

Tompkins County Council of Governments
Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 7/26/2012
Thursday, June 28, 2012 3:00 PM
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Attendance

Members Present: (9 municipalities)

T/Caroline – D. Frongillo, I Weiser	V/Groton – B. Conger
T/Danby – R. Dietrich, L. Shawley	C/Ithaca – J.R. Clairborne
T/Ulysses – E.Thomas	Co./Tompkins – P. Stein
T/Lansing – R. Hopkins (excused at 3:45 p.m.)	T/Ithaca – H. Engman, B. Goodman
	V/Cayuga Heights – K. Supron (excused at 4:10 p.m.)

Municipalities Not in Attendance: (8 municipalities) V/Dryden, V/Freeville, V/Lansing, T/Groton, V/Groton, T/Enfield, T/Dryden, T/Newfield

County Staff: J. Mareane, M. Lynch, P. Younger, County Administration, M. Pottorff, Legislature Office; L. Schill, Tompkins County Planning Department

Guests: P. Poist, TCAT; M. Armstrong, H. Filiberto, Tompkins County Area Development; S. Anderson, Cooperative Extension; C. Chock, Tompkins County Legislator; G. Hart, Finger Lakes Community News; D. Smith, H. Lambert, Friends of the Hydrilla Task Force; J. Wilson, Dryden Resource Awareness Coalition

Call to Order

Mr. Engman called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit) Announcement

Ms. Poist reported the TCAT advisory committee was established in 2006 with the intent to serve as an extra set of eyes and ears for TCAT as members are riders of busses. The committee holds regular monthly meetings at TCAT (2nd Monday of each month) and reports on what they see and hear while using the TCAT bus service. Minutes of meetings are taken and given to the Transit Services Committee which is under the auspices of the TCAT Board of Directors. She said membership of the advisory committee has dwindled over time from 25 to 6 members and she asked that TCCOG members inform anyone from the public who they think would be interested in serving.

Report on TCAD Activities

Ms. Armstrong distributed an economic impact report and reviewed the impact of the recession that began in the United States in 2008. She said the recession did not hit New York and Ithaca until 2009, when everyone felt a big slump in employment. Tompkins County lost approximately 200 jobs in 2011 (.04%). New York State began to experience an upturn in employment in 2012. She also reviewed a table that showed the performance of key employment sectors during the recession in addition to a three-year forecast, noting the biggest impacts were to the workforce, education, and manufacturing sectors. She said it will take a long time for the United States to get out of pre-recession employment numbers and she expects it to take Tompkins County about three years.

Ms. Filiberto spoke to the work TCAD has been doing with local businesses, stating they focus their limited resources in the areas that provide the best return on investment. They primarily provide services to businesses that sell a product or service outside of Tompkins County and work primarily with advanced manufacturing or high-tech companies that make significant capital investments in their equipment and buildings, and are creating jobs that are increasing the tax base. She said these companies are creating jobs that are paying a livable wage; the average non-management wage is over \$19 per hour.

Ms. Filiberto said this revolving loan fund has grown by over 60% over the last year and currently there are approximately \$1.8 million in loan funds in the community. Over the past year they have made five loans, including Cortland Produce, Litronics, Mesmerize, Concept Systems, and Challenge Industries. She also reported on the IDA (Industrial Development Agency) activities and how they have worked with local governments and communities.

Ms. Armstrong reported on a mix of other activities TCAD does that relate to local government work. She said when they were first asked by the County to take on economic development strategy work on a Countywide basis they made their Board larger and more diverse. It includes the City Mayor, two representatives from rural municipalities, two County Legislators, a mix of small and large businesses and a number of agencies such as the United Way and the Chamber of Commerce, and an agricultural seat. At the request of Don Barber, Cooperative Extension will be making a presentation at the next meeting on July 19th at noon. Ms. Armstrong reiterated the importance of TCAD having municipalities as partners and encouraged towns and villages to reach out to TCAD if they have a need for assistance.

Ms. Armstrong reported on the Code Enforcement Survey that was conducted at the request of Don Barber and provided a summary of the responses, noting most municipalities had at least one person participate in the survey and there was a good spread of responses over the topic areas. She stated there were 19 usable surveys from municipalities, 13 from staff, 5 from a board chair or elected official, and 1 was unidentified. She will be working on producing a summary of the responses. At the request of members she will leave the survey open to allow for additional submissions to be received. She provided members with a copy of the approved 2011 Work Plan for TCAD.

Presentation on Hydrilla

Sharon Anderson, Cooperative Extension and member of the Hydrilla Task Force, provided a PowerPoint presentation on Hydrilla and the location in the Cayuga Inlet of where it was first found in August 2011 and noted the following points:

- It is hoped that Hydrilla will be eradicated by 2020 but it will not be easy;
- It is a very aggressive and one of the most invasive aquatic plants in the world and is spread by humans and will not “run its course”.
- Spreads in three different ways: plant fragments, urions, and tubers;
- Shades out native plants and decreases the dissolved oxygen in the area;
- For an unknown reason, Hydrilla produces blue/green toxin which produces neurotoxins and is not good for drinking water and has been linked to eagle deaths;
- Economically it impedes boating, fishing, and swimming which are important to the area’s tourism as the Lake is the second reason why people come to the area;
- Florida has given up trying to eradicate Hydrilla and just tries to manage it, which costs millions of dollars every year;
- This is the first place hydrilla has been found in the Great Lakes Basin;
- The Hydrilla Task Force was formed in the Fall of 2011;
- Herbicides are the only thing that is likely to be successful and a treatment was done in

- October 2011 and works only if it is in contact with a plant for a minimum of 60 days;
- There are several outreach efforts underway, including coordination with other counties;
- A second herbicide treatment is scheduled for July 11th;
- There will be monitoring to see if Hydrilla has gone into the Lake.

Ms. Anderson summarized the plan for eradication is herbicides, monitoring, and education. The estimated cost at this point is \$1 million each year until at least 2020. She stressed public education is critical and that boaters need to know they need to take any plant material off of their boat or watercraft.

Ms. Lambert and Mr. Smith thanked members for the support this issue has received from all levels of government. She said workshops are being held around the Lake to help people be able to identify and report a finding of Hydrilla. The Friends of the Hydrilla Task Force has been doing outreach seeking funds that are needed to fund the public outreach efforts that address monitoring, signage on all 33 marinas on the Lake, and outreach and education. Mr. Smith said all municipalities will be contacted with a request for a contribution to these efforts. The website containing information is www.Stophydrilla.org.

Introduction - Greener Cleaner Southern Tier Plan - Leslie Schill

Ms. Schill, Tompkins County Planner, reported on the Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Plan. This is a Statewide effort being rolled out by the Governor through the Cleaner Greener Communities Program. It is a new program that is following in the format of the regional format of the Regional Economic Development Council and is being developed in eight months and includes eight counties. The plan which has already started will have a focus on energy and greenhouse gas emissions reductions and increased sustainability in the Southern Tier. The Plan will address the following nine topic areas: energy and greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, livable communities, economic development, water management, waste management, working lands and open space, climate change adaptation and governance. Tompkins County has been the lead and will be managing this project and the 40-member Council has already met twice. Ms. Schill said there has already been public outreach efforts following the regional kick-off meeting that was held in April.

She presented information on the draft goals and asked members to review the goals and comment through the interactive website: www.cleanergreenersoutherntier.

Once goals have been identified they will establish targets and indicators that will be associated with the goals. Anticipated outcomes include public engagement, a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory, regional sustainability goals, best practices and case studies reports. A 20-year implementation plan of the project will be developed in addition to a 5-year action strategy and a top 10 regional project portfolio. Ms. Schill said this is being viewed as a way to create new regional collaboration and partnerships and to put Tompkins County in a position to be competitive for the implementation funding.

Report on Shared Services Grant Opportunity

Shared Services Grant Update (DOC ID: 3316)

Mr. Mareane reported on a new performance and efficiency grant and distributed a press release from the Governor's Office. His interpretation of the grant is that it is for projects that have already been done and work is in place that are to produce savings. Quoted from the Press Release: "These competitive grants will reward local governments that have taken the lead in reducing property taxes, streamlining government and making communities of New York a better place in which to live and work." Grant requests are due by July 25th. Additional information can be obtained at

www.dos.ny.gov/funding

Mr. Mareane was asked to look into whether the Health Consortium would be eligible to apply for funds.

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Report from Cable Committee

Mr. Engman reported the Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis. A small sub-group is currently reviewing contracts that have been forwarded from various places. Once that is complete they will work on creating a model and making a request to meet with Time Warner Cable.

Update from Gas Drilling Task Force

Ms. Thomas said the Task Force did not meet in June.

Discussion of Expenses for Road Forum

Mr. Engman said there was a request for funds in the amount of \$300 for a video recording of the Road Forum that was held in Cortland. Members requested further explanation and a report from Mr. Barber. This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Minutes Approval - May 24, 2012

Due to lack of quorum the approval of minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

RESULT: DEFERRED

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.