

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, December 8, 2010
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
615 WILLOW AVENUE

MINUTES

Members Present – Mina Amundsen, Martha Armstrong, Todd Bittner, Dick Coogan, Rick Couture, Fernando de Aragon, John Gutenberger, Dave Herrick, David Kay, Dooley Kiefer, Gay Nicholson, Monika Roth, John Spence, Scott Whitham, Andy Zepp

Member Excused -- Kathy Schlather

Member Absent – Pam Mackesey

Others Present – Sue Cosentini, 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. There were no changes to the agenda.

Five Year Progress Report on Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Ed Marx explained that PAB had a role in the proposals for new action items in the Comp Plan update. Staff is contacting lead agencies and will send proposed changes to the Legislature early in 2011. Action items will only be included if a lead agency is established. From his point of view as the author, it was interesting to form the review for readers. He tried to highlight items with long-term potential, as they set the course for our future. A more formal review may occur at the ten-year mark, and TCPD offers updates in each Annual Report. Comments and questions can be directed to him by phone or email.

Commissioner's Report – Project/Program Updates: Ed reported that the second round of applications for the Housing Fund has been evaluated, and announcements are expected in a few days. Some funds were unused and will carry over. The Fund seems to be hitting the mark, as applications match the intention of the collaboration. The Housing Needs Assessment is being reviewed by Jeanne Leccese, and she will be gathering actual building permit data from municipalities instead of or in addition to using information from the Assessment Department. Martha Armstrong suggested including number of units, single or multi, whether housing is affordable, and value per unit of the construction project. An inventory of subsidized housing was recently posted to the TCPD website. ▪ Gay Nicholson facilitated a meeting on financing energy efficiency projects. There is no authority for a PACE program, but it may be resolved at the federal level. ▪ Ithaca College and Cayuga Medical Center are examining use of combined heat & power districts, and staff will interact on those potential projects. ▪ Going onto the TCPD website by the end of the year are the wind atlas and the scenic resources protection guidelines. ▪ A watershed assessment is being undertaken of Taughannock Creek by Milone & MacBroom. This will be similar to the two previous studies undertaken by M&M, and a draft is expected this month. ▪ Newfield has committed to conduct an aquifer study. ▪ The Stream Corridor Program has finished out the NYS grant. This protected or enhanced two miles of stream corridor and planted 1800 trees and shrubs. ▪ The Ludlowville stormwater control project is moving forward with design plans provided by an engineering consultant for stabilization and stormwater retention, and SEMO and FEMA have made funding commitments. ▪ Staff will be doing detailed analysis and visiting with municipalities for the Development Focus Areas. ▪ TCPD is currently advertising for a Senior Planner for the tourism program, which is coming to the department. ▪ Ed has been working with

ITCTC on Complete Streets, which can identify the network of shared transportation areas and enhance proactive planning. ▪ Darby Kiley has begun work at TCPD in the gas drilling planner position primarily funded by the Park Foundation. Her work is predominately with municipalities and TCCOG.

2011 will bring more concerted efforts for community partnerships and idea collaboration. Ed welcomes ideas from members. Dooley Kiefer asked about use of “revised” and “completed” concerning action items in the Five Year Report. Ed said revised items were originally in the plan, but have been updated. Completed items are established and will continue under the lead agencies. Monika Roth asked if the waterfront development plan is off the radar, noting the written plan was completed. Ed said that development is still an action item (in Water Resources).

Budget Results/Impacts: Ed reported there was one change made to the TCPD budget prior to finalization. The Legislature reinstated funding for the 50% cost share for municipal contracts. ▪ Staff hours are being reduced 6 to 7% through a combination of changes. ▪ As of January 1st, TCPD will no longer make technical assistance comments on 239 development review letters. Municipalities will be notified. Dooley felt this may be one of the most effective things TCPD does and said she is sorry it won’t continue. Ed said it took a significant number of staff hours, but they will continue to meet the requirements for 239 reviews. If any municipality asks about a specific project, staff will provide comments. Municipalities have not always been receptive to the comments.

Sustainability Initiatives in 2011: Community Sustainability becomes part of Ed’s official role in 2011. ▪ The Downtown Ithaca Alliance commissioned an architect study on connectivity of downtown with campuses. The study recommended an intensive transit system between the campuses, downtown, and the waterfront. An example of use would be rowing teams getting to the Inlet. Gary Ferguson is making contacts for further discussion. Todd Bittner suggested providing information on how this system can link people to trails, too, and showing how the whole system links. He also suggested a trail from Fall Creek near the high school to link with the Waterfront Trail. Fernando deAragon pointed out a Way2Go meeting next week will have discussion with the architect on this study. ▪ Ed has begun discussions on the idea of a storefront location where citizens and visitors can learn about sustainability initiatives. This will also enhance opportunities for college students to engage on the topics, and include retired volunteers. Mina suggested including younger students, too. Martha said one goal should be to define what “sustainability” is for Tompkins County. She also suggested interacting with Discovery Trail members, who already have some displays up and running. John Gutenberger pointed out they can include TC3, which already has a campus presence on the Commons. Gary Ferguson is also helping with a location for this, and some sort of business plan will have to be developed. Gay said the original concept for the Green Resource Hub was a storefront, but they have developed more online. The web development has been so successful that “Tompkins Transitions” may be franchised. Ed went on to say federal grant programs want to see some regional impact. Tompkins County is not officially part of any regional agencies, and he thinks of us as more part of the Finger Lakes instead of the Southern Tier. Discussion and collaboration proposals will occur with other counties. This is an opportunity to set a goal to become a sustainable region and be a model. NYS lists its largest industries as agriculture and tourism, Finger Lakes Land Trust leads in linking open space, we are developing a blue way, and have a national forest. We could self-identify as a center for sustainability. Joe Mareane is interested in pursuing this with other county administrators, and Ed will discuss with other planning directors. Martha commented there are several efforts regionally already, and several directions to draw from, including jobs and political. What is our vision as a region? Ed said we need to step outside that rule. The Finger Lakes have agriculture, tourism, higher education and technology in

common. Outside the Finger Lakes watershed, those aspects drop away. This would not be a state designation. Martha said agriculture and tourism are not truly the largest industries, and it troubles her to use that combination as a basis. Monika said the Finger Lakes Institute has examined land use, and some regional efforts are in place. Gay said this was a topic of discussion at Sustainable Tompkins years ago about identifying all phases of food production. Andy Zepp asked if there is a synergy to be realized. He feels this is worth exploring, especially with Ontario County. Ed said it would only work if it resonates with other counties. The County Administrator and legislators are supportive.

Election of Officers for 2011/2012 – Fernando asked for volunteers to serve on a nominating committee. In discussion, it became evident that Mina Amundson was willing to service as chair, and Gay Nicholson was willing to serve as vice chair. Slate was moved by Monika Roth, seconded by Rick Couture and passed by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes from – Draft minutes moved by Dick Coogan, seconded by Rick Couture. Amendment suggested by Dooley Kiefer was accepted. Minutes approved by voice vote.

Announcements – Dick Coogan reported the Route 96 Corridor Study suggested restriping the road in Jacksonville. This has been done with positive results – traffic is slower. Crosswalks will be done in the spring. ▪ Monika Roth reported Cooperative Extension is doing outreach on the Emerald Ash Borer. This will start with development of an arborist list and gathering master foresters. Review of Ag District 1 will occur in 2011. She is hoping for NYS funding to update the County agriculture plan. CCE is working with some towns on their ag plans. She is also involved in examination of a food incubator at the northside P&C space. ▪ Dooley said there was much discussion last night at the Legislature on the IDA bond issue. It passed with 8 votes (minimum required). Technically it is not supporting retail, but supporting the other components required by the municipality as part of the planned development. She stressed the concept needs paying attention to. Gay voiced disappointment that the resolution passed, saying senior housing at market rate didn't seem to be a good use of stimulus funds. Martha said the funds have very specific parameters and are only available to 12/31. Dooley also announced the concept of a Center of Government building is being examined. This could become a shared resource, but that is not the purpose of the study.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department
Minutes adopted by PAB on January 26, 2011.

Membership:

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