

Tompkins County Council of Governments
 Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Thursday, February 27, 2014 3:00 PM
 Scott Heyman Conference Room

Attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Fredric Dietrich	Member, Town of Danby	Present	
Herb Engman	Member - Town of Ithaca	Present	
J.R. Clairborne	Member, City of Ithaca	Present	
Elizabeth Thomas	Member - Town of Ulysses	Present	
Kate Supron	Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights	Present	
Irene Weiser	Member - Alternate, Town of Caroline	Present	
Bill Goodman	Member - Alternate, Town of Ithaca	Present	
Ann Rider	Co-Chair, Town of Enfield	Present	
Chuck Rankin	Member - Alternate, Village of Groton	Present	
Marty Petrovic	Member, Village of Trumansburg	Present	
Jim Zimmer	Member, Village of Dryden	Present	
Kelly Smith	Member, Town of Groton	Present	
Ruth Hopkins	Alternate, Town of Lansing	Present	
Jason Liefer	Alternate Representative, Town of Dryden	Present	
Joe Mareane	Tompkins County Administrator	Present	
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present	
Megan McDonald	Senior Planner	Present	
Michelle Pottorff	Minute Taker, Legislature Office	Present	

Guests: Jeff Shepardson, CDRC

Municipalities not in attendance: Village of Freeville, Village of Lansing, Tompkins County, Town of Newfield

Call to Order

Ms. Supron called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

A discussion of dog control and the Governor's budget proposal was added to the agenda. The report on a the Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy was deferred to the next meeting.

Minutes Approval

1/23/2014 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Ann Rider, Co-Chair, Town of Enfield
SECONDER:	Jim Zimmer, Member, Village of Dryden
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Thomas, Supron, Weiser, Goodman, Rider, Rankin, Petrovic, Zimmer, Smith, Hopkins, Liefer

Report from the Community Dispute Resolution Center

Mr. Shepardson provided a follow-up to the training for TCCOG members that was held last Fall entitled "Effectively Facilitating Heated Meetings". He said he has been able to provide the same

training at places across the State and has received very positive feedback. He said they had hoped to obtain money from funding sources to enable them to provide the training at no cost to participants in Tompkins County. He asked for feedback on establishing a date for 2014 for this training to be provided to elected officials but can also include planning board members, school board members, and any involved in public policy and managing an interaction with the public.

Mr. Dietrich and Mr. Engman both spoke highly of the workshop that was provided and how informative they found it. He encouraged members and other local officials to attend a session. Mr. Shepardson said the cost per participant would be \$75 for a full-day training.

Following a discussion related to the scheduling of a session it was suggested that Mr. Shepardson consider doing half-day sessions and begin with looking at Saturday, April 26 or Thursday, May 1.

It was MOVED by Mr. Engman, seconded by Ms. Weiser, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve TCCOG being a sponsor of the Effectively Facilitating Heated Meetings Workshop.

Resolution: Creation of Sustainability Subcommittee

Resolution (ID # 4750): Resolution in Support of Forming a County-Wide Task Force to Assist Municipalities in Researching, Prioritizing and Addressing Sustainability Issues (ID #4750)

Ms. Weiser encouraged members to find individuals who would be interested in participating on this Task Force and to have them contact Ms. Weiser who said this will function similarly to the Gas Drilling Task Force. Ms. Weiser questioned whether presentations by professionals be provided to the Task Force or whether they should be made to the full TCCOG membership. It was suggested that the Task Force decide which presentations would be the most appropriate for bringing to TCCOG.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Irene Weiser, Member - Alternate, Town of Caroline representativ
SECONDER:	Elizabeth Thomas, Member - Town of Ulysses representative
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Thomas, Supron, Weiser, Rider, Rankin, Petrovic, Zimmer, Smith, Hopkins, Liefer

WHEREAS economic development, environmental protection and quality of life are major concerns for local governments, and

WHEREAS, accelerating climate change increases the urgency of addressing energy use and sustainability, and

WHEREAS Tompkins County recently completed the Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan which prioritized 22 projects that will improve the economic and environmental health of the area, and reduce energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, and

WHEREAS, local governments have an important role to play in advancing sustainability efforts via policies, plans, codes in areas such as local land use, zoning, building, design, and energy codes; land acquisition, infrastructure development, and investment in transportation services, and

WHEREAS, constrained budgets and limited staff prevent many municipalities from moving forward with policies to enhance sustainability; and

WHEREAS, in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of our residents and to protect the natural environment, economic development and quality of life in our communities, municipalities in Tompkins County need to research, prioritize and act on sustainability concerns; and

WHEREAS, intermunicipal cooperation will be essential to the success of each municipality's sustainability efforts and the Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Council of Governments hereby convenes a Sustainability Task Force with the purpose of assisting municipalities within Tompkins County by gathering and disseminating information for governing bodies to use in their considerations of sustainability policies,

RESOLVED, further That the Task Force shall be referred to as the TCCOG Sustainability Task Force and shall commence work immediately,

RESOLVED, further, That other organizations within Tompkins County with an interest in this topic such as the County Planning Department, Sustainable Tompkins, Environmental Management Council and individual municipal task forces may have representation on the Sustainability Task Force as well as representatives from the governing body of each interested municipality.

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Other - Action Item: Request for Sponsorship and Funding - Educational Forum regarding the Governor's 2014 Energy Plan (ID # 4683)

Ms. Weiser said the Governor's draft 2014 New York Energy Plan sets some bold goals for clean energy and increased efficiency, however, it also predicts continued and accelerated expansion of natural gas infrastructure in New York State. An educational forum will be held on March 5th at the Public Library and will speak to the weaknesses in the plan, and how you can make effective comments to the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority. It will also be an opportunity to learn why everyone concerned about climate change and in favor of switching to renewable energy sources should make comments on this Plan.

Speakers at the forum will be:

- Jackson Morris, Senior Energy & Climate Analyst with NRDC; former senior policy analyst with Pace Law School's Energy & Climate Center. He has worked to advance clean energy policies for many years.
- Dr. Brice Smith, Associate Professor and Chair of Physics at SUNY Cortland, former senior scientist at the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. His work has focused on renewable and sustainable energy systems for over a decade.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Irene Weiser, Member - Alternate, Town of Caroline representativ
SECONDER:	Elizabeth Thomas, Member - Town of Ulysses representative
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Thomas, Supron, Weiser, Rider, Rankin, Petrovic, Zimmer, Smith, Hopkins, Liefer

The following is a vote result on the motion to approve funding for videotaping the Public Forum on the New York State Energy Plan to be held on March 5, 2014:

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Ann Rider, Co-Chair, Town of Enfield
SECONDER:	Kate Supron, Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights representative
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Thomas, Supron, Weiser, Rider, Rankin, Petrovic, Zimmer, Smith, Hopkins, Liefer

Report on "Supervising for Success" Program (ID # 4682)

Mr. Mareane reported on a Supervising for Success program the County has been offering to employees over the last few years on a voluntary basis with 20 to 40 individuals who have participated. A second level was recently added that specifically applies to supervisory issues, practices, and skill sets and it was voluntary until last year when a decision was made that it would be mandatory for anyone who wanted to become a manager. The response from individuals who have participated in these sessions have been extremely positive. The County has worked through TC3.Biz for this and had a discussion with them last week to see if this is something Tompkins Cortland Community College might open up under the County's umbrella to other municipalities within the County who want to put their supervisors through this training. The cost would be on a per user basis. The training sessions are typically a half or full-day and are approximately \$500 per participant. In 2013 the County sent 115 people through both semesters of training and paid \$52,000. He asked that members not focus on the cost at this point. Mr. Mareane said he would expect that smaller municipalities cannot afford to develop a training program for the few supervisors that they have but it may be affordable to participate as part of a larger program. He asked if there is interest by members in the County continuing discussions about this with TC3.Biz and to include others in the discussion with a report back to TCCOG on the progress.

Members of TCCOG were very interested in exploring this further. Mr. Mareane will meet with TC3.Biz and will report back at the next meeting.

Discussion of How to Support the County's Efforts on Tax Relief

Mr. Engman said in order to effect this year's Legislation that will be determined by the budget cycle and adoption of the New York State budget this group will need to move quickly. He said work needs to be done to bring points together on how tax relief can be improved by ways other than what is being proposed by the Governor. In addition to mandate relief, there are other things such as how to deal with tax exempt property that can relieve the property tax burden. He thinks the only way local governments might influence this is to come up with good ideas that can attract interest.

Mr. Mareane agreed and said he believes the focus should be on communicating with State Legislators. He suggested a small group of local officials meet with Senators O'Mara and Seward and Assemblywoman Lifton to explain the "trap doors" within this plan and to show why the numbers presented by the Governor do not apply to taxpayers owning an average-cost home. Mr. Mareane said they will be attempting to place something on the County website to show how much a homeowner will save by this proposal as well as how much they would save if the State were to take over paying the cost of services it mandates.

Members were in agreement to Mr. Mareane's suggested approach. Ms. Thomas said tried to present this to the Ulysses Town Board but need to have information showing what the shift has been from income tax to property tax.

Mr. Liefer said while he believes going to State representatives is important he also thinks it is very important to involve the media to the greatest extent possible to educate the public. He said the Governor's figures are not accurate for Tompkins County and relate more to counties downstate. Ms. Weiser said in addition to using the local media there should be efforts to get the Albany media, specifically the Legislative Gazette, to listen to local governments. Mr. Mareane said NYSAC released an article yesterday. Mr. Engman said another component to the public's support is the impact when services begin to get cut and until people start to feel the cuts they will not support these efforts.

It was suggested that a working group be established that would include a representative of the City, County, towns and villages. The following individuals agreed to serve on this working group: Ms. Thomas, Mr. Engman, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Liefer, Mr. Clairborne, and Mr. Mareane.

Report from Cable Committee

Mr. Engman had no report.

Report on Animal Control

Mr. Engman reported the seven municipalities of TCCOG that have formed a group on dog control have been working well together and are now at the point of going out to bid on a request for proposals (RFP) for a consistent dog enumeration program. This would be a three-year program with one third of the involved municipalities being done each year. By the end of the third year there would be accurate dog enumeration information available. He said if any other municipality would like to join this coalition they can do so and should let him know. Mr. Engman was asked to provide members with a copy of the RFP.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were suggested for inclusion on the next agenda:

Priority Trails Strategy
Report from Cable Committee
Report from the Tompkins County Mandate Relief Group
Report from the Sustainability Task Force
Discussion and brainstorming of potential areas where there could be shared services

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.