critical facilities in the area
85 are the Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport, Tompkins County Health Department, Public Safety Facility, and
86 the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response. Generation capacity possibilities were discussed
87 as a combination of combined heat and power, renewables, and demand management; geothermal is also
88 being considered. The three phases of the New York Prize competition were discussed: the feasibility phase,
89 detailed design and engineering (higher level of funding), and the last step would be the actual build out of
90 the microgrid.

91
92 The Energize New York program will be going to the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality
93 Committee, followed by adoption by the Tompkins County Legislature and City of Ithaca. This would give

94 commercial properties the ability to obtain financing for efficiency and renewable projects on existing
95 buildings that would be low-interest financing re-paid as an assessment on their tax bill. This opportunity
96 will be made available state-wide with the option of participating by tax-lien jurisdiction.
97

98 Solar Tompkins next efforts will focus on education, outreach and development on air- and ground-source
99 heat pumps; a grant has been received from the Park Foundation that will make funding available. Planning
100 staff and Tompkins County Area Development met with Sara Culotta from Taitem Engineering in order to
101 conceptualize how to assist businesses directly in assessing their energy needs.
102

103 Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport will undergo renovations to the terminal. Energy modeling of the options
104 for the terminal and options for the roof will be addressed.
105

106 The Public Service Commission issued an order on the Reforming the Energy Vision with a clear
107 explanation of what direction they will be moving in based on the comments received. Key areas of interest
108 will focus on engaging customers in their energy use and demand management. Currently the pilot program
109 discussed previously is being conceived as involving 12,000 customers between both the City and Town of
110 Ithaca.
111

112 **Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported that three out of four remaining RFEI respondents submitted
113 responses to the request for proposals for the Old Library. Final submissions were received from Franklin
114 Properties, Rochester Cornerstone Group, and Travis Hyde Properties. • Another look will be taken at
115 possibilities for Biggs property. Discussions centered on the possibility for a smaller-scale residential project
116 or selling the property. • Discussions have taken place with Cornell Cooperative Extension and a professor at
117 Cornell University regarding the creation of a regional forestry initiative. Some of the ideas discussed were
118 certification of sustainable products and how to engage property owners on active management. • The
119 Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan will be published in final form on the Tompkins County website in
120 the next month. • Approval from the Housing Fund Program Oversight Committee was received on the
121 property located at 210 Hancock Street. At the next Planning Energy and Environmental Quality meeting,
122 considerations will be made regarding Tompkins County's role in trail development and whether the
123 Planning Department will become more engaged in the process. Requests for additional support with key
124 areas such as East Hill Recreation way to Varna and extensions of South Hill to Brooktondale are being
125 considered. • In a recent meeting, the state reconfirmed their interest in the Black Diamond Trail South; land
126 owner issues regarding purchase agreement or right-of-way are some of the issues that Tompkins County
127 may assist with.
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130 **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:33 AM.
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132 Respectfully submitted,
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134 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
135 Tompkins County Planning Department
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137 Minutes adopted by PAB on May 27, 2015
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