



Inclusion Through Diversity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Committee Supports Intensive Study to Address Energy and Economic Development Needs

The Economic Development Committee of the County Legislature today endorsed establishment of a Tompkins County Energy and Economic Development Task Force, a broad-based group which, as a result of through study and discussion over the next eight months, will recommend a strategy on how the County can achieve both near-term economic development and energy goals.

The Task Force plan is the latest step to fulfill the formal commitment, made late last year, by County Planning Commissioner Ed Marx and Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD) president Michael Stamm to collaborate on addressing long-term and immediate energy needs and emissions in ways that contribute to a vital local economy. They pledged to bring “a broad variety of voices to the discussion of community goals and strategies, as well as tangible steps to meet both energy and economic development goals,” with such community discourse “based on clear and accurate information and occur(ing) in a civil and respectful manner.”

County Legislature Chair Mike Lane then asked TCAD president Stamm to consider creating a TCAD working group to fulfill that vision. “I’ve been troubled for many months that groups in the community were talking past each other,” Chair Lane told the committee. “We know that there has to be change, but we have to make that change in a socially responsible environment...If we want to be strong and have a tax base to support the types of things we want in this community, we have to work together,” he said.

The Plan, presented to the committee today by County Administrator Joe Mareane, establishes a 15-member task force, to be chaired by Sciencenter Executive Director Charlie Trautman and made up of a balanced mix of individuals with expertise in fields including renewable and traditional energy resources, business operation, and real estate development. Stamm and Commissioner Marx will serve as non-voting members of the task force.

As detailed in its charge and described by Administrator Mareane in hid briefing memo to the committee, the Task Force over the next eight months will work to understand rapidly changing energy policy, regulatory, and market forces; the current and projected supply and demand for energy; how decisions are made regarding which mechanical/electrical systems to install; and the technical and economic feasibility of current sustainable, renewable energy systems. It will draw on the knowledge and insights of subject matter experts and from public input. The task force will issue recommendations regarding how economic growth can best be sustained over the next five years, while “putting the community on a trajectory that can meet the County’s carbon emission goals.” Staff support will be provided by TCAD and the County.

The group’s draft report and other deliverables are due January 29, 2016—about the same time as the scheduled completion of the Planning Department’s Energy Roadmap, which will support an update of the County’s 2020 Energy Strategy during 2016. Committee Chair Martha Robertson stated, “This is where the rubber meets the road,” speaking to the importance of the task force effort, in conjunction with the Energy Roadmap and other ongoing energy initiatives.

Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair, Economic Development Committee, 272-0584; Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434, 844-8313, or 844-8440; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

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