

**PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Wednesday, October 26, 2011**  
**SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**125 East Court Street**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Mina Amundsen, Todd Bittner, Dick Coogan, John Gutenberger, David Kay, Dooley Kiefer (Associate Member), Pam Mackesey, Kathy Schlather, John Spence, Rob Steuteville

**Members Excused** -- Martha Armstrong, Sue Cosentini, Fernando de Aragon, Dave Herrick, Gay Nicholson, Monika Roth, Scott Whitham, Andy Zepp

**Member Absent** – Rick Couture

**Others Present** – Katie Borgella (TC Planning Dept.), Joan Jurkowich (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & Community Sustainability), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by the Chair, Mina Amundsen. There were no changes to the agenda.

**Proposal for RFP for Biggs Property** – Ed Marx provided a quick history, saying PAB was involved in the plans for disposition of this land when Tompkins County moved the Health Department to Brown Road. It has been subdivided, and Cayuga Medical Center purchased the former Health Department portion. The County still owns the vacant land and the building known as K House. CMC is considering a combined heat/power plant for district energy. The entrance from Route 96 was identified in the Route 96 Corridor Study as a central location for nodal development.

The draft concept distributed prior to the meeting has been evolving for a couple years. The County decided to sell or lease all West Hill Property. When applying for the Climate Showcase Communities grant, this site was identified as a possible location for model development along with Aurora Dwelling Circle and EcoVillage TREE. As part of the grant, the project team hopes to translate the EcoVillage energy efficiency concepts more broadly to this site and find ways to codify EcoVillage concepts to more mainstream models and develop new model zoning. Rob Morache authored the draft document and is working on graphics to represent the concepts. He is willing to conduct a workshop for interested PAB members. When the County initially announced plans for development of the Biggs B site, project goals included providing more housing for the community and modeling principles.

Working with the map, Ed said we are looking for cluster development that creates a buffer at the north and west edges. Neighbors are always concerns about change, and this would create a permanent open space buffer. The parts of the parcel with forest and Federal wetlands create the buffer zones. TCAT bus service goes to CMC and a walkway would be proposed to the bus stop. When asked what the adjacent landowner on the south side thinks, Ed said she has been at some CSC advisory board meetings and is learning this project can be a good neighbor for her.

A density bonus would be suggested for the proposal scoring process. Under current zoning, the acreage could support 35 dwelling, and the project team hopes to increase that to 70. HUD guidelines are 20% affordable housing, and the project application scoring process would give extra points if more than that. This draft proposes at least 50% purchased, with the balance as rental property. They are requesting ideas on how to keep the affordable units affordable long range. TCAT service runs hourly, with extra commutes to Trumansburg. The grant requires documentation of transit, development of draft ordinances, and an education component. The project proposal was based on the EcoVillage model being modified for other sites. It is necessary to document reduced greenhouse gas emissions. EcoVillage TREE and Aurora Dwelling Circle could be completed enough to be solid models by the end of the grant period, and the Biggs

location may approach completion within that timeframe (Ed noted we have 2 ¼ years remaining). We must monitor energy use during development. CSCAB is currently reviewing draft Pedestrian Zone regulations.

Rob Steuteville asked if they are also considering the flaws at EcoVillage. Ed said they are, and will mention transportation and include other lessons learned. EcoVillage continues to improve energy efficiency. When TREE is finished, EcoVillage will be the largest size community of this type in the US. Rob said he sees a flaw in the basic concept of clustering in a remote location. Ed said EcoVillage had hoped to have more transportation options, and TREE may yield a critical mass for ride sharing. He noted many communities have provisions for developments such as EcoVillage on agriculture sites. Dooley Kiefer asked if social engineering aspects of EcoVillage will also be mentioned. Ed said those are part of the draft regulations, and sharing certain attributes creates more interaction and positive concepts. You can't zone in privacy or self-governance, but they can be encouraged through design and the homeowners organization. Joan Jurkowich noted the Biggs B property is near a major employer and as a Development Focus Area grows up they will get more of the commercial neighborhood sites that EcoVillage does not have, and Mina concurred the area would change over time. Ed added that CMC may develop their site in ways that complement the CSC proposal. David Kay said district heating is not specifically a New Urbanist idea, but is an efficiency that seems doable. Ed said CSCAB and CMC are collaborating on that analysis.

Todd Bittner recommended that open space, which is a CSC factor, be formally protected, perhaps by easement. This would prevent the buffers from being developed and make it more likely to be able to use for carbon sequestration rights. He also encouraged trails for community benefits. He pointed out if the goal is open space protection, there needs to be enough buffer for deer management under DEC regulations. And deer management is needed to keep the forest. Homeowners can waive their right to a buffer and that would retain enough space for deer management. He will email recommendations to Ed.

Ed said he will also be bringing this draft to PDEQ next week. Project requirement is 50% energy improvement, but the team seeks up to 80%. Some of the EcoVillage lessons learned are to provide meeting space and a visitor apartment in the common areas, and that means individual units can be smaller and more efficient. There also is potential in the new draft to anchor the Biggs location community with commercial business. Kathy Schlather asked about potential population. Ed responded the node could include 20,000 to 30,000 residents when built out, and this part would be 70 units x 2.5 residents, so around 175 residents. Kathy also pointed out many retirees want or need parking right next to their door, so the team will find different needs and desires in a total community. Ed said many EcoVillage residents are retired, but location of parking is not an issue there. Distance from home to parking lot is still shorter than the average walk from Wegmans to a shopper's car on a Saturday. We'll find out what developers are willing to try. Concerning marking the map with a preferred development area, Ed said this is the best way to prevent proposal submissions that would be contrary to the team's goal of using the open space to create the edge.

**Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported TCPD is close to submitting a NYSERDA Cleaner Greener grant application for our eight-county region. Joan Jurkowich, Katie Borgella and Leslie Schill have worked very hard on this application and the RFP process that identified a preferred consultant. ▪ The grant application was successful for development of a Blueway Trail, and Seneca County is the lead on the project. Kickoff will occur in November. ▪ The Village of Lansing is contracting with TCPD for staff time to help identify needs and develop an RFP for a consultant to work on the potential development area north of Rt. 13 and west of Warren Rd. ▪ On Cayuga Street near Ithaca High School there is an overflow parking spot. This is being turned into a vegetative stream buffer with a small access path to Fall Creek under the Stream Corridor Protection Program, with Scott Doyle organizing the many facets of work and volunteer groups. ▪ Efforts continue with preparation of staff comments to DEC on the dSCEIS on gas drilling. The intent is to post on our website for public reference.

**Approval of Minutes from September 28, 2011** – Minutes were not addressed due to lack of a quorum.

**Announcements** – Dick Coogan said one goal of the Rt 96 Corridor Study was to get some small, visible projects accomplished quickly. Road striping in Jacksonville was one of those, and he reported it has been

accomplished, but it took three years. David Kay reported the City of Ithaca has established their Comprehensive Plan Committee. Kirby Edmonds is chair and David is vice-chair. A public meeting next week is part of the overall process. John Spence reported he recently attended an Albany conference on rural preservation, which had bad news on all levels. Homes and Community Renewal will be the new name for the State office. Grant announcements should have been made in the spring, but now may appear in December. Some agencies are running out of money, but BHTC is OK for now. One bit of good news is that housing dollars will be used for housing project. Next year there will be a 20-point scale for approval of applications and they have to meet the parameters of the Regional Economic Development Council strategic plans. John asked how he can access minutes for the public meeting that was held at the Women's Community Building, and Ed will provide a link. John Gutenberger said he served on the regional Infrastructure committee and tried to get housing included, but many other communities didn't see housing as an issue. Rob Steuteville reported that some communities are gaining access to grant money through foundations. For example, Mobile Alabama was able to leverage their comprehensive plan into a regional plan opportunity and now they have access to foundation funding. Partners need to get organized and start the process. Ed said there was a recent Ithaca Journal article on the housing study for the City. He expects the county-wide portion to be completed in about two weeks. The City multi-family vacancy rate is 0.5%, so risk is very low here for developers. There may be an opportunity to leverage that info into the CSC proposals. The county-wide report will be distributed when it is available. Dooley Kiefer asked how Ed's presentation went at the History Center (mentioned in the September minutes), and he said there were only eight people present.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on November 30, 2011.

**Membership:**

Mina Amundsen, At-Large	Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member
Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.	Pam Mackesey, Planning Committee
Todd Bittner, Natural Environment	Gay Nicholson, At-Large
Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)	Monika Roth, Agriculture
Sue Cosentini, Business	Kathy Schlather, Human Services
Rick Couture, Education	John Spence, Housing
Fernando de Aragon, Transportation	Rob Steuteville, Built Environment Design
John Gutenberger, Education	Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres.
Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure	Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.
David Kay, Local Planning (urban)	