

Minutes
Tompkins County Council of Governments
Thursday, September 22, 2011
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Adopted 10-27-11

Members Present: (12 municipalities)

T/Ithaca – H. Engman	T/Danby – R. Dietrich
T/Newfield – R. Driscoll	Co./Tompkins – C. Chock
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas	V/Lansing – D. Hartill (arrived at 3:09 p.m.)
C/Ithaca – E. Rosario	T/Enfield – R. Barriere
V/Cayuga Heights – K. Supron	T/Caroline – D. Barber
T/Lansing – K. Miller	T/Dryden – M. Sumner

Municipalities Not in Attendance: (5 municipalities) V/Dryden, V/Freeville, T/Groton, V/Trumansburg, V/Groton

County Staff: J. Mareane, M. Lynch, County Administration

Guests: M. Armstrong, C. Trauttman, H. Filiberto, S. Kimball, Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD); A. Pearce, Gas Drilling Task Force; L. Miller, B. Ching, C. Strauss, J. Reynolds, Cornell University students; L. DiPietro, Ithaca Times; J. Hoffman and J. Brooks, Susquehanna River Basin Commission

Call to Order

Mr. Barber called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Sumner, seconded by Mr. Barriere, to approve the minutes of August 25, 2011 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

Announcement on Smart Work Program

Mr. Mareane announced Dr. Haynes, Tompkins Cortland Community College President, has planned an all morning event to be held on October 26th to introduce Smart Work (Lean Office) training to school districts and municipalities from both Tompkins and Cortland counties. Presenters will explain what this means and how it can be applied to operations. There will be testimonials on how it has been very effective with the County's operations to improve efficiency, productivity, morale, and customer service. He stressed this is not culture change, it is a project-driven process that looks at places within operations and finds ways to streamline those operations. He said the response from employees at the end of these projects has been as enthusiastic as it has been of managers. The event will be held at the Ithaca Country Club and includes both morning refreshments and lunch. He encouraged all members to attend.

Ms. Chock said she was initially skeptical of this concept but has been impressed with the results at the County level.

Report on TCAD's Economic Development Strategy

Martha Armstrong, Vice President and Director of Economic Development Planning, said she is beginning to go around to different groups asking the question "if we could change the world by what we are doing now as far as the economy, what do we want it to look like"? She will be putting this question into a Survey Monkey and will provide backup information in an effort to brainstorm this idea with municipal officials. She also offered to meet one-on-one with anyone wishing to.

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Mr. Hartill arrived at this time.

Presentation on TCAD Funding

Mr. Trautmann, Chair of the TCAD Board, said TCAD is seeking to change the way it is currently funded. Although TCAD is doing well financially at the present time, that is about to change as a result of the current structure of TCAD funding. He provided a brief overview of TCAD's background, stating it has existed since 1964, it is the County's economic development agency, they provide a variety of services including business planning, revolving loan funds, and provides other services that create jobs. The TCAD Board is very diverse and includes representation from higher education, government, business, agriculture, not-for-profit sector, and the high-tech sector as examples. The mission of TCAD is "to create good jobs and enhance the quality of life in Tompkins County through responsible economic development".

At this time Mr. Kimball and Ms. Filiberto provided members with a [presentation](#) on TCAD financing. Mr. Kimball noted during the presentation that sources of the IDA's funding are decreasing, therefore, causing the long term fund balance for the IDA to decline as well.

Mr. Trautmann concluded the presentation by stating the IDA coffers have been drained over the years and they are looking ahead and seeing that expenses will outweigh revenues in the next few years. They are trying to be proactive and are looking for a new and more sustainable funding model. Reference was made to the pie chart showing an investment model having three sources equally make up TCAD's funding: local government, employers, and IDA/TCAD. The current funding model is local government – 7%, employers – 23%, and IDA/TCAD – 70%. Ms. Sumner asked which municipalities are included in the current 7%. Mr. Kimball responded the Town of Ithaca, City of Ithaca, Tompkins County, Town of Caroline, Town of Dryden, and the Town of Enfield. TCAD's current budget is \$500,000.

Mr. Barber encouraged local governments that have contributed to TCAD in the past to consider all that they do for the community and continue this support; he also hopes that those who don't currently contribute to TCAD will consider doing so because there is a significant benefit to the residents of the County by having a proactive economic development strategy.

There was a brief discussion regarding what level of support TCAD would like to see from local governments. Mr. Trautmann said the intent of this presentation was to make members aware of the issue and would be willing to come to a future meeting with proposed figures. Ms. Marino said she would be interested in hearing what TCAD is looking for from local governments and how much is currently being contributed and by which municipalities.

Ms. Filiberto said Tompkins County is part of the State's new Southern Tier Regional Council. The Council has wide-ranging membership and has been charged with coming up with a five-year strategic plan for the Southern Tier Region (8 counties) and they will identify and rank projects that will receive funding. Michael Stamm, TCAD President and Cornell President Skorton are members of the Council. Martha Robertson, County Legislature Chair; and Carolyn Peterson, City of Ithaca Mayor, are both non-voting members of the Council. There is money that will be allocated, of which \$60 million is existing tax credits and a lot of it repurposed from other programs. She said they are trying to make a Statewide consolidated funding application for things such as historic preservation, low income tax credit projects, and Department of Transportation funds. All projects would come through an application process and 20% would be ranked according to their score from the Regional Strategy; the remaining 80% is from the agency that runs the program. A public forum will be held on September 28th at 6 p.m.

Public Hearing on the Revised Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Barber spoke of the public hearing TCCOG sponsored in 2009 at which over 1,000 people attended and said people were thankful local government provided an opportunity for them to speak. He said there is an opportunity to hold another public hearing as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has released a revised draft supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (sGEIS) for well permit issuance for horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale and other low-permeability gas reservoirs. He said in order to approve a resolution to appropriate funds from the TCCOG Reserve Fund at the next meeting, TCCOG bylaws require members to be informed at this meeting prior.

Ms. Sumner questioned how much the previous hearing cost. Mr. Barber believes the costs were limited to the cost of use of the State Theater and a court reporter who transcribed testimony. Ms. Sumner asked how much more effective this would be than having people contact the Department of Environmental Conservation directly. Mr. Barber said everyone has the opportunity for the public to contact the DEC directly; the idea behind the public hearing is to provide an opportunity to speak with a DEC representative in attendance as well as other members of the public. He also said words can be expressed in writing but emotion cannot. Mr. Barber said the DEC did respond to the comments that were sent from the first hearing.

Mr. Engman said he thinks the main value in holding a hearing is to keep the public engaged; others agreed.

There was discussion of the current balance in the TCCOG Reserve Fund; Ms. Pottorff stated the current balance is \$750; however, approximately \$500 in additional funds are expected to be received.

Mr. Rosario said he spoke with Mayor Peterson about this. He expressed support for having a public hearing but expressed concern with over-exhausting TCCOG's remaining Reserve Fund. Mr. Engman said he did not have a concern with using the remaining balance as the Fund will be replenished at the beginning of the year. He suggested approving the resolution with an amount of \$1,000.

It was the consensus of those present to direct the Gas Drilling Task Force to move forward with setting up a public hearing. A committee will meet to come up with a budget and to raise the remaining needed funds.

It was MOVED by Ms. Sumner, seconded by Ms. Chock, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to move forward with placing the resolution entitled "Resolution to Fund a Public Hearing on the Revised Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the next agenda with a proposed amount of \$1,000.

Ms. Sumner suggested the subject of the Reserve Fund be placed on the next agenda.

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Report on Cell Towers

Mr. Engman did not have a report. Ms. Sumner reported the new cell tower project in the Town of Dryden is under construction.

Report from the Gas Drilling Task Force

Mr. Barber reported a few weeks ago he participated in a conference call with representatives from IOGA (Independent Oil and Gas Alliance). They would like to come to Tompkins County to talk about their process. Mr. Barber responded that he is not interested in having a conversation about their process but would be interested in having a conversation where they respond to questions being asked by municipalities and they have said they will come to Tompkins County to speak with municipal officials. He agreed to send questions ahead of time or at least a list of subject areas.

Ms. Sumner said she would like to be involved and is pleased it will primarily include input from municipalities. She offered to participate in developing a list of questions. Ms. Chock said there is a list of items that came out of the Task Force on Land Values and Assessment that may be used as a basis for some questions to be asked. She expressed concern that whatever group meets with them is not authorized to talk about agreements. Mr. Barber clarified the purpose of the meeting is to ask and answer questions; there will be no negotiations. It will be a discussion of the impact on the community.

Mr. Engman believes it would be worthwhile to ask questions about what the impacts on the community would be and he would be willing to participate in a discussion like this. Mr. Dietrich said he would like to seek additional questions from residents of his community as a way of including their participation in this meeting.

Mr. Engman, Ms. Chock, and Ms. Sumner agreed to work with the Gas Drilling Task Force on developing a list of questions. There will also be discussion of how to frame the meeting and how to reach out to the community. Ms. Chock suggested using the work of various work groups of the Task Force as a resource in developing the list. Mr. Dietrich asked that Beth Harrington at the Department of Emergency Response be included.

Announcement

Mr. Engman announced the group working on the Time Warner Cable negotiations will meet on Friday, October 7th at noon at the Ithaca Town Hall.

Presentation – Susquehanna River Basin Commission

Mr. Driscoll said a year ago the Susquehanna River Basin Commission was invited to speak to the Gas Drilling Task Force about their overview and the scope of their work in the southern portion of Tompkins County, which includes the Towns of Newfield, Caroline, Dryden, and Danby. Their presentation was very informative and he thought that it would be interesting to hear from them a year later about what their impressions are of gas drilling and throughout the River Basin that is in their jurisdiction.

Mr. Hoffman, Compliance Specialist in Field Operations for the Commission; and Mr. Brooks, Field Inspector based in the Bradford County Compliance Office, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's role in the gas industry. Mr. Hoffman noted the [presentation](#) is to educate and not persuade.

Following the presentation there was an opportunity for members to ask questions. Ms. Chock asked who pays for the Office and how many staff the Commission has. Mr. Hoffman said there has been an increase in staff from 50 to 80 in the last three years. There are four commissioners who run the Commission. Commissioners are from New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the federal government - Army Corp of Engineers. They receive funding from all four entities, application fees, a consumptive water use payment, and monies from violations and penalties.

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Mr. Pearce spoke of water withdrawal sites and the movement of water and asked if they have seen any instances where gas companies share withdrawal sites. Mr. Hoffman said they do share and this is encouraged by the Commission. He said gas companies can only use water from approved sites. The water was originally trucked although there are locations that have storage facilities on site. He said the gas industry is trying to get trucks off the road so they are doing a lot more piping of the water. Recently they have seen when a gas companies buries its line for the gas they are also burying water transmission lines with it.

Mr. Driscoll asked if there is any intention of having flowback return by pipe. Mr. Hoffman said he has not seen that and said the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) in Pennsylvania regulates flowback. He said the Commission tracks it for recording purposes; they typically truck it to treatment facilities or to treatment centers. They have created mobilized treatment centers, treat the water on-site then ship it back out. Mr. Driscoll asked if the Commission has oversight on the water that has been cleaned and returned. Mr. Hoffman said there are a few facilities that are capable and suited to bring in flowback, treat it to a certain standard, and have discharge permits and approval of the DEP to release back to the waterway. Mr. Hoffman said the Commission promotes reuse of that flowback and the industry is doing this. He also said the Commission monitors many areas other than just gas drilling, noting most of the 50 million gallons of water used per day comes from golf courses and ski slopes.

Ms. Chock said it would be useful for the public to have access to the information presented. She would also like to have more information that would look at questions of how you compare things. She asked how each of the uses take the water, what condition they return it in, and what way it goes back into the ground. Mr. Brooks said the information presented on consumptive use is based on water that is not returned to the basin. Using a golf course as an example, he said water is typically sprayed on the ground at golf courses and goes back into the ground, they do not have a way to quantify how much of that is returned. Mr. Pearce said he does not think water consumption is as much of the issue as how it is used, moved, re-circulated and recycled.

Members thanked Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Brooks for their presentation.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office