

Minutes

Tompkins County Council of Governments
March 25, 2010

APPROVED

**Tompkins County Council of Governments
March 25, 2010
Scott Heyman Conference Room
3 p.m.**

Members Present: (13 municipalities)

T/Caroline – D. Barber/D. Frongillo	V/Cayuga Heights – K. Supron
T/Danby – R. Dietrich/L. Shawley	T/Ithaca – H. Engman
T/Dryden – M. Sumner	V/Groton – E. Conger
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas, R. Marino	V/Trumansburg – D. Nottke
T/Newfield – R. Driscoll	C/Ithaca – C. Peterson
T/Enfield – R. Barriere	Co./Tompkins – D. Kiefer
T/Groton – G. Morey	

Municipalities Not in Attendance: (4 municipalities) V/Dryden, V, Lansing, Town of Lansing,
V/Freeville

Guests: J. Mareane, P. Younger, M. Lynch, County Administration; L. Cameron, Health Department; E. Marx, Tompkins County Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; M. Armstrong, Tompkins County Area Development; C. Chock, Legislature; D. Herrick; T.G. Miller; M. Whitmore, Cornell University Dept. of Natural Resources

Staff: M. Pottoroff, Legislature Office

Call to Order

Mr. Barber called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

An update on the Google Broadband request for information was added to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of January 28, 2010

It was MOVED by Ms. Conger, seconded by Mr. Barriere, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of January 28, 2010 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

Report on Emerald Ash Borer

Mark Whitmore said he has been a Forest Entomologist for thirty years and has never seen anything like the Emerald Ash Borer. He stressed the importance of community leaders paying attention to this and said planning will be key to minimizing damages. He said there are approximately 1 billion ash trees in New York State and all are at risk.

Mr. Whitmore provided the following information:

The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) was in western Massachusetts last year. The federal government spent \$25 million and this year has budgeted \$50 million to control this bug. If it reaches New York State it will devastate several types of trees.

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Mr. Whitmore spent the majority of his time talking about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The EAB was first established in 1994 and detected near Detroit, Michigan, in 2002. It has spread to 13 states and 2 provinces. Movement is primarily by: firewood, nursery stock, and saw timber. Eradication techniques are very difficult because they travel in distances of up to 20 miles.

The EAB life cycle:

- Adults lay eggs in mid to late June;
- Eggs laid on bark surface, cracks; once the eggs are hatched they go into the bark between the wood and bark and feeds off the tissue. This girdles and kills the tree.
- Creamy white turning to amber;
- Hatch in 7 to 10 days;
- Larva – four instars – 301-315 days
- Adult – female lives 21 to 25 days;
- 2-3 week maturation feeding on leaves;
- Female lays 60-90 days

Signs and Symptoms

- Start infesting branches in the top of the tree;
- Likes open grown or edge trees;
- Canopy thinning;
- Branch dieback;
- “D” shaped adult exit holes;
- Increased woodpecker activity;
- Epicormic, or water sprouting

Infested Green Ash: Tree death generally takes 2-3 years

Mr. Whitmore presented a sequence of maps from 2003-2010 to show the increased spread of the EAB. He said from his work in the west, he believes the populations can grow to a level where they could create a firestorm effect across the State.

He provided the following information on Randolph, New York:

- First detected on June 14, 2009 (Cattauragus County);
- 39 infested trees cut and chipped on June 24, since then six more trees discovered;
- Infestation is at least two years old, likely more;
- Infestation delimitation in progress;
- 1,800 purple sticky traps deployed in 2009 with 8 sq. mile or 1/80 acres. No EAB caught.

Impacts:

Economic – timber value, landscaping value, home heating/cooling, water use. At approximately \$500 per tree for removal, this could have significant economic impacts.

Cultural:

- Aesthetics: tourism – fall colors; landscaping
- Traditional uses – baseball bats, maple sugar, baskets

Ecological – potential to lose species, what will replace them, habitat and dependent species

Issues:

Rural Forests – declining timber value – harvest now?

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Liability and safety – Ash rot quickly! Not time to lose.

Urban Forests:

Political – It's not here, why bother? Mr. Whitmore said it will be here and its something community leaders need to pay attention to.

Liability and Safety – no street inventory, ash rot quickly and fall down, pesticide use can be a problem

Resources – There needs to be time to train personnel, equipment needs – trees needed to be chipped and there aren't many here

Actions

Eradication is not an option. Trees cannot be de-barked when in quarantine, the outer inch of wood needs to be shaved. Mr. Whitmore said the only option available is to slow the spread; however, there needs to be time to prepare, to develop control strategies and educate the public.

Develop Community Action Plan (Intermunicipal Cooperation is key)

- Tree inventory
- Personnel training
- Treatment decisions
- Contractual arrangements
- Inter-municipal cooperation
- Develop wood utilization options

Mr. Whitmore explained the plan for Randolph, NY, and said they will have a plan called SLAM. They will identify where it is, girdle the population of trees because they are much more attractive to the bugs. Once bugs are attracted to the trees they will take the trees out and grind them. The plan is to slow the spread and avoid what he expects will otherwise be a firestorm effect.

Ms. Chock asked if anyone had been in contact with the State parks. Mr. Whitmore said they are well aware of this and the risk of transported firewood. They are trying to do training but need to provide reasonably priced firewood on-site to avoid people bringing in their own.

Mr. Whitmore provided his e-mail and asked that anyone with questions contact him at mcw42@cornell.edu. The public can obtain information by contacting Cooperative Extension.

Report on Gas Drilling

Mr. Engman provided a brief history, saying seven towns got together to try to draft a road construction law. Those towns included: Ithaca, Caroline, Danby, Dryden, Enfield, Ulysses, and Newfield. That process is basically complete and the next step is to take the draft developed by Attorney Guy Krogh and run it by public works personnel and town boards to see if it will meet the needs for town roads. The second part of the work was to work on road preservation laws. The County has drafted a road preservation law and Guy Krogh has reviewed that and prepared an analysis.

Mr. Engman explained the difference between the two types of laws. The road construction law would apply in cases such as when a drilling company would want to put a gas transmission line across the road or a driveway off the road to go into a well site. The road preservation law would relate to any damage done to a road and is related to the repetitive movement of heavy equipment on the road.

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Mr. Krogh estimates it will cost approximately \$16,000 to complete the road preservation law. Mr. Engman suggested that since it looks like it will be rather expensive that a look be taken at another alternative, such as the potential arrangement with Delta. Delta is an engineering firm that Sullivan County towns contracted with to develop a procedure, not only to develop the road preservation law, but to develop road-use agreements, and to look at the whole process that should occur if this became an issue in a community. Mr. Engman said their costs are considerably less; it would cost each municipality approximately \$8,500 for the basic services. If a municipalities was to have a complete road management process done there would be an additional charge. He said if there is agreement in moving in this direction the group would send the road preservation law along with Guy Krogh's analysis, to Delta. The other advantage to working with Delta would mean that there would then be 14 municipalities going down the same path.

Mr. Driscoll said he is very persuaded to consider Delta because of the scales of efficiencies and the opportunity to join with other municipalities and not do this on its own. He will be presenting this to the Newfield Town Board this evening.

Ms. Thomas spoke of the enormous amount of information that is coming in and said she will be reconvening the gas drilling subcommittee.

Ms. Thomas also spoke of what she sees as a need by TCCOG to have additional staff resources to gather information and to coordinate efforts surrounding major issues that arise.

Mr. Dietrich said he agrees the subcommittee on gas drilling needs to be reconvened and suggested there also be discussion of the creation of sort type of clearinghouse for all of the gas drilling information, research, and data. He also suggested there be exploration of the relationship between the County and TCCOG.

Water and Sewer Study – Update on Presentation

Ms. Armstrong provided a brief overview of the history of the Study and said comments are still being accepted; however, the final document must be completed by March 31st. She introduced David Herrick of T.G. Miller PC.; he distributed a summary of the information about what was learned about the sewage treatment plants, water supply permits for treatment facilities, and where the communities are with respect to spare capacity. He said the purpose of the study was to identify what is available to support additional planned growth objectives that are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Conclusions of the study include:

- Municipalities are proactively planning and undertaking repairs and upgrades to existing treatment facilities and piping systems. The Villages of Dryden and Groton are implementing sewage treatment plan upgrades to meet new effluent discharge limits and moderately increase capacity. A new sewer service area and collection system in the Town of Lansing will soon be constructed in the vicinity of Warren Road. The Town of Ithaca is designing several pipeline replacement projects and has initiated a utility master planning study. In the Town of Danby, the West Danby Water District recently completed a detailed investigation of water supply, storage and distribution facilities.
- Municipal water systems utilizing groundwater sources can have limited redundancy. The water systems in West Danby and the Villages of Dryden, Groton, and Trumansburg cannot adequately supply the maximum day demand if the best producing groundwater well is out of service. Applications to the Tompkins County Health Department for the

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extension of public water mains within these distribution systems, if, and when received, could trigger a detailed review to determine if capacity is sufficient. The Health Department currently has in effect a moratorium on new water main extensions within the Village of Trumansburg service area.

- The Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission (Bolton Point) water treatment facility continues to have surplus capacity to meet the demands of the five municipalities.

**Resolution by the Tompkins County Council of Governments to Accept the County-Wide
Intermunicipal Water and Sewer Feasibility Study**

MOVED by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Sumner. It was MOVED by Ms. Sumner, seconded by Mr. Driscoll, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to change the word "County" to "municipal" in the fourth and seventh Whereas. A voice vote on the resolution as amended resulted as follows: Ayes – 13, Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Whereas, the Tompkins County Economic Development Strategy's goals include increasing and diversifying the County's housing supply and revitalizing the county's unique commercial districts and town centers, and

Whereas, the Economic Development Collaborative was organized to formalize, strengthen and deepen the cooperation among the many local agencies and municipal bodies addressing economic development issues in the County to make the process more effective through common goals and approach, and

Whereas, the Tompkins County Council of Governments is a member of the Economic Development Collaborative, which is currently working to address the goals of the County's Economic Development Strategy, and

Whereas, the Economic Development Collaborative suggested the creation of an updated, county-wide evaluation of existing water and sewer infrastructure and the development of a conceptual plan of water and sewer infrastructure needs to support future planned growth to meet municipal housing and economic development goals, and

Whereas, the last county-wide evaluation of water and sewer infrastructure was completed in 1994, and

Whereas, an updated evaluation would facilitate the development of housing within town and village centers, commercial revitalization of those centers and growth in the tax base, with the most efficient use of public dollars for infrastructure, and

Whereas, the Tompkins County Council of Governments supported the development of a county-wide study to evaluate existing water and sewer infrastructure and the prepare conceptual plans of water and sewer infrastructure needs to support future planned growth to meet municipal housing and economic development goals, and

Whereas, the members worked with the Economic Development Collaborative to ensure cooperation of members' planning and engineering departments with this project and helped in securing funding for the study from state and local agencies, and

Whereas, the consultant team lead by TG Miller has met with the participating municipalities to prepare the study, presented the findings at a public presentation on March 4, 2010, and distributed the final draft on March 22, 2010 to the Council of Governments for review and comment at their March 25, 2010 meeting, and

Whereas, the Council of Governments finds that the study satisfies the goals of creating a comprehensive inventory of water and sewer infrastructure, providing conceptual planning, and identifying current intermunicipal services as well as specifics for future intermunicipal cooperation to support planned growth, now therefore be it

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Resolved, That the Tompkins County Council of Governments accepts the study "The County-wide Intermunicipal Water and Sewer Feasibility Study",

Resolved, further, That the study be sent to New York State in fulfillment of the Shared Municipal Services Incentive grant program contract.

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Update from the Health Insurance Consortium

Mr. Barber provided an update on the Health Insurance Consortium and said there are two outstanding issues. The first is financial related – the New York State Insurance Department, after five months, has said they are not sure the Consortium's premiums are correct. Mr. Barber said the Insurance Department is being provided with three years of data and a face-to-face meeting will take place within a week. The other issue relates to labor representation and the number of voting seats labor will have on the advisory committee. He said the unions met this week and will be reporting to the Board of Directors this evening about the discussion that took place at that meeting, along with their reasons for wanting more than one vote. Mr. Barber said each month that goes by results in municipalities spending more on health insurance than was budgeted.

Members of TCCOG expressed gratitude to Mr. Barber for his continued work on the Health Insurance Consortium.

Google – Broadband Request for Information

Ms. Younger distributed a project summary on the project to test ultra-high speed broadband networks in trial locations across the country. Tompkins County's response title is "Google Tompkins NY". She stated most sections required by the County in the response are close to completion and she is awaiting information from two community members to complete the response. Mr. Dietrich thanked County Administration for its efforts on this initiative.

Upcoming Agenda Topics

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

- Gas drilling coordination;
- TCCOG and Tompkins County – discussion of relationship;
- Purchasing opportunities; and
- Commercial delivery of telephone books (suggested by Ms. Kiefer)

Emergency Planning

Mr. Mareane reminded members of will be held at Tompkins Cortland Community College from 5-7 p.m. the March 30 emergency management training session that

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottoroff, TC Legislature Office