



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Edward C. Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning
and Public Works

Telephone (607) 274-5560
Fax (607) 274-5578

AGENDA
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, November 28, 2012
9:00 AM
Scott Heyman Conference Room, 125 E. Court St.

Call to Order & Changes to the Agenda	Mina Amundsen
Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2013	Nominating Committee
Commissioner's Report	Ed Marx
Report on Development Focus Areas Fund	Joan Jurkowich
Updates on Projects and Programs	Staff
Approval of Minutes from October 24, 2012	Mina Amundsen
Discussion: Topics of Interest	
Announcements	Members
Adjournment	Mina Amundsen

Please allow 1 ½ hours for this meeting.

*If you will be absent, please notify
Kathy Wilsea at 274-5560 or
kwilsea@tompkins-co.org*

*Upcoming meeting dates: January 23, February 27
PAB will not meet in December.*

Inclusion through Diversity

1 *Draft 10/24/2012*

2 **PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**
3 **Wednesday, October 24, 2012**
4 **SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**
5 **125 East Court Street**

6
7 **draft MINUTES**
8

9 **Members Present** – Mina Amundsen, Martha Armstrong, Michelle Berry, Todd Bittner, Will Burbank, Dick
10 Coogan, Rick Couture, John Gutenberger, David Kay, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Kathy Schlather, John
11 Spence, Rob Steuteville, Scott Whitham

12 **Members Excused** -- Sue Cosentini, Fernando de Aragon, Dave Herrick, Gay Nicholson, Andy Zepp

13 **Member Absent** – Monika Roth

14 **Others Present** – Katie Borgella (TCPD), Joan Jurkowich (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning &
15 Community Sustainability), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

16
17 **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by the Chair, Mina Amundsen. There were no
18 changes to the agenda.
19

20 **Biggs Development Proposal** – Ed Marx reported one proposal was received for development of housing on
21 the County’s West Hill vacant land to comply with the Climate Showcase Communities grant, pedestrian
22 plan, and other goals. Ed is pleased with the proposal as a beginning point. It was submitted by Better
23 Housing for Tompkins County partnering with NRP, which is a solid partnership. BHTC brings knowledge
24 of our community and NRP has a leadership role nationally in housing and affordable housing. Ed expects it
25 will take a couple months of working together to make this a better proposal. Ed shared a layout sketch from
26 the proposal with members. This would be mixed income but largely affordable housing, developed as a tax
27 credit project. It includes gardens, passive solar power, and consideration of location in placement of
28 parking. Katie Borgella, Rob Morasch and Ed scored it out to see if it met the RFP requirements.
29

30 In discussion period, Ed said the dotted outline is area reserved for future use or maybe redesign. Some open
31 space will be retained, currently suggested for trails and playground. It does not quite conform to Town of
32 Ithaca zoning, but NRP is willing to conform more. John Spence said he expects lots of input from PAB in
33 the process. BHTC is excited about working with NRP and finds them experienced and flexible. Since NRP
34 has a Buffalo office, they could be available to meet with PAB. They tried to put their best ideas into the
35 proposal in a short period of time to meet the deadline. Housing is in three clusters to encourage
36 socialization. Parking design was difficult for them. Scott Whitham commented it looks like a conceptual
37 layout, and Ed said NRP even had another iteration for the layout. Rob Steuteville felt it could be organized
38 into a more cohesive village by changing the parking. John Spence said putting in lanes would trade parking
39 for roads. Ed said the submission concept gives automobile space back to people.
40

41 Mina asked what is PAB’s role. Ed said, as the process unfolds, PAB will have a role. He had expected to
42 have PAB help with the selection process, but there was only one application so comparison was not needed.
43 Today’s information is preliminary, and he noted this will also be a Town of Ithaca process. We have a
44 responsibility to make sure the project meets our objectives. David Kay suggested scheduling some separate
45 time for discussion with PAB members who are interested in this project, and John Spence said the developer
46 also wants this discussion. Ed pointed out the County Legislature will have to consider the deal and tax
47 credits, and he will begin that discussion at PDEQ on 11/7. The County Legislature would have to accept or
48 negotiate so the design process can move forward. He expects issues to rise for discussion, such as energy
49 efficiency. An input period is built into the timeline. Ed stressed we would consider this a great project if it
50 were not being subjected to the CSC high bar. Some units will be rental to ownership, as allowed by tax
51 credits. BHTC would manage, which is a great asset to the project. Martha Armstrong reiterated Ed’s
52 comment that this would be a very good project under any circumstances. We can’t jump on it and require
53 too much else. David Kay felt it is good to have someone already sitting at the table to hear our

54 conversation. Ed said the big question is, can this work in the market place and achieve the quality of life we
55 want? He does want PAB support, and pointed out this could be a game changer and show many new
56 possibilities.

57
58 David Kay asked if the fact we only received one response needs evaluation. Ed said he dialogued with
59 another firm that dropped out, and they are willing to debrief with us and discuss points that wouldn't work
60 for them. He acknowledged there are some lessons to be learned.

61
62 **2012 Planning Department Work Program Update** – Ed Marx noted he will also report to TCCOG
63 tomorrow on this subject. He provided status on key goals and measures of success, then noted success on
64 some projects that weren't specified in the work program.

65
66 **Commissioner's Report** – Leslie Schill and Ed attended the ribbon cutting for phase 1 of Holly Creek.
67 • The Environmental Management Council completed their update of the Unique Natural Areas Inventory
68 and held a public meeting. Finalization is expected next month. Dooley said there was not full support from
69 EMC members for changes that “snap to” tax parcel boundaries. Ed said there will be a staff review, too.
70 Todd Bittner said changes need case-by-case examination, taking land use into account. • The Cleaner
71 Greener Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan is considering 20 suggestions from the public meetings.
72 It has engaged our region and brought about interaction. There is only one staff person, who is not a
73 professional planner, at NYSERDA coordinating all these plans.

74
75 **Approval of Minutes from September 26, 2012** – Draft minutes were moved by Martha Armstrong,
76 seconded by Rick Couture and accepted with no changes. Final minutes are available on the Planning
77 Department website: www.tompkins-co.org/planning/ under Advisory Boards.

78
79 **Announcements** – Rob suggested anyone working with Development Focus Areas check out the EPA
80 Building Blocks grants program. There are 20 topics and no matching funds are required. A two-page letter
81 is required, deadline is tomorrow, and he is willing to help or provide the web link.

82 Will Burbank reported he sits on IDA and is aware the City is rethinking their density policy to streamline
83 the process. It would allow tax abatements in defined areas for projects of \$1 million or more, and building
84 height of three stories or more. IDA would still be charged with making the decision about abatements.
85 Mina felt this is tied to their transportation policies. Ed said the checklist has a large number of benefits that
86 can be implemented and required through zoning or other means. It would be better for developers to have
87 these requirements in the City codes, which would put them into more projects. Will has some problems
88 with the demonstration of need being standard for seven-year projects, and he feels there is lots of room for
89 input. Martha pointed out the 90% declining incentive is on value above the current value of the property.
90 Dooley reported she has heard about a proposal from Dick Thaler for five-story housing in the Village of
91 Lansing. Also, the permit conditions for Cornell's Lake Source Cooling includes a study to create a
92 watershed model to arrive at Total Maximum Daily Load on phosphorus. John Gutenberger said this is
93 through the Water Resources Institute, which is funded by NYS, and the bulk of the money is to do
94 lake/stream assessment. The information has been sought for decades. He suggested Susan Riha as a contact
95 at the Water Resources Institute.

96 Ed invited PAB members to a brown bag lunch on 11/14 at the Public Library, where information will be
97 presented on Buffalo-area form-based codes work. More information will be shared by email.

98
99 **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

100
101 Respectfully submitted,
102 Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
103 Tompkins County Planning Department

104
105 Minutes adopted by PAB on __, 2012.

106

107

108 **Membership:**

Mina Amundsen, At-Large
Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.
Michelle Courtney Berry, At-Large
Todd Bittner, Natural Environment
Will Burbank, Planning Committee
Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)
Sue Cosentini, Business
Rick Couture, Education
Fernando de Aragon, Transportation
John Gutenberger, Education

Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure
David Kay, Local Planning (urban)
Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member
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.

109