

Tompkins County Council of Governments
Regular Meeting Minutes – Approved 5/23/2013
Thursday, April 25, 2013 3:00 PM
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Martha Robertson	Member, Tompkins County	Present	
Richard Driscoll	Co-Chair, Town of Newfield representative	Present	
Fredric Dietrich	Member, Town of Danby representative	Present	
Herb Engman	Member - Town of Ithaca	Present	
Kate Supron	Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights representative	Present	
Betty Conger	Member, Village of Groton representative	Present	
J.R. Clairborne	Member - Alternate, City of Ithaca representative	Present	
Donald Hartill	Member, Village of Lansing	Present	3:17 PM
Dominic Frongillo	Member, Town of Caroline representative	Present	3:15 PM
Ruth Hopkins	Alternate, Town of Lansing representative	Present	

Municipalities not in attendance: Towns of Dryden, Groton, Lansing, Ulysses, Villages of Dryden, Trumansburg

Guests: J. Shepardson, CDRC (Community Dispute Resolution Center); J. Anderson, Frack Acton

Call to Order

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

Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda

A discussion item from the Community Dispute Resolution Center concerning a training/professional development opportunity was added to the agenda.

Report from Cable Committee

Mr. Engman reported the Committee has not met since the last TCCOG meeting. The next meeting will be April 29th at 11 a.m. and will be reviewing a draft model. The Committee has not yet communicated with Time Warner Cable; they are waiting until after the template is developed.

Ms. Conger commented that Time Warner has now added a surcharge to their bills in the amount of \$.60. She noted the Town of Groton has not had a contract with Time Warner Cable in twenty years. Ms. Conger did not know what the surcharge is specifically for and said Chuck Rankin, Town Clerk, is looking into this. Mr. Dietrich said the Town of Danby also does not have a contract and will look into whether they also now have this surcharge.

Mr. Frongillo arrived at this time.

Minutes Approval - April 25, 2013

Mr. Hartill arrived at this time.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Conger, to approve the minutes of April 25, 2013. A vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 10, Noes - 0, Abstentions - 1 (Ms. Supron). MINUTES APPROVED.

CDRC Training Opportunity

Jeff Shepardson reported on an initiative that CDRC has been trying to spearhead in the community. He provided brief history, stating that last year CDRC met with various agency representatives (Cooperative Extension, Planning Department) from Schuyler County to talk about difficult community conversations and how CDRC would resource those who found themselves needing to facilitate some of the difficult exchanges that were happening in town councils, boards, and public hearings. He said CDRC came up with a couple of different strategies and developed training modules; one was for elected officials and one was for land use board members. The title of the training is “Effectively Supporting Heated Community Conversations” and takes the skills and the process of mediation that CDRC has done for many years and focusing that in a group/community setting. This is beginning to gain traction and asked if members would be interested in receiving or sponsoring the training for Tompkins County municipal leadership.

Mr. Driscoll said he asked Mr. Shepardson to bring this to TCCOG. He spoke of the difficult conversations elected officials have had over the last couple of years and said suggested it begin with TCCOG and then consider expanding it and sponsoring the training for other groups. Ms. Robertson spoke of the value of this training and the many ways the skills learned will be useful. Ms. Robertson suggested TCCOG could sponsor this training and could use Reserve Funds to offset the costs.

It was the consensus of members present that there is interest in this and Mr. Driscoll was directed to work with Mr. Shepardson in putting together a training session for TCCOG and all municipal boards.

Member Report on Climate Conference and Other Items

Mr. Frongillo reported the Climate Smart Climate Ready Conference took place last weekend and there were multiple tracks, business, youth, community, and local government participation and several very interesting presentations were given. He specifically mentioned the City of Elmira and stated they were able to save hundreds of thousands of dollars by switching to LED’s. He said the climate is changing and municipalities have to be ready for it as there will be many more extreme weather events.

Mr. Driscoll questioned what the City of Elmira changed. Mr. Frongillo said the City of Elmira has 5,000 street lights and switched as least 500 of them to LED’s. In order to do that they had go up against NYSEG which makes it difficult and required the City to purchase the light poles. Mr. Frongillo said the City was able to obtain some grant funding for this and had to switch the lights because NYSEG would not do that. Ms. Supron commented that she went on a walk through of the Wastewater Treatment Plant this morning with Johnson Controls and learned there were no great efficiencies to be seen but there may be something worthwhile that could be done with lights.

Mr. Frongillo said the Town of Caroline had a conversation with NYSEG and asked to do one test light demonstration and NYSEG did not support it. He thinks it would take a concerted effort by a bulk of municipalities with the involvement of Federal representatives and the DOE (Department of Energy).

Ms. Robertson suggested Bob Pass, NYSEG Community Relations, be invited to attend a TCCOG meeting to talk about a number of energy issues and updates. *Ms. Supron will follow-up on this.*

Solarize Tompkins County

Mr. Frongillo said the Towns of Caroline, Danby, and Dryden have joined together in a solarize program that he believes is a model that can work elsewhere in the County. It is a community program to gather together households that are interested in using solar panels or solar hot water and bidding them

out to an installer and then getting bulk discounts as well as being able to streamline the paperwork process. He said the homeowners receive a significantly reduced price, installer gets a lot of business, and the community wins because there could be jobs created. The Town of Caroline has taken the lead on this and is the fiscal sponsor. Mr. Frongillo said over 50 households attended the first community meeting in Dryden. That was the first of six outreach meetings that will be held within the three towns. He said this is being done now as a pilot but something that could be used as a Countywide model next year. *Mr. Frongillo was asked to provide a calendar of public information meetings that are scheduled.*

Broadband Update

Mr. Frongillo said vast portions of the Towns of Enfield and Caroline were left out in the grant that was recently awarded for providing broadband service in the County and it would take between \$500,000 to \$750,000 to cover both of those municipalities. He said asked how TCCOG which works for the best interests of all municipalities in the County as a whole make sure those areas are served and asked what options there are for public funding or pooling other funds.

Mr. Driscoll said as a group that relies on each other for mutual support it is a good idea to consider this seriously but needs additional information as he doesn't understand why these areas were not included.

Ms. Robertson said this proposal received more money (\$2.2 million) than any other proposal of this type in the State. She thinks the State determined not to fund any at 100% but to provide enough funding to see that the project would move forward. She also thinks they chose the municipalities that were geographically the most difficult to serve.

Mr. Frongillo said it goes against the mission of the grant which is to provide broadband service to households that were not able to access it otherwise, however, within the logic of granting agencies it makes sense to say there are limited dollars so they will put it where it can do the most good.

Mr. Dietrich said the Broadband Committee discussed this at length at its meeting this week and he believes there is a proposal being developed and people are diligently trying to find alternative funding.

Road Use Agreements

Mr. Frongillo said Supervisor Barber asked him to talk about road use agreements and to raise the question of if projects happen what is the process that will communicate to other municipalities that there will be an increase in road traffic and also make them aware projects are taking place. Mr. Dietrich said every project will come through the zoning office of each municipality and then it will go to the Highway Superintendent who will make a determination of which entity owns the road and allow that entity to take over.

It was the consensus to ask Jeff Smith, County Highway Director, to attend the next meeting to ask that there be a system municipalities with the County look at the haul route and tell another municipality if a truck will be traveling on a certain road. Ms. Robertson will follow up with Mr. Smith.

Gas Drilling

John Armstrong, Communications Director for Frack Action, reported on the latest developments in Albany of which some he thinks significantly impact local municipal officials fairly significantly. He said this year they have been focussing on the health impacts of fracking and have heard from many medical experts who have said there needs to be more research done into the medical impacts. The

medical community in New York State has been very unified in saying the results of studies have to be received before a decision can be made on gas drilling. The New York Medical Society which represents 30,000 physicians have once again passed a resolution uniting the call across the medical board for a delay on fracking and to do a specific comprehensive medical study. Mr. Armstrong said some alarming information has also been received from the American Lung Association.

With regard to developments in Albany Mr. Armstrong said there is no updates. He has communicated to people in Albany that there are great concerns over the process; health, economic, and environmental impacts, lack of transparency; FOIL requests have not been responded to; and questions raised at the Assembly hearings have not been responded to. Mr. Armstrong said this week the Lobby group for gas drilling sent all State Legislators a postcard for Earth Day and a letter urging fracking more forward. He spoke of some of the signatories on the letter and said there have been companies that are doing studies that are also working for gas companies and appear on the signatories list. Mr. Armstrong said the one group that did the economic impact analysis is now on a letter advocating to the Governor to frack in New York State. This was one example provided that Frack Action believes a conflict of interest exists. They are calling for the SGEIS to be thrown out and the process restarted since the entire has been plagued with conflicts of interests, ethical improprieties, problems, and a lack of transparency. He urged members to consider doing the same.

Following discussion Mr. Engman asked if there is a template that provides all of the information presented that could be included within a resolution or letter. Ms. Robertson agreed to draft a resolution to be included on the next agenda for action by TCCOG.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The following item will be included on the next agenda:

Overview of CSI's Stream Monitoring Partnerships

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.