

Tompkins County Council of Governments
 Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED
Thursday, September 26, 2013 3:00 PM
 Scott Heyman Conference Room

Attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Fredric Dietrich	Member, Town of Danby	Present	
Herb Engman	Member - Town of Ithaca	Present	
Kate Supron	Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights	Present	
Betty Conger	Member, Village of Groton	Present	
Mary Ann Sumner	Member, Town of Dryden	Present	3:12 PM
Irene Weiser	Member - Alternate, Town of Caroline	Present	
J.R. Clairborne	Member - Alternate, City of Ithaca	Present	
Ann Rider	Vice Chair, Town of Enfield	Present	3:18 PM
James Dennis	Alternate - Tompkins County	Present	
Joe Mareane	Tompkins County Administrator	Present	
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present	
Don Barber	Town of Caroline Supervisor	Present	
Martha Armstrong	VP, Director of Economic Development and Planning	Present	
Heather Filiberto	Director of Economic Development Services, TCAD	Present	
Jay Franklin	Tompkins County Director of Assessment	Present	

Guests: Bernd Blosssey, Associate Professor of Department of Natural Resources, Cornell; Jeff Shepardson, Community Dispute Resolution Center; James Balyszak and Sharon Anderson, Cooperative Extension;

Call to Order

Ms. Supron called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes Approval

7/25/2013 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Betty Conger, Member, Village of Groton representative
SECONDER:	Herb Engman, Member - Town of Ithaca
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Supron, Conger, Sumner, Weiser, Clairborne, Rider, Dennis

8/22/2013 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mary Ann Sumner, Member, Town of Dryden representative
SECONDER:	Betty Conger, Member, Village of Groton representative
AYES:	Dietrich, Engman, Supron, Conger, Sumner, Weiser, Clairborne, Rider, Dennis

Tompkins County Area Development Annual Update

Ms. Armstrong provided an overview of the County's economy and distributed a chart highlighting the employment and economic output within the County. The recession started in the United States in 2008, but did not hit New York and Ithaca until 2009, when everyone felt a big slump in employment. Recovery started in 2010 and Tompkins continues to have a slow steady job growth. Tompkins County Area Development is seeing better opportunities for people to get jobs. Some of the key areas of growth locally are education and health services. Manufacturing seems to be coming back and expects over the next three years to be looking at 40-50 jobs being created in that area. The other areas that are experiencing growth include retail, accommodations, and food service.

Ms. Sumner arrived at 3:12 p.m.

Ms. Filiberto provided background information about TCAD and what they are seeing. The following are highlights from her report:

Background

- Created in 1964
- 501©(6) local development corporation
- Mission - TCAD is dedicated to building a thriving and sustainable economy that improves the quality of life in Tompkins County by fostering the growth of business and employment

Governance

- 33-person board of directors
- local government (County, City, Caroline)
- education
- private sector
- business service providers
- labor, tourism, agriculture

Revenue Model

- 1/3 fee based, 1/3 county, 1/3 investors
- County increased 5-year commitment, a show of our strength in tough economic times
- convergent investor campaign raise investors

What do we do?

Economic Development Leadership

- Water and Sewer Study
- Lansing Town Center Incentive Zone
- Emerson
- (TCCOG) Call upon us for assistance

Direct Services to businesses (financing, property tax incentives, State/regional incentives)

Focus on high value sectors

- manufacturing/high tech (second largest export sector after education)
- value added ag/food based manufacturing

Focus on:

- expansion of existing business
- new business started by existing entrepreneurs
- business attraction (much less)

Allocating scarce resources - work with companies with:

- growth potential
- wages & benefits
- types of jobs (advancement)
- commitment to community
- return on investment

TCAD recent business services accomplishments

- IDA - CIITAP downtown density projects - Marriott, hotel Ithaca & Conf. Center, Harold Square
- IDA - Manufacturing expansions - soon to come one small, on potentially very large
- RLF - The Piggery, Finger Lakes Fresh
- Tech Transfer - start up NY, Incubator, FLEF

Ms. Rider arrived at 3:18 p.m.

Mr. Barber spoke of the work of TCAD and encouraged municipalities to continue or increase funding to TCAD.

Cornell Deer Management Summit

Mr. Blossey, Chair of the Cornell Deer Management Committee, spoke of the struggles in the community with deer and their affects. The struggles with deer management has led to various unsuccessful remedies of deer impacts on Lyme disease, vehicle accidents, etc. The question is what can be done about it. The State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has implemented a deer management focus in this area but does not encompass all of Tompkins County. The Cornell Deer Management Committee would like to propose as one of the largest land owners in the community to try to advance its stewardship of the local resources it has and invite all the communities to participate in developing common goals and metrics on how to measure what the deer impacts are. The Deer Management Committee is organizing a forum that will include representatives from the State and he hopes to have a representative from each community at this event. There will also be a lunch event on October 23rd at the Leven Center at the Cornell Plantations at 11:30 a.m. to discuss the willingness to move forward collectively and what that process will look like. Cornell has research capabilities that are wide ranging and said he is trying to bring the appropriate people to the table. By developing metrics on how to measure performance and doing it collectively he hopes that will be seen as a positive direction. He said Jim Sterba, Author of Nature Wars and Correspondent for the Wallstreet Journal and New York Times will be present for this event to answer questions. The evening of October 24th there will be a public forum where the community will be invited to ask questions of a panel of experts including Jim Sterba. More information on these two events will be made available next week.

Update on CDRC Training for TCCOG Officials

Mr. Shepardson distributed a copy of an invitation to a professional development training entitled "Effectively Facilitating Heated Meetings" for Tompkins County Council of Governments officials. There are three sessions scheduled: October 9th, October 16th, and October 23rd and will include the following content:

- Creating/Holding the Space: Meeting parameters and Procedures
- Understanding Conflict "Where's the HEAT coming from?"
- Managing Conflict/Enhancing Communication: Skills of Amplification
- Large Group Role Plays and/or Case Studies

- Sessions include dialogue and an exchange of learning/experience

Update on Hydrilla Eradication Project in Cayuga Inlet

Ms. Anderson said Cooperative Extension is celebrating its 100 year Anniversary this year and distributed an invitation to an all day celebration on October 14th.

Mr. Balyszak provided a PowerPoint presentation to update the Council on the Hydrilla Eradication Project. Hydrilla is a highly invasive plant species. In 2011 it was discovered in the Cayuga Inlet. Mr. Balyszak gave a description of what the Hydrilla plant looks like and said it can grow in water up to 25-30 feet deep. It produces tubers that allow it to stay dormant in the soil for many years. The plant is very brittle and when it breaks up and the fragments can spread very easily by a variety of ways including on boat propellers from one water body to another. The risk for spread of this plant is very enormous in the Finger Lakes and Great Lakes.

Following the finding of the Hydrilla plant, the Hydrilla Task Force was formed. The main goal of the group is eradication and preventing its spread as outlined in the Management Plan. The areas where the plant was found were identified and appropriate permits were obtained to begin the necessary treatment to eradicate. He explained the monitoring and treatment processes that have taken place over the last couple of years. In 2013, using the same processes, the plant was discovered in the Fall Creek area. The treatment for that area is beginning today.

He spoke briefly about the outreach efforts at various levels of State and local agencies as well as boaters, anglers, etc.

Ms. Anderson continued the presentation and said she serves as the Chair of the Outreach Committee. She spoke of the value of outreach and the importance of community acceptance through research and sharing of information from other communities in different States. Having community support for herbicide treatment is critical to continue with the treatments for eradication. It has been a very transparent process and said one of the things they are doing is education. It is very important for people to understand what Hydrilla is and the impact of its existence. Part of the outreach effort has been to make information available locally and with other States.

Ms. Anderson spoke of the trained volunteers who go out and look for Hydrilla on a regular basis. She also spoke of the funding and that the State is not providing any funds for 2013. In addition to other organizations supporting this effort and providing funding, the Towns of Ithaca and Ulysses have both set aside funding for this in 2013. By having local support, it helps leverage funding at the State and Federal levels.

Ms. Sumner believes the public may not be aware of how serious Hydrilla is and asked how quickly it grows if untreated. Mr. Balyszak believes that it establishes itself within a one to two year period and that in a four to five year period the entire inlet could be completely covered. Ms. Sumner expressed concern with protecting Dryden Lake and asked if information could be posted and made available in the Dryden area. Ms. Anderson said she would follow-up on this.

Request to Sponsor Event and Approve Funds for Videotaping - Marcellus & Utica Shale Gas Potential in New York

Ms. Weiser said Tompkins County Council of Governments is being asked to co-sponsor a database presentation about the potential for the recovery of gas from Marcellus and Utica Shale. The presentation is being given by a variety of participants including former employees of the industry. She briefly highlighted the topics that would be presented. She said the request is for \$300 to support Chris

McConkey making a videotape of the event to make available. It is scheduled for October 30th at 7 p.m. at Hollister Hall Auditorium, Cornell.

It was MOVED by Ms. Weiser, seconded by Mr. Engman, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve \$300 to support Chris McConkey videotaping the October 30th presentation and for Tompkins County Council of Governments to co-sponsor the event.

Report from Cable Committee

Mr. Engman said the Cable Committee has had its technical review. Once that is integrated into the draft agreement, it will be sent out to the participating municipalities. The one question that has been raised is when the local municipal attorneys' should review it. He said it is being recommended that the review take place following negotiating sessions by the negotiating team. The reason is there are three attorneys already involved. He said it would be more appropriate for each municipality to have their attorney review the agreement at the time approval and signatures are needed on the contracts.

Report from Tompkins County Assessment Department

Mr. Franklin distributed a memorandum outlining the Assessment Department's activities. He said since becoming Director, he has been trying to make a more local appearance and thought one of the best ways to do that was attend a Tompkins County Council of Governments meeting.

He proposed the following schedule to report to this group that he hopes will provide timely information to municipalities:

March - To report on the work that was done for the current assessment roll. Preliminary Change notices are mailed in early March of each year.

July - To report on the final assessment roll and the number of informal reviews/grievances that were received during the year. This will also be a time to report on the work that will be undertaken to prepare the next year's assessment roll. This will also allow for a legislative update of changes in the Real Property Tax Law.

November - To report on any changes to the work to prepare for the next assessment roll. To discuss any information needed in order to process tax bills for January.

Mr. Franklin said the Tompkins County Assessment Department is one of two true assessing units in New York State. The Department is in effect the assessment staff for each municipality and said his staff is always available to assist. The Department received the "Excellence in Assessing Award" for 2013 from the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services.

The following are some key points highlighted from the 2013 Assessment Roll:

- Properties revalued for 2013 Roll
 - Farmland and Vacant Land
 - Residential
 - Town of Lansing - Conlon/Buck, Waterwagon, Sunset, Dart Drive, Horizons
 - Town of Dryden - Tannery Circle, Scout Lane, Scenic Way, Lee/Hollister Road
 - Town of Ithaca - Planned Unit Developments
 - Commercial
 - Banks
 - Cell Towers

- Restaurants
- Downtown Properties (City and Villages)
- 5,666 Preliminary Changes in Assessment
- 1,085 Tentative Roll Changes (changes since Preliminary plus unchanged informal meetings)
- 11.31% of the changes contested their value via informal or Grievance (average over 13 years is 11.31%). The typical range for assessment challenges is you plan for 20% of the changes, you hope for 10% but you expect 15%.
- 4 Small Claim Assessment Review Cases
- 18 Certiorari Cases

Preliminary Plans for 2014 Assessment Roll:

- Residential
 - Assessment Uniformity Review
 - Countywide Mobile Homes
 - Village of Groton
 - Old Style Houses in Lansing and Caroline
 - Assessment Typically Increasing
 - Ellis Hollow
 - City of Ithaca
- Commercial
 - Apartments
 - Self-Storage Units

Other Key Department Updates:

- Basic STAR re-registration - approximately 20,000 property owners have to reapply.
 - Increase in paperwork for corrections and penalty/renunciation calculations.
- Over 960 residents are turning 65 next year in the County - increase in Senior Exemptions.

Broadband - Report

Mr. Barber spoke as the Town of Caroline representative and said the Town has had a lot more to do with Broadband than most communities because of the number of poles that need to be put in. As a result of that they have learned some things that are causing concerns. One is recognizing this is a Daisy Chain type structure that will connect everyone to each other. The Town has been trying to talk to Clarity Connect about Phase 2, but they have been less than willing. He asked about the poles and when they would be fixed if there was an ice storm or an accident involving a pole. He asked about priorities, timelines, and the impact to the subscribers who have businesses and are using broadband. He asked what happens if Clarity Connect is bought by another company and questioned price control. The proposed system is not covered by the Public Service Commission and has no regulations or quality guarantee. He asked what happens when technology changes and new hardware is needed. He said currently each municipality is on their own with no leverage. He asked if municipalities would consider joining together to gain some leverage because each municipality is in this together.

It was recommended that this issue be brought back to the next meeting for further discussion.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Broadband - Discussion (Don Barber)

Minutes
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Smart Energy Policy Committee (Irene Weiser)
Road Preservation Law (Discuss municipalities communicating among each other) (Mary Ann
Sumner)
Tour new Legislature Chambers (Jim Dennis)

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.