

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, June 22, 2011
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM
125 East Court Street

MINUTES

Members Present – Mina Amundsen, Martha Armstrong, Todd Bittner, Dick Coogan, Sue Cosentini, Fernando de Aragon, John Gutenberger, David Kay, Dooley Kiefer, Pam Mackesey, Gay Nicholson, Kathy Schlather, Rob Steuteville, Andy Zepp

Members Excused -- Rick Couture, Dave Herrick, John Spence

Member Absent – Monika Roth, Scott Whitham

Others Present – Katie Borgella (TC Planning Dept.), Joan Jurkowich (TCPD), Tom Knipe (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & Community Sustainability), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by the Chair, Mina Amundsen. There were no changes to the agenda. New PAB member Rob Steuteville and new staff member Tom Knipe were introduced and introductions were made around the table.

Development Focus Areas Strategy – Joan Jurkowich spoke of the plans for rolling out the draft strategy, which include July and August meeting with local governments, joint meetings with Town of Ithaca and City of Ithaca staff and board members, meetings with municipalities that have Development Focus Areas within their boundaries, and a public meeting in late September. Then the final document would go to the County legislature with acceptance hoped for by the end of 2011. PAB members could participate by attending meetings and interacting with media.

Rob Steuteville wrote a letter to the Ithaca Journal that appears in today's paper in response to a recent op-ed article from a Dryden resident. Rob's letter spoke, in part, of how dense development results in reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and supports public transit and retail businesses. Many PAB members voiced willingness to participate in outreach. Joan will share the schedule of meetings and opportunities to comment, if any municipality specifies a written comment period. Rob asked if anyone is following the Town of Ithaca attempts to develop a SmartCode. It is his understanding that a proposal is being put together for the Town to adopt this transect code.

Mina asked if the Strategy could relate to climate protection. Sue Cosentini asked if the goal is to get zoning changed. Ed said that is not necessary. The goal is to seek relationships that mesh with County goals on density.

Joan then walked through the draft strategy. Groundwork would include

- TCPD work on the other types of focus areas, how things continue to change and how to influences change.
- Benefits of dense development.
- 21 areas and how node and hamlets differ.
- How to achieve the vision through density and design; regulations; infrastructure; and the connections of urban to node.
- The final report might only include one example, with others posted on the TCPD website.

Comments from members: Dooley Kiefer said page 11 identified important centers, but they are not in the Executive Summary. Martha Armstrong suggested some other terms for the general schema, as use of “hamlet” confounded her because some are already established nodes. She felt terms were not used consistently in schema. Andy Zepp suggested providing a subset of a few that are supported for change within the next four years, as he finds references to the hospital/Rt 96 corridor and South Lansing confusing and is interested in careful language crafting. Also, maybe the principles could be distilled to three critical points. Ed said South Lansing has approached IDA for tax incentives to promote development, and Ed is concerned about the geography of that node. The hospital area is the most studied, and also has the most potential. It is the largest employment area outside the City and the Village of Lansing, and is the topic of a heat/power study. He would prefer to see no new development outside the circles marked by half-mile radii. Mina said she likes the idea to target a few areas. David Kay said he sees the discussion with municipalities are more important. If the County moves into area analysis, they can provide technical assistance. Ed said that is in the TCPD work plan for the future. He hopes this Strategy is a consensus-building document. These concepts have already been discussed with the Town of Ulysses during their zoning updates. Rob said it is helpful to present the concept as a choice, and point out the differences between current pattern and our goals. Joan said some of that groundwork was laid with the Comprehensive Plan. Fernando said infrastructure can show the practicalities of dense development, and give dollars and cents reasons. Martha said TCAD had a meeting and discussed opportunities for doing an inventory of areas and showing what commercial activities can be supported. This can show they are tangible ideas. She noted the nodes would be compact, but not complete.

Dick pointed out there are lots of organizations to interact with besides municipalities. Citizens can be educated on ways to solve problems, too. Mina noted she saw references to reduced emissions, and thought it could be emphasized that dense development can lead to lower vehicle usage. Ed said commuter transit exists to some degree to all of these places. Other than commutes, these are walkable communities. John Gutenberger said he is struggling with the cover page of the Strategy, since the text makes it look like we’re trying to introduce a new concept. There was discussion on improving the subtitle. Pam Mackesey suggested that people who will be affected might not know what will happen if trends don’t change. We need to be careful, as some citizens feel the County is imposing. As there will not be time to bring the updated draft back to PAB, it will be distributed to members by email.

Commissioner’s Report – Ed Marx reported the Village of Lansing has asked TCPD to visit a joint planning board/trustees meeting on the need for affordable housing. PAB members will be informed of the date on that. • The Town of Lansing is planning a presentation in August to IDA, seeking incentives for multifamily housing and commercial projects for the South Lansing town center area. • The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Project evoked interest from all ten counties invited to participate. A meeting was held in May at the Finger Lakes Institute. This is about the process to discuss joint efforts for rural sustainability and provide alternatives to sprawl – not selling off building lots for income. Ed hopes they can develop strategies for the region in agriculture, tourism and forestry. All participants were enthusiastic, but have differing visions to contribute. They will meet again in July and include Cooperative Extension, regional planning agencies, and economic development agencies. Ed has had some discussions about potential Cornell research opportunities and grant opportunities. • John asked if Tompkins County is a member of Southern Tier East Regional Planning & Development Board. We are not, and Ed provided some history. Martha said they are getting new leadership, as she is aware they are recruiting. • Liz Walker and Ed attended the meeting in Denver for the 50 Climate Showcase Communities awardees. Tompkins is one of two that are in the Smart Growth category.

Development of model ordinances is a big part of CSC, and sharing across the sectors with other communities means there is lots to learn. • Ken Schlather (CCE), Peter Bardaglio (TCCPI) and Ed presented to a national conferences of communities that receive Energy Block Grant funds. The presentation was on collaborative efforts, and conference attendees were from communities larger than ours. • Over the next six months, staff effort will be put into bringing the Sustainability Center to reality. We are waiting to hear about a grant from the Park Foundation. More than 30 letters of support were submitted with the grant application.

Approval of Minutes from March 23, 2011 – Minutes were moved by John, seconded by Sue and accepted with no changes. Final minutes are available on the Planning Department website: www.tompkins-co.org/planning/ under Advisory Boards.

Announcements – Gay Nicholson announced the July 11 SEEN meeting will have a TCCPI presentation on the collaboration process. Gay also announced a presentation on June 27 by South African visitors speaking on tour about Industrialization of Agriculture Land. Ed Marx passed out cards on the Finger Lakes Trails & Greenways Conference to be held in Ithaca on September 23 & 24. Todd Bittner announced that conference will include an opportunity to visit the new Welcome Center at Cornell Plantations, where the Friday night networking event will be held. Fernando announced an overlapping conference on September 22 & 23. This is the Upstate Transportation Forum, funded by NYSEDA and coordinated by Ithaca CarShare. Referring to the Route 96 Corridor Study, Dick Coogan said the DOT job order for the Jacksonville crosswalk painting has been located, so that project will be done this year. Fernando announced the Multi County Regional Transportation Study is kicking off projects next week, examining ways people move in the region and possible new commute/transit patterns. Rob said the Complete Streets bill passed unanimously in the NYS Legislature this week. He hasn't examined the bill, but Complete Streets is a great concept.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on August 24, 2011.

Membership:

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| Mina Amundsen, At-Large | Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member |
| Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev. | Pam Mackesey, Planning Committee |
| Todd Bittner, Natural Environment | Gay Nicholson, At-Large |
| Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban) | Monika Roth, Agriculture |
| Sue Cosentini, Business | Kathy Schlather, Human Services |
| Rick Couture, Education | John Spence, Housing |
| Fernando de Aragon, Transportation | Rob Steuteville, Built Environment Design |
| John Gutenberger, Education | Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres. |
| Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure | Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt. |
| David Kay, Local Planning (urban) | |