

**TOMPKINS COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MINUTES
February 22, 2007**

Present: D. Austic-T.Ulysses, D. Barber-T. Caroline, S. Farkas-T. Lansing,
M. Lynch-County Admin., C. Peterson-City of Ithaca, M. Robertson-
Legislator, S. Trumbull-T. Dryden, C. Valentino-T. Ithaca, Stephen
Whicher-County Admin, G. Stevenson-Legislator, Don Hartill-V.
Lansing

Meeting called to order at 3:10 p.m.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the 1/25/07 meeting with changes.
Made by: D. Austic
Second: Don Hartill
Carried

Resolution Regarding the EMS & Fire Advisory Board:

Legislator Greg Stevenson wrote to Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairbourne asking that the resolution include paid, as well as volunteer, firefighters.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction, what are others doing:

- The City of Ithaca passed their Greenhouse gas reduction resolution in June 2006. Their plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2016. They have a contract with Johnson Controls for energy performance regarding energy conservation measures that also includes an educational component for Ithaca City workforce and the community. Areas to work on:
 - 1) Vehicle Fleet
 - 2) Codes and Regulations, Zoning/Land Use
 - 3) Education and Citizen Involvement
 - 4) Metering Greenhouse Gas Emission
- The Village of Groton has fewer vehicles in their fleet and the new town hall is geo-thermal.
- Ulysses addressed the issue of most alternative fuels not generating as much power so we should also consider the efficiency of vehicles with better gas mileage.
- Are we looking to reduce consumption or emissions?
- Tompkins County has adopted a B-5 strategy, using 5% bio-fuel now and moving up to 20%. There is no change over of engines at 5%.

- Something to look into is a “Car Share Group”; you have to have a membership. You pay for the time you use the vehicle. Businesses could use the cars during the day and community members in the evening. This would amortize the maintenance of the fleet. Some local governments are doing this already.
- The new TCAT buses will be hybrid.
- Possible pooling of purchases with a blanket contract, not individual buying, for Cornell and the County Municipalities.
- Geo-thermal building is an issue that also ties into housing for the County.

Planning Board Training:

C. Valentino reported out about NYS Department of State Training for Local Officials, Planning Board Training coordination within Tompkins County. Cortland County offers a free training for planning and zoning boards. TCCOG could set up the trainings, possibly work with Cooperative Extension and share the costs. The City of Ithaca is working on this as well. Ms. Valentino volunteered to discuss this further with Cooperative Extension and report back to the Council at their March meeting.

Deer Management:

Cornell is continuing to pursue this. There was a meeting in the Village a while back discussing approval of hunting-bow or gun. You have to have the approval from the property owner. Mr. Hartill is looking at indemnity for property owners. The hunt can be done at any time; it requires submission of a plan before someone is given authority for any such operation. Farmers can do this at any time if they can prove damage to their farm by the deer. Lansing is doing an educational program for their community.

Countywide Housing Strategy:

Ed Marx from the Tompkins County Planning department presented the Housing Strategy for Tompkins County. Some of Mr. Marx’ key points were:

- There is a severe shortage of housing in Tompkins County.
- The most critical gap for housing is for families at or below median income (\$50, 000 or less).
- Affordable housing, according to HUD, is defined as housing which costs no more than 30% of the household income.

- When more than 30% of the household income is used for housing, there is a negative effect on other household spending, such as health care, clothing, transportation and food.
- The county's Affordable Housing Needs Assessment identifies a need for at least 3,894 new non-student housing units between 2005 and 2014, which includes both rental and owner-occupied units.
- State and Federal housing funds have not kept pace with need.

Suggestions for building affordable housing in this area:

- A nodal pattern of development
- Focus on in-fill development and development in existing population centers.
- Areas where public water and sewer infrastructure is in place or can be developed in a cost effective way.
- Higher density locations
- Mixed use and multi-family expansion

Four recommended strategies to promote affordable housing:

- 1) Inclusionary and Incentive Zoning
- 2) Community Housing Trust
- 3) Employer Assistance
- 4) Community Housing Affordability Fund

Planning proposes to monitor both supply and demand to determine how successful these efforts are at meeting the community's housing needs. They will also include a survey to provide current and trend information, which will be repeated on a regular basis if support can be obtained from community partners.

Discussion Topics:

- Collaboration throughout the County will garner the best results.
- There are concerns with this being a huge project-units tend to be more expensive than people of median income, who live and work here, can afford.
- We need to speak with a unified voice from all the entities in the County.
- Work with educational institutions, financial institutions, employers, major housing agencies, etc.
- TCCOG members need to consult their boards seeking support so that we can procure cohesive endorsement from this organization.
- How far out from the City are we willing to go?
- HUD also has a report out that the City of Ithaca needs 1,400 to 1,500 additional housing units.
- Ithaca City would like to see transportation visited along with this.
- Taxes and heat are significant financial issues in Upstate New York.
- What is the right kind of zoning and will everyone have buy-in?
- We need clear guidelines as to what we are looking for.
- How realistic and practical is this project?

- Conservation is the best strategy-older housing is the biggest issue with windows and doors; maybe we could offer a subsidy to homeowners.
- When something is being subsidized, someone somewhere is paying for it. Where will that be in this situation?
- Our residents are struggling with housing affordability. We can't afford not to take action on this.

Community Budget Forums:

M. Lynch asked that the TCCOG members remind their communities about the upcoming budget forums: March 3rd in Dryden at the firehouse, March 10th in Enfield at the elementary school and March 24th in Ithaca-the Human Services Building.

Housekeeping:

S. Whicher reported that he had heard from Jay Gallagher, a reporter for the Albany Times, about Tompkins County's SMSI proposal; we may see something in the news next week.

Recreation Partnership's reorganization meeting is 2/28/07, 3 to 8 p.m. at Chemung Canal Trust. They are looking for input from the municipalities-concerning revision of their charter.

Next Meeting Topics:

Planning Board Training-C. Valentino

Update on Volunteer Firefighter issues-C. Valentino

Upstate New York task force for waste haulers, to stay on routes 81 and 90

C. Peterson

County and City Emergency Management plan re: snow action. C. Peterson

Inclusionary Zoning/Zoning-All

Greenhouse gas reduction topic open to other municipalities who want to discuss what they are doing-All.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 4:30 pm

Made by: S. Farkas

Second: C. Peterson

Carried

