

**PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Wednesday, April 28, 2010**  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
**615 WILLOW AVENUE**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Mina Amundsen, Dick Coogan, Fernando de Aragon, John Gutenberger, Dave Herrick, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Gay Nicholson, Peter Penniman, Monika Roth, John Spence, Fred Wilcox

**Members Excused** -- Martha Armstrong, Scott Whitham, Andy Zepp

**Members Absent** -- Rick Couture, Pam Mackesey,

**Others Present** – Joan Jurkowich (Planning Dept.), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & PW), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by the Chair, Fernando de Aragon. Due to lack of a quorum, agenda items will be taken out of order.

**Announcements** – Monika Roth announced the annual Cooperative Extension plant sale will take place on May 15 in Stewart Park, beginning at 9:30 AM.

**Proposed Addition to Ag District 2** – Monika Roth provided this report. This opportunity for property owners to participate in the annual addition cycle started on February 1<sup>st</sup> with contact of qualified landowners. Only one request was received. It is in District 2, from a physician who intends to return from another state to open a vineyard and orchard. The property is part of the proposed Town of Ulysses Conservation Zone, and matches the intent of current and proposed zoning. The only point that was controversial in discussion at the Town of Ulysses board meeting two weeks ago was whether or not the landowner intended to harvest any timber. Timber harvesting will be very limited under the proposed Conservation Zone regulations. Debbie Teeter contacted the landowner on this point, and learned he intends to harvest nuts and leave the timber for buffer zones. Debbie attended the town board meeting again last night, and the board passed a resolution of support for this addition. A copy of that resolution is not available yet. Dooley Kiefer asked if this application was premature, and Monika said the landowner won't qualify for agriculture *assessment* until he has \$10,000 annual income from agriculture on the property. It could be removed from the ag district during an 8-year review. Ulysses is drafting an ag plan and supports agri-tourism. Joan Jurkowich mentioned this is also consistent with the Scenic Byway goals. Dick Coogan moved to recommend addition of this property to Agricultural District 2, which was seconded by Peter Penniman and received unanimous support in voice vote.

**Planning Department Program Review** – Joan Jurkowich explained this is a first draft based on 2010 data for the department. It is not clear yet how County Administration will be tweaking this framework. The proposed rankings are supposed to reflect relevance to the Comp Plan, and Joan said today's discussion was arranged to try to get input on priorities. Ed Marx said the County Legislature and County Administration are working toward a budget process that examines budget programs rather than over target requests. This is supposed to be a bigger picture of the department. The number of citizens affected is a consideration in the review, but that is difficult to assess for TCPD work. The new administrator is taking a businesslike approach and seeking ways to compare apples to oranges. Discussion followed on the topics broken down in the draft. ▪ Income is generally grants, occasionally fees. ▪ County government addresses some things not done on any other level. ▪ In the past it was spelled out in staff numbers, but this is more a study of impact. ▪ TCPD leadership in energy and greenhouse gas programs is critical, and the County is the logical choice to lead PACE. ▪ Taking a program away from TCPD might not mean a savings for the County if that program had to be picked up by another department. ▪ TCPD is a good conduit for grants. ▪ Sometimes small County contributions can leverage big partnerships. ▪ Some work is based on County policy or legal requirements, and not visible to the community. ▪ A lot of TCPD work moves concepts into reality, and that shifts priorities. The work of the Planning Department can be the difference between a plan that doesn't do anything and having it work in the community. TCPD often builds and shepherds a concept, then pushes it out the door. ▪ PACE would have lasting impact, so implementation is of great interest. ▪ John Spence pointed out that, of the two housing programs, he would give

preference to the Housing Fund. It provides leverages, lets the County guide where development happens, and allows conversation. But First Time Homeownership is also important, as the County cost is relatively small and, although the number of clients served is also relatively small, it helps people who couldn't own a home otherwise, has a good education component, and deals with local banks. Yes, it could go to Better Housing for Tompkins County, but municipalities must apply for CDBG grants. ▪ It's hard to separate effectiveness from excellence of concept in many of the programs. ▪ Almost every year something unexpected comes up that is so important it needs to be addressed (EIS for emergency services communication towers, the draft sGEIS on Marcellus Shale drilling, etc.). ▪ It's hard not to look at the numbers, but TCPD has many intangibles. ▪ The bang for the buck is part of grant application reviews. ▪ The Housing Fund as a coordinated entity is a big item. ▪ Examining hard data leads to quantifying community-wide programs. Many projects have started up and been made possible by these programs. There is a synergistic impact. ▪ Specify which work is required by statute, like 239 reviews.

Ed recapped, saying he heard support today for the Comp Plan, regional and municipal interaction, EGGE and PACE, affordable housing, and municipal support. Environmental protection shows in several areas.

**Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2010** – Draft minutes were moved by Dick Coogan, seconded by Dave Herrick, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported that he, Mina Amundsen and Fernando de Aragon made a presentation to the national APA conference on collaboration. He talked about the conference, mentioning that he found it significant that it was attended by the highest number of federal officials he has ever seen at an APA conference. That sent a message to him that the current administration believes planning is important and is providing federal funds for the first time in many years. Emphasis was on coordination of housing, transportation and environmental quality. More communities and professionals are encouraging 50- or 100-year plans in response to climate change issues. Adaptation and flexibility will be plan decision points in the future. New Orleans made the mistake of getting rid of local planners after Hurricane Katrina and allowing others to offer ideas. First they needed to stabilize the lives of people in crisis. Mina said these failings meant New Orleans lacked environmental stewardship. Ed said the Executive Director of APA stressed comprehensive planning is a tool for environmental protection.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on June 23, 2010.

**Membership:**

Mina Amundsen, At-Large  
Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.  
Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)  
Rick Couture, Education  
Fernando de Aragon, Transportation  
John Gutenberger, Education  
Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure  
Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member

Pam Mackesey, Planning Committee  
Gay Nicholson, At-Large  
Peter Penniman, Business  
Monika Roth, Agriculture  
John Spence, Housing  
Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres.  
Fred Wilcox, Local Planning (urban)  
Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.