

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, February 27, 2013
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM
125 East Court Street

MINUTES

Members Attending:

Name		Representation
Mina Amundsen	P	At-Large
Martha Armstrong	P	Economic Development
Michelle Berry	E	At-Large
Todd Bittner	E	Natural Environment
Carol Chock	P	Planning Committee
Dick Coogan	P	Local Planning (non-urban)
Sue Cosentini	P	Business
Rick Couture	P	Education
Fernando deAragon	P	Transportation
John Gutenberger	A	Education
Dave Herrick	E	Facilities/Infrastructure
David Kay	A	Local Planning (urban)

Name		Representation
Gay Nicholson	E	At-Large
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Kathy Schlather	A	Human Services
John Spence	A	Housing
Rob Steuteville	A	Built Environment Design
Scott Whitham	A	Cultural & Historic Pres.
Andy Zepp	E	Land Pres/Public Land Mgmt
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>		<i>Associate Member</i>
Ed Marx	P	Commissioner of Planning
Joan Jurkowich	P	Deputy Commissioner
Kathy Wilsea	P	Secretary

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 9:08 AM by the Chair, Martha Armstrong. There were no changes to the agenda. Due to lack of a quorum, draft minutes were not addressed.

Comprehensive Plan Update -- Discussion – Joan Jurkowich provided a memo with the agenda. TCPD staff hopes for adoption of an updated Comp Plan in 2014. The first topic was whether or not it is time for a change in tenor. Due to the acceptance and support received for the 2004 plan, staff members think we can be more aggressive with the update. There was discussion about the scope – is a 50-year plan possible, or effective? Joan acknowledged it would be difficult. Mina Amundsen likes taking a long-term view, especially with land use and natural resources, but there was consensus that energy topics change fast. We won't be able to use fossil fuels because of climate change. Mina would like to establish values for non-developed lands in different expressions besides development. Carol Chock said a 50-year vision is important, but the County Legislature won't think that far away unless there are interim benchmarks. We would also need to make special efforts to involve the towns if we are talking about lands. Martha felt actions could be 5-to-10 years, and vision 50 years, which Joan said was kind of the stance taken in the original Comp Plan.

Dick Coogan said, even if municipal boards look at the County plan, they rarely cite it in resolutions. Local boards have varied interests, and open space is only taken into review when they have a specific site to address. Since local planning boards are probably our biggest partners, Martha asked how we can engage them. Local PBs used to meet together occasionally and share information, but are not mixing much now. Ed pointed out the 2004 plan was developed at a time when PBs met together.

Rick Couture asked if a County Comprehensive Plan must be followed. Ed responded that the County Legislature adopted it, but action items are not mandatory. The Cleaner Greener Regional Plan shows how fast we need to act in order to effect change. We have to take that view and ratchet up the action items. Fernando acknowledged some momentum on energy policy is being lost while the state and nation are denying reality. Is Tompkins County willing to take a stand and lead? Ed stated it needs to happen locally; cities and counties are taking dramatic action. Sue Cosentini added landowners to that statement. Fernando supports the leadership role because he sees things happening that are not the progressive things he wants to see – especially pressure to say there is no energy crunch. Ed stressed focus needs to shift to climate change.

Carol mentioned disconnect between ideals and funding. The County Legislature always faces the reality of funding and how to take into account specific goals. Martha pointed out a comp plan can support grant applications. Mina stressed work needs to be done to come up with balance. Ed commented solutions might not be what is expected – maybe spending more money on buses will get other vehicles off the road and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Mina

said she has concerns about solar panels because she sees them being placed on agriculture land. She would prefer to have them on rooftops, but installation is several thousand dollars more per site. She is pushing discussion at Cornell about how to have renewables fit in with vision. She suggested we examine where we do and do not want these placed. Dick said we need to take into account the value of land to the owner. Sue feels a comp plan can set the spirit of what we want the future to look like. Martha said carbon neutral goals can bring about concerned steps, as was a topic of Edward Mazria's recent appearance in Ithaca (Architecture 2030).

Joan wanted to move on to action items and the topics that were suggested but left out of the comp plan the last time. Monika Roth thought some topics could be split up in different ways, but feels Cayuga Lake is a defining element of our community. Cooperative Extension staff is updating the Ag Plan now, and will finish about the same time as the Comp Plan. They are examining forestry and will conduct industry-specific focus groups. Dick pointed out neighboring municipalities sometimes act in conflicting ways, using light pollution as an example. Martha agreed we need to engage broader stakeholders, as water/sewer service could be looked at from a bigger perspective, too. Dick added waterfront issues and the view in Newfield as topics that need larger consideration. Plan topics suggested: socioeconomic ideals, social justice, self-sufficiency for citizens, culture, tourism, gas drilling. Monika said fiscal realities also impact rural landowners. Farmers can get ag assessment and reduced taxes, but others cannot for open land, so they subdivide when they need funds. We need open space under economic/fiscal realities. Members spoke of how topics can be addressed and/or woven throughout the plan. Major concerns can be mentioned in a foreword, then embedded, but not be the context of the whole document. Could be referred to as global principles, but separating what we want to accomplish as action items would be more digestible for local boards. Dick encouraged use of committees, as used during the EGGE development, because he always felt PAB was represented in discussion without using up PAB meeting time. The level and methods of interaction with the community need to be addressed. Suggestions: meeting with chairs of local boards (dinner?) would yield vested interest, discussion with County department heads, having an internet presence and finding methods to drive visitors to it, use software (recommended by Fernando) to create conversations, TCCOG, municipal supervisors and their deputies, interaction with the municipalities that are currently developing comprehensive plans, Leadership Tompkins, Get Your GreenBack. Referring back to topics, Fernando pointed out the word "food" is not in the ag section of the 2004 plan, and wondered if "water" and "shelter" are.

Commissioner's Report – Ed Marx reported the Sustainability Center is now part of the Center for Transformative Action, has an 18-month lease for space at the Human Services Annex, and will open in late March. ▪ Ed, Better Housing for Tompkins County and the developer will meet for their first formal interaction on ideas for the Biggs space with a committee of the Town of Ithaca town board tomorrow. ▪ The City of Ithaca applied for a Sustainable Transportation Enhancement Program grant that would essentially complete the Black Diamond Trail, improve bridges in the Cherry Street Industrial Park, and provide link from West Hill to Buttermilk. Monika asked to stay informed on that, as CCE is considering community gardens in some of those sites. ▪ The Cleaner Greener Regional Plan is in review phase with NYSERDA. Statewide, all plans will be presented to Regional Economic Councils in April. ▪ The County's Green Building Policy was passed at the Facilities & Infrastructure meeting, is proceeding to Planning, Energy & Environmental Quality and Government Operations committees, then will go to the Legislature. ▪ Climate Showcase Communities work will be part of the April 18-21 Climate Smart and Climate Ready regional conference agenda, and topic for a national webinar from Sustainable Strategies of Washington DC. ▪ Application deadline is 2/28 for the staff vacancy at TCPD.

Announcements – Sue proposed having PAB members tour the Aurora Street Pocket Neighborhood in May or June. She is working with three other landowners on possible sites for another development. Monika reported Debbie Teeter is back at work following a medical leave. CCE has arranged an Ag Summit on 3/13, and she will send info by email. They will provide information on PDR, agriculture laws, and assessment re-evaluation of farmland. Fernando reported the transportation programs are facing reduced funding. Key projects are completion of Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail, Route 13 crossing, and Varna road modifications.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department
Minutes adopted by PAB on April 24, 2013.