

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, July 26, 2017
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM
125 East Court Street

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Members Attending:

Name	✓	Representation
Martha Armstrong	P	Economic Development
Joe Bowes	P	Housing
Sue Cosentini	P	Business
Fernando de Aragón	P	Transportation
Dave Herrick	E	Facilities/Infrastructure
Rod Howe	E	Historical/Cultural Resources
David Kay	E	Local Planning (urban)
Darby Kiley	E	Local Planning (non-urban)
Susan Mann	E	Education
Gay Nicholson	E	At-Large
Martha Robertson	P	Planning Committee

Name	✓	Representation
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Leslie Schill	P	Education
Kathy Schlather	P	Human Services
Rob Steuteville	A	Built Environment Design
Andy Zepp	E	Land Pres/Public Land Mgmt
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Others Present		
Katie Borgella	P	Deputy Commissioner
Scott Doyle	NA	Associate Planner
Joan Jurkowich	NA	Planning Administrator
Ed Marx	P	Commissioner
Megan McDonald	P	Associate Planner
Kristin McCarthy	P	Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

Call to Order

David Kay could not attend the meeting, so Martha Armstrong agreed to chair on his behalf. She called the meeting to order at 9:08 am.

Agenda Review/Changes & Approval of June Minutes (June 28, 2017)

Ed Marx didn't introduce new member Susan Mann because she was still at home recovering from an injury she suffered last month. Susan is the newly appointed Energy representative on the board.

Due to a lack of quorum, approval of the June minutes was postponed until later in the meeting.

Discussion: Should Tompkins County rejoin the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board?

- Ed spoke to the group about the pros and cons of Tompkins County once again becoming a member of the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board. As part of his presentation, he handed out documents related to the organization, including information on their programming budget and 2015-16 activities.

- Tompkins County hasn't belonged to Southern Tier East (STE) in over 20 years. In the past, the County didn't think the board's work program matched well with our priorities and didn't warrant the investment of money and time required to rejoin. The cost of an annual membership today is \$10,000 plus an in-kind contribution in staff support from a planning commission and an economic development agency – it is unclear what the amount of that in-kind contribution is expected to be, though member organizations are able to report the activities they are already doing as part of that in-kind contribution.
- This issue has come up recently because STE just completed the pre-application round for Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding, and there is a belief that some organizations in Tompkins County have not received ARC funds because our County is not a member of STE. In this round, to be considered you must have a letter of recommendation from a county planning commissioner who belongs to STE. However, the New York Department of State says not to worry about it and send the paperwork to their offices. (Ed commented the situation is a bit awkward as a result of that dichotomy.)
- Martha Robertson asked if anyone knew which groups from Tompkins County have received ARC funding in the past. Ed replied that Groundswell has received it, and Martha A. said TCAD once received grant money for a virtual business incubator. Kathy Schlather commented that the Human Services Coalition was granted ARC funding, but that was 20 years ago. STE offers that if we commit to making in-kind contributions for the rest of this year (a letter would probably suffice) and to paying to join in 2018, then we could sit in on final round of ARC at the end of this August.
- Some positives to rejoining the STE include:
 - It would help fulfill an objective of the County Comprehensive Plan, which states that we should be active in regional activity.
 - In Katie's opinion, the new director, Jen Gregory, has good intentions and we have worked with her productively on other initiatives when she held a different staff role.
 - The ARC grants, which can run up to \$150,000, can be useful in that they fit unusual niches.
- Some negatives to rejoining include:
 - It would place even more demands on staff time, as there are monthly meetings.
 - Eight counties comprise the STE, which can make accomplishing anything cumbersome.

The consensus at the latest Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability (TCPSD) staff meeting was to give STE membership another try. A formal vote was not taken by the PAB members, but they recommended the County rejoin by a show of hands.

7/19 Indian Creek Neighborhood and Harris B. Dates (Biggs) Property:

To start, Ed recapped the history of the property for the group: there had been an RfP in place, the Town of Ithaca approved it as did the County Legislature. However, the developers found wetlands on the property and the project was cut. The County then had the property up for sale, but there were no takers.

At a recent meeting, TCPD staff went out to share some new ideas regarding development of the parcel with members of the Indian Creek Neighborhood Association. These included:

- Building two apartment buildings, perhaps modeled after the EcoVillage Common House, on 2.5 acres of land
- Installing a solar PV farm
- Transferring development rights from the property to two privately owned adjacent parcels. This option seemed to have the most support from the audience.

Approval of the June Minutes

Martha moved, and Darby seconded, to approve the June 2017 minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously by the members present, with minor editorial changes.

Commissioner's Report

- The County Legislature unanimously approved Scott Doyle's Capital Reserve Fund and Natural Infrastructure Capital projects.
- Two projects were submitted for the Community Development Fund. The deadline was July 24th.
- An inventory of potential and proposed housing development sites is being compiled. When the first draft is ready, which should be soon, it will be shared at a meeting of town planners from throughout Tompkins County.
- TCPD submitted their proposed 2018 budget to the County administrator. They requested funds for two new staff members: an energy navigator and a housing planner. They hope to hear soon from NYSERDA regarding matching funds for the Business Energy Navigator program. The energy navigator position, which as of now would be a three-year contract, would be funded by the County, TCAD, and NYSERDA.
- Martha R. received word that NYSEG filed with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to build a compressor station in Lansing. Martha and other colleagues have been trying to get a meeting with the head of the PSC.
- Fernando inquired if there was news on the solar farm project in Dryden. Martha R. said the SEQR was approved, and Thursday there is a Town Board meeting to "discuss a path forward." No vote is scheduled, and it has become a political issue.

Announcements

Katie urged everyone to come to Ed's retirement party on Wednesday, August 23rd, at the Westy.

Katie will serve as interim Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability while the search for Ed's successor is under way.

Adjournment

Martha A. declared the meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.