

**Tompkins County Council of Governments
March 27, 2008 Meeting**

Minutes

Present: D. Austic-T. Ulysses, E. Conger-V. Groton, R. Dietrich-T. Danby,
R. Dolge-T. Newfield, H. Engman-T. Ithaca, D. Hartill-V. Lansing, M. Koplinka-Loehr-Co. Legislature,
G. Morey-T. Groton, F. Pudufalski-T. Enfield,
C. Peterson-City of Ithaca, M. Sumner-T. Dryden, S. Whicher-Co. Admin, B. Goodman-T. Ithaca

Guests: Frank Collyer-V. Cayuga Heights, Liz Thomas-T. Lansing, Linda Adams-T. Caroline

Meeting commenced at 3:00 pm.

Motion to accept the minutes:

Made by: R. Dietrich

Second: F. Pudufalski

Carried Unanimously

Purchase of Development Rights Program:

Scott Doyle of Tompkins County Planning Department and Monika Roth of Cornell Cooperative Extension gave a presentation on two tools by which farmers in this community can preserve their land as farmland.

One tool is the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. PDR programs pay property owners to protect their land from development. Landowners sell agricultural conservation easements to a government agency or private conservation organization. New York State's PDR program is called the Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program. In the PDR program Planning is currently working with four different farms in Tompkins County, two in Lansing and two in Dryden.

The second tool is the Municipal Agriculture Planning Grant program. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets initiated this program last fall. Two municipalities in Tompkins County have submitted and been awarded grants-Ulysses and Lansing. This is a non-competitive grant of \$25,000 awarded to municipalities to assist in developing an agricultural-specific plan.

As part of the PDR process the 2008 Tompkins County Farm Community Preliminary Applications were disseminated. Mr. Doyle and Ms. Roth are available if your municipality would like further information.

Health Benefits Update:

Overview:

Information disseminated at the meeting with regards to the Shared Municipal Services Health Benefits Consortium consisted of:

- An overview/history of the grant,
- Critical dates pertaining to the grant,
- A proposed health benefits project timeline, and
- A list of the health benefits steering committee members.

Steve Locey sends his apologies for not being in attendance; however, he will be at the April 24th meeting.

In the fall of 2006 Tompkins County, on behalf of TCCOG, was granted a \$266,000 Shared Municipal Service Incentive (SMSI) grant. The grant awarded to TCCOG is in support of TCCOG's initiative to form an intermunicipal Health Care Consortium with a target implementation date of January 2010.

The formation of the Health Benefit Consortium is planned in three phases:

- Phase 1: Create project structure for Health Care Consortium
 - Data Collection
 - Proposed structure and agreement
 - Communicate with unions, members and elected officials
- Phase 2: Develop a Health Benefit Plan Design
 - Develop formal communication plans
 - Develop plan design
 - Begin incentive plan design
 - Finalize structure and consortium agreement
- Phase 3: Implementation
 - Continue communication plan
 - Establish governing body
 - Develop initial policies of the governing body
 - Enroll members

Currently we are finalizing Phase 1 and have an RFP out for Phases 2 and 3. More detailed information on the history of the SMSI Health Benefits grant can be found on the Tompkins County Home page (click on “Shared Services Health Benefits Study”).

Next Steps:

Each Municipality needs to pass a resolution in support of the Health Benefits Consortium and have a Chief Elected Officer sign an agreement to support formation of the consortium. Sample copies of both documents were attached to the email sent out with the information for this meeting. Doreen will send clean electronic copies to the municipalities and their clerks with a reminder that this must be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

The resolution passed by each municipal board and the agreement signed by the Chief Elected Officer must be returned to County Administration no later than May 10, 2008.

Nominating Committee Report:

R. Dolge informed the membership that there were two candidates for Chair of TCCOG. Both candidates kindly agreed that they would take the Vice Chair position in the event that they were not elected Chair.

Candidates were: Doug Austic and Herb Engman
Mr. Engman and Mr. Austic were asked to leave the meeting room.
Members present voted and the proxy votes were tallied.

Mr. Austic was elected Chair and Mr. Engman became Vice Chair. Votes of members present and proxy tallied were:
8 for Mr. Austic and 4 for Mr. Engman

Congratulations to both of you, thank you for taking on this task and we look forward to working together.

Dog Control RFP Process Update:

R. Dietrich disseminated information compiled regarding ways to address the issue of distributing fees for animal/dog control. The subcommittee is concerned about how its time should best be allocated to proceed with work on this project.

1. Negotiate with SPCA and Abigail Smith
2. Continue with the RFP process

3. Develop an RFQ

Mr. Dietrich would like to know how the membership would like to proceed. A discussion followed, key topics were:

- SPCA seems to have more room for negotiation.
- SPCA is applying for 2 Doing Business As licenses: one for SPCA and one for Animal Control to better delineate services and the funds supporting them.
- Steve Thayer, City of Ithaca Controller, has offered to talk to Ms. Smith/SPCA.
- Is there another provider available to take on the entire county?
- There has been no usable formula established for fees.
- Ulysses has an agreement with SPCA for basically \$100 per dog-TCCOG members would like to review the agreement between Ulysses and SPCA.
- Will the SPCA do a contract if not all municipalities contract with them?
- Groton and Ulysses will not be participating in the next contract.

The consensus of the group was to proceed using two formats:

1. Continue to negotiate with the SPCA
2. Continue to look into alternate entities to do animal control services.

Next Meeting Topics:

Health Benefits: Steve Locey

Animal Control

Bring back the list of topics for membership to review and discuss to:

Keep an item, remove an item, and consider new topics.

Discuss what is involved with the Office of Real Property Services Grant,

Clerks are in need of some clarification.

Motion to adjourn

Made by: R. Dolge

Second: C. Peterson

Meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm