

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, June 23, 2010
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
615 WILLOW AVENUE

MINUTES

Members Present – Mina Amundsen, Martha Armstrong, Dick Coogan, Rick Couture, Fernando de Aragon, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Gay Nicholson, Monika Roth, John Spence, Scott Whitham, Andy Zepp

Members Excused -- John Gutenberger, Dave Herrick, Fred Wilcox

Member Absent -- Pam Mackesey

Others Present – Katie Borgella (Planning Dept.), Jeanne Leccese (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & PW), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by the Chair, Fernando de Aragon. Approval of minutes was postponed due to lack of a quorum. Katie Borgella introduced Ardak Tukenova, an intern at the Planning Department this summer.

The 2020 Energy Strategy – Katie Borgella said the goal of this strategy can be reached, but will need financing and a lot of effort. The strategy was distributed to members with the agenda. Katie reviewed the wedges, commitments of the parties involved, actions underway and actions planned. While discussing New Local Measures, Dooley Kiefer voiced concern that the NYS Legislature will not enact enabling legislation for PACE, but Katie said she expects the legislation to be resolved in this session or next session. Regarding Transportation Demand Management, Mina Amundson suggested mentioning how location of housing can affect demand for transportation. Dooley pointed out it is in the text, but not in the list of bullets. Ed Marx said work on the Development Focus Areas is underway, and we could add a bullet on complementary planning. Also, housing additions in the Development Focus Areas by 2020 will only amount to 10% of the County's housing stock, so reaching housing goals is a longterm effort. Martha Armstrong suggested also referring to the interplay at meetings on Development Focus Areas. Concerning the Biomass for Rural Heating measure, Ed clarified that the 20% goal means converting 20% of the homes that currently use propane, electric, or fuel oil over to biomass. There were comments on the District Heating Feasibility Study. Fernando de Aragon said we need to stress to the City that district heating can be part of the Commons redesign. Other members concurred that it is worth examining for application in the Commons and trailer parks. This measure has no emissions reductions associated with it, as it is only for the feasibility study.

Katie then asked if these are the right measures to be working on, and what are the Strategy's strengths and weaknesses. Mina asked how district heating might be implemented, and Katie said staff just began discussing this with Cornell and would be contacting Mina to include her. We can possibly apply for grants. John Spence asked if NYS budget problems are negatively affecting timeframes. Katie said that is evident with development of PACE. Dooley asked if the title of the document imposes a limit. There is no discussion on local creation of green energy, like wind. Ed said biomass and renewables are mentioned. As the success of a local wind project is still questionable, it was not included in the measures for the 2020 Energy Strategy. Locally-generated energy that goes into the grid is in the NYS RGGI program. If generated for local use, there are still many issues to sort out. Dooley pointed out there are investors interested in local renewable energy. Ed said the Roadmap would examine capacity and how much of our needs can be addressed and controlled locally. Gay Nicholson voiced hope that the Road Map would include an education component. Fernando said the Road Map is the first step toward efficiency. Ed said laws that are in place or expected within two years can have impacts by 2020, otherwise concepts are considered longer term. Dooley objected to the abbreviation for metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, saying it didn't match use of terms in the scientific community. Staff said this matches the Department of Energy, World Bank, and Environmental Protection Agency terminology. [Later in the meeting, Gay Nicholson moved and Andy Zepp seconded and the PAB voted unanimously to endorse the 2020 Energy Strategy and recommend that PDEQ and the Legislature also endorse the Strategy. This action is recorded in paragraph 2 of the Commissioner's Report on page 2 of these minutes.]

Capital Reserve Fund for Natural Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection – Request for Funding: Ed Marx explained that recommendation by PAB is part of the sequence for approval by PDEQ and the County Legislature. Andy Zepp provided background on the request, with specifics about the parcel and how it would become part of the Emerald Necklace protected open space lands. This is a rare opportunity for recreation and ecological protection, and important

headwaters for Sixmile Creek. The sellers would separate ten acres for sale, that includes the house and a pond. Long term, Finger Lakes Land Trust intends to sell the north portion to NYS to become part of Yellow Barn State Forest. FLLT is still doing fundraising among municipalities, Cornell, and private individuals, but began this quest based on a significant gift from Dorothy Park. Ed pointed out the request meets the interim guidelines for the fund. Martha Armstrong moved to recommend funding the proposal, which was seconded by Dick Coogan and passed with 9 yes vote, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention (Zepp).

There was then a short discussion on informing municipalities and land preservation groups about the fund. It is a small fund that has no steady stream of funding, but is available for any project that qualifies. The County can't own or manage these properties. Staff has informed some municipalities that were looking at specific properties where the fund might have been applicable.

Interim Guidelines: Ed said TCPD was drafting the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas when the interim guidelines were developed. Now the County Conservation Plans I and II are done, so it would be a good time to review the guidelines. It can be an agenda topic for a future meeting. When guidelines are finalized would be a good time to publicize the fund. Gay Nicholson asked if the fund can be used for 10% land set-aside for subdivision plans. Ed said the Town of Ithaca and Village of Lansing are the only municipalities with set-asides in their subdivision plans. A municipality needs an open space plan before they establish set-asides.

Commissioner's Report – Ed Marx reported a public meeting on Development Focus Areas was held on 6/14, and was well attended by municipal officials, planning board members and not-for-profit agency employees. Staff offered to talk with planning boards about their comprehensive plans. Notes will be on the TCPD website for review and comment. The Development Focus Areas will be brought to PAB again in the finalization process. He noted the countywide water and sewer study was a big piece of this. Federal monies are becoming available for planning grants and he would like to apply for funding for implementation. TCPD applied for and received a Park Foundation grant to hire a planner for Marcellus Shale issues. This staff member would examine local preparedness and laws, and study what local municipalities can do. This would be for one year, and TCPD is seeking matching funds from the County Legislature.

Katie Borgella asked if PAB action is sought on the Energy Strategy. Ed said, yes, endorsement of the Strategy would be part of the process. Gay Nicholson moved to endorse the draft, which was seconded by Andy Zepp and passed unanimously. Dooley Kiefer said there was discussion at the EMC Energy Committee yesterday regarding the initial percentages needed in order to achieve success. In order to have a statistical chance of success, there is a need to start with higher interim goals. Martha Armstrong said TCAD uses energy expenses as part of business development budgets. A year-by-year flow chart can show reductions as they are expected to kick in. Katie said, using 2008 as a baseline, a business-as-usual approach was charted, and reductions calculated based on that. Dooley said the EMC committee also discussed comparison for local measures rather than using national averages. Katie said she checked the emissions report, and analysis was done using Department of Energy figures for our area with a variety of energy sources. Ed pointed out we can't spend all our time analyzing data and not doing anything. There is a risk to doing too much study. The Strategy went to EMC and PAB, and will go to PDEQ and the Legislature. Ed hopes to have it adopted in order to apply for the EPA Showcase Communities grant. Mina suggested emphasizing the connection of all development – energy, housing and transportation.

Nomination for PAB Vice Chair for Remainder of 2010 – Due to the resignation of Peter Penniman, PAB needs a new vice chair. Dick Coogan volunteered and was appointed by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2010 – Draft minutes were moved by Martha Armstrong and seconded by Dick Coogan. Dooley Kiefer requested one change, which was accepted. Amended draft passed by unanimous voice vote.

Announcements – Ed Marx announced a public meeting on the five-year update to the County Comprehensive Plan will be held tonight. Gay Nicholson announced Sustainable Tompkins will hold a meeting on Saturday on community visioning.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department
Minutes adopted by PAB on July 28, 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

Monika Roth, Agriculture

John Spence, Housing

Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres.

Fred Wilcox, Local Planning (urban)

Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.