

1 6/22/16

2 **PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**
3 **Wednesday, June 22, 2016**
4 **SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**
5 **125 East Court Street**

6 **FINAL MEETING MINUTES**

7
8 **Members Attending:**

Name		Representation
Martha Armstrong	P	Economic Development
Todd Bittner	P	Natural Environment
Joe Bowes	P	Housing
Sue Cosentini	E	Business
Fernando de Aragón	P	Transportation
John Gutenberger	A	Education
Dave Herrick	A	Facilities/Infrastructure
Ruth Hopkins	P	At-Large
Rod Howe	E	Historical/Cultural Resources
David Kay	P	Local Planning (urban)
Darby Kiley	P	Local Planning (non-urban)
Gay Nicholson	E	At-Large

Name		Representation
Martha Robertson	P	Planning Committee
Monika Roth	E	Agriculture
Kathy Schlather	P	Human Services
Rob Steuteville	A	Built Environment Design
Andy Zepp	A	Land Pres/Public Land Mgmt
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Others Present		
Katie Borgella	P	Deputy Commissioner
Megan McDonald	P	Senior Planner
Ed Marx	P	Commissioner of Planning
Pam Pariso	P	Planning Admin. Asst.

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11 **Guest: Megan McDonald, Senior Planner, Tompkins County Planning Department.**

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13 **Call to Order & Changes to the Agenda** – Chair David Kay called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM. No
14 changes to the Agenda.

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16 **Approval of Minutes from May 25, 2016** – No changes proposed. Martha Armstrong made a motion to
17 accept. Fernando de Aragon seconded. All were in favor. Minutes from the last meeting were unanimously
18 approved. Final minutes will be available on the Planning Department website: [www.tompkins-](http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/)
19 [co.org/planning/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/) under Advisory Boards.

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21 **Introductions** – None.

22
23 **Presentation: Green Energy Incentives, Report & Discussion**

24 Tompkins County Planning Commissioner Ed Marx presented the results of the TCPD/TCAD-funded study
25 which engaged Taitem Engineering to develop detailed information on Return on Investment (ROI) for
26 energy efficiency and/or renewable energy measures to better understand cost constraints facing developers
27 and how to motivate developers to construct highly energy-efficient buildings. The study examines ways to
28 incentivize energy efficient construction, which typically costs more, without complicating an already-
29 complex IDA abatement process even further. The study focuses on measures required to be taken to achieve
30 Architecture 2030’s goal of a 70 percent reduction in fossil fuel energy use, as compared to a typical existing
31 building of the same type. That equates to a target of 40 percent better than the new NYS code.

32
33 Case studies were conducted on five local properties: two office buildings, two multi-family mixed-use and
34 one hotel. High-efficiency boilers, water heaters and lighting are currently being incorporated into the
35 building designs, but there is much more to be done to achieve the much higher building efficiency
36 envisioned by Architecture 2030. Two local examples that have achieved net-zero are HOLT Architects’
37 office and EcoVillage’s TREE multifamily/mixed use building.
38

39 Tax abatements and other incentives could entice developers to achieve higher levels of energy efficiency.
40 The report outlines several nationally recognized ways to meet the energy efficiency standards envisioned in
41 the study. All require third party analysis and confirmation, which would help reduce any needed follow-up
42 and study by TCAD staff. Incentives would not be based on actual constructed building performance, but on
43 modeling done using pre-construction plans and checklists.
44

45 These potential green energy incentives were discussed with developers in a feedback session, and it was
46 mostly positive. The drawbacks, according to the developers, include having to capitalize the extra cost of
47 the improvements given the fact that energy efficiency measures may not be recognized by banks as
48 enhancing the building value; and concern about an abatement program that ended abruptly without some
49 tapering off. Also, developers and landlords often don't pay utilities, so passing on lower utility costs isn't
50 necessarily a priority for them.
51

52 A member asked about feedback from other municipalities on tax incentives. Ed said it hasn't gotten that far
53 yet. Ed said they hope to get a portfolio of highly-efficient buildings to serve as an example for future
54 development. Because of this study, developers' general concerns are known, and they can be addressed up
55 front. The county hopes to get developers and banks to "buy in" for the long term, and not just consider
56 short-term ROI. It's a carrot approach rather than a stick approach.
57

58 It was suggested that a formal evaluation and review process be undertaken to determine what incentives will
59 change behavior. Ed believes we need to move forward quickly to achieve the county's goals. It was noted
60 that without big incentives, most builders won't go out of their way to build to high efficiency standards. The
61 final report is still being written.
62

63 **Housing Needs Assessment:**

64 Planning Department Senior Planner Megan McDonald gave a report on the preliminary findings of the
65 recent Tompkins County Housing Needs Assessment. The assessment is looking at a time horizon of the next
66 decade. There has been a lot of disagreement on the current local housing situation, and census data alone
67 don't give a good picture of the local situation. There's a need for fresh data on housing so that the County
68 can project and plan better for the needs of the future. The Planning Department is using a quantitative model
69 to calculate and project the needs, using data from various sources. The Danter Company is the consulting
70 firm gathering these data. Their recent online survey anticipated maybe 500-1,000 responses, but had some
71 4,500 participants. This huge response indicates how hot of an issue housing is in the community.
72

73 Employment in Tompkins County is growing, so we are seeing increasing in-commuting, as well as the need
74 for additional housing. Right now, based on employment, there's a deficit of more than 7,000 housing units
75 which accurately reflects the number of in-commuters. There is a significant need for new housing units
76 now. With projected employment expected to increase, the outlook for the next ten years is that this deficit
77 will continue to grow. There will continue to be a significant need for housing just to keep up with Tompkins
78 County's growth, even if we weren't trying to capture in-commuters or respond to the projected increasing
79 student population.
80

81 Student housing needs have a significant impact on housing deficits, and since enrollments are expected to
82 increase, off-campus apartments -- especially student-purposed housing -- will be in increased demand.
83 There will be a huge need for new construction of student-purposed housing in the next 10 years. Cornell is
84 conducting a housing study as well, for both on- and off-campus needs.
85

86 Senior housing is another huge need. This is not just because the local aging population is growing, but also
87 due to the fact that Ithaca is now considered a highly-desirable retirement destination community. There is an
88 unmet demand, and this will increase as the population ages. Retirees desire one-floor living and a
89 "walkable" neighborhood.
90

91 Affordability continues to be a major issue, as most homes start at over \$200,000. Demand for condos also
92 seems to be rising. Once the needs assessment is complete, the county will next develop a housing strategy to

93 meet demands for all these population segments, and this committee will be asked for their input. Public
94 input will also be solicited.

95
96 It was brought up that data are needed to show the relationships between supply and demand for all these
97 population segments before it's presented to the public. People see lots of new construction and think enough
98 is being done, but it's not enough. The water/sewer infrastructure study done several years ago showed that
99 there is sufficient existing capacity to support expected growth in the surrounding municipalities, primarily in
100 the Development Focus Areas. Ed said he hopes to map the strategy to align the demand with the physical
101 locations suitable for future housing growth based on local plans. Ed said the consequences of inaction will
102 be more traffic congestion and more rural sprawl which will hurt the environment. This group, the Planning
103 Advisory Board, will be one of the groups consulted for strategies in the next year. All agreed that this a
104 major Tompkins County planning issue.

105
106 **Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported on: 1) The next stage of the microgrid feasibility grant process.
107 Applications are due in October. The County is considering getting a third party to manage the process, since
108 the County will eventually be a customer. 2) The airport is applying for a NYS improvement grant. It
109 proposes green terminal renovation and a new business/industrial park with access road and infrastructure at
110 Warren and Cherry roads, with the DOT as the proposed first tenant. 3) South Hill recreation way extension
111 has some landowners contesting it due to NYSEG landownership legalities.

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113 **Announcements** – None.

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115 **Adjournment** – Kathy Schlather moved for adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 AM.

116
117 Respectfully submitted,

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119 Pamela Pariso
120 Administrative Assistant
121 Tompkins County Planning Department

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123 Approved on August 24, 2016