

*final*

**PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Wednesday, January 25, 2012**  
**SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**125 East Court Street**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Mina Amundsen, Dick Coogan, Sue Cosentini, Rick Couture, Fernando de Aragon, John Gutenberger, David Kay, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Kathy Schlather, Andy Zepp

**Members Excused** -- Todd Bittner, John Spence, Scott Whitham

**Member Absent** – Martha Armstrong, Dave Herrick, , Pam Mackesey, Gay Nicholson, Monika Roth, Rob Steuteville

**Others Present** – Joan Jurkowich (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & Community Sustainability), Debbie Teeter (Cooperative Extension), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 9:08 AM by the Chair, Mina Amundsen. Due to lack of a quorum at this point, agenda items will be taken out of order.

**2011 Planning Department Work Program** – Ed Marx provided an overview, noting there were a fair number of carryover items due to the many interruptions to work and schedules in 2011, which included formation of the Regional Economic Development Council, funding applications, transfer to TCPD of the Tourism program, gas drilling, and new staff. Those delayed projects will show up again – Conservation Strategy, Development Focus Areas Strategy, and Tourism Strategic Plan, to name a few. Some of the programs for 2012 that he wanted to point out are work on the Energy Road Map by four Cornell graduate students, participation in the Get Your GreenBack campaign, the feasibility study for West Hill combined heat and power and its possible expansion to a district energy concept, Climate Smart Communities, Biggs RFP, a pending brownfields grant for the former Emerson site, updating the All Hazards Mitigation Plan with inclusion of a climate adaptation plan, and the Cleaner Greener Communities grant for which TCPD is negotiating the scope and hiring a consultant for completion of plans for eight counties in eight months. NYSERDA has added adaptation planning to CGC.

Concerning Cleaner Greener Communities, Ed responded to member questions saying he thinks CGC is looking at deferred increase through land use, although there are many groups with land use control across the region. NYSERDA wants measures in the transportation analysis, some of which we have already been talking about. Joan Jurkowich pointed out accomplishing this in eight months will be tough, and we don't want to alienate any municipalities so they reject the whole plan. Also, it took us years to get to our level of conversation about Smart Growth, so we won't have time for the whole region. Ed agreed we need to consider analysis of future State implementations. Best practices communities will become models for the region. Phase II CGC projects are unknown now, but will need to be tangible projects. The program wants to see money used for leverage, too.

Also listed in the Work Program this year are tourism objectives: evaluation of existing programs and the grant programs, which may be streamlined.

Concerning the process for the Development Focus Areas, meetings will be held between staff and municipalities between now and the public meetings that will be conducted in March and April. Andy Zepp expressed interest in maximizing impact on the municipal level, where changes to development patterns can occur, and volunteered to help. Ed estimated that 70% of efforts will go into organizing, and 30% into disseminating information. He acknowledged it is hard to get the public to learn about these concepts and to take an interest. Although members of zoning boards of appeal will be invited, the target audience is the elected officials and planning board members. TCPD has a small amount of money for matches with municipalities on projects.

**Eight-Year Review of Ag District 1** – Debbie Teeter was present from Cooperative Extension. She reviewed the phases conducted in the update under NYS Agriculture & Markets division. Ag & Markets oversees ag districts, ag district law, and the protection tools for farmland. She reminded members that, under current law, there is an addition period every year but the eight-year review is the only time landowners can request removal. Ag & Farmland Protection Boards are specified in NYS law to make recommendations to the County Legislature. In Tompkins County, review includes contact with municipal planning boards and PAB. AFPB includes information on agriculture assessment to municipalities as part of the process. History shows that farmers pay more in taxes than they receive in services, and must have at least \$10,000 income from agriculture to get the agriculture assessment. Debbie interacted with towns concerning recommendations to add or remove. Parcels in villages were not considered. Owners of all eligible property were contacted by mail concerning the recommendations to add or remove and, in all cases when the landowners responded, their requests were honored. Considerations included parcel size, proximity to the existing ag district, and ownership or rental for agriculture purposes. Debbie noted Cornell land is not in the ag district. All parcels were double checked with the County Assessment department. Today, Debbie seeks approval of PAB so the proposal can go to PDEQ and then the County Legislature. Dick Coogan moved to accept, which was seconded by Andy Zepp and passed by unanimous voice vote.

**2011 Planning Department Work Program (continued)** – Dooley Kiefer suggested some of the programs would be well demonstrated with maps. Answering other questions, Joan and Ed said Conservation Partners include Finger Lakes Land Trust, Cooperative Extension forestry staff, DEC, and State Parks. The Annual Housing Report will probably come out in March. For the Southern Tier Regional Rural Initiative Venture Fund, the regional office is developing guidelines for the \$3 million in funds. Guidelines need to go through the draft-circulate-finalize cycle. Right now the draft is a combination of loans and grants. For the Sustainability Center, announcement has just been made that they wish to hire a part-time coordinator, with Downtown Ithaca Alliance conducting advertising. Displays are under development and the center location is under discussion with the County Legislature. Taking over fundraising, oversight and grantwriting from TCPD will be the work of the coordinator, and the Park Foundation is helping fund the position. A Park Fellow from Cornell is helping with long-range planning for the Sustainability Center. The Healthy Homes program is funded by a Community Development Block Grant and involves repairs/replacements for roofs, septic systems and drinking water wells for homes that are currently in such bad condition they are not qualified for weatherization grants. Any other questions or comments can be sent to Joan or Ed by email.

**Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported the Southern Tier Sustainability Plan is taking lots of his time.

- Comments to DEC on the rdsGEIS on gas drilling are up on the Planning Dept. webpage.
- In their comprehensive planning process, the Town of Ithaca seems to be moving their preferred site for development on West Hill south and west of the Biggs location.
- In March, PAB will probably have a presentation on the Energy Road Map.
- The Blueway Trail held a kickoff meeting.

**Announcements** – Dick Coogan reported the Town of Ulysses has preliminary information on a 54-unit development proposal south of Jacksonville on the west side of Route 96. In several ways, this is not a good match for the recommendations of the corridor study. Fernando deAragon announced the kickoff of the Transportation Study.

**Adjournment** – Other agenda items were not address due to lack of a quorum. The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on March 28, 2012.

**Membership:**

Mina Amundsen, At-Large  
Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.  
Todd Bittner, Natural Environment  
Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)  
Sue Cosentini, Business  
Rick Couture, Education  
Fernando de Aragon, Transportation  
John Gutenberg, Education  
Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure  
David Kay, Local Planning (urban)

Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member  
Pam Mackesey, Planning Committee  
Gay Nicholson, At-Large  
Monika Roth, Agriculture  
Kathy Schlather, Human Services  
John Spence, Housing  
Rob Steuteville, Built Environment Design  
Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres.  
Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.