

Minutes

Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee Tompkins County Legislature

Regular Meeting

November 15, 2007 3:30 PM Old Jail Conference Room

Members Present: Pam Mackesey (Vice Chair), Jim Dennis, Frank Proto, Tyke Randall

Member Excused: Martha Robertson

Staff: Fernando De Aragon, ITCTC
Scott Doyle, TCPD
Jackie Kippola, T C Administration
Jeanne Leccese, TCPD
Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning & PW
Dwight Mengel, DSS
Leslie Schill, TCPD
Kathy Wilsea, TCPD

Visitors: Martha Armstrong, Tompkins County Area Development
Brett Bossard, Community Arts Partnership
Rick Carnrike, TCAT

1 Call to Order & Agenda Changes -- The meeting was called to order at 3:35 PM by the Vice Chair, Pam Mackesey, with members Frank Proto and Jim Dennis present. Martha Robertson was excused. Item 2b was postponed, as Stu Stein was unable to attend today. The TCAT resolution will be taken first.

3 Tompkins County Area Development

a) **Resolution:** Resolution in Support of the County-wide Water and Sewer Evaluation – Martha Armstrong had provided background information prior to the meeting. Martha said TCAD facilitated the grant application for the County. Tompkins County Council of Governments supported the joint study concept, which will identify current systems and show possible links and expectations for growth in the next ten years. When Martha discussed the concept at COG, all members present voted in support. The last study was in the mid-1990s. An RFP went to regional engineers and was posted on a State website for Central NY projects. The study would be funded by a grant and IDA. Frank said he was taken aback that a client committee issued an RFP. Jackie Kippola said the County is authorized to issue RFPs that benefit municipalities. Frank asked if this created a commitment for TC Planning Dept. Ed Marx said there is no commitment for TCPD to proceed with any projects. This information would be useful to municipalities and agencies, and valuable as affordable housing is developed throughout the County. Identification of existing infrastructure capacity allows faster site selection for construction. Frank felt issuing the RFP was a step ahead of where the process should be. Jim said Ulysses, Trumansburg, and Taughannock State Park have water controversies, and he hopes this will be authorized so the information becomes available. [Tyke Randall arrived at 3:51 PM.] Frank said his concerns are about process. He wanted those present to let staff know the process is disappointing to him. COG members can represent their municipalities, but can't authorize the County to act. The resolution was **amended** to add a Resolved clause to establish the Chair of the Legislature or his designee as authorized to act on this grant. Martha said the RFP went out as a County document in order to meet the Shared Municipal Services Initiative grant cycle. Ed reported that a non-profit organization can't apply for SMSI, and the County is doing the application because TCAD is a County agency. The RFP was issued to get an idea of cost. Committees are informed of intentions to apply for grants, and this is what is happening today. The application cycle has a deadline looming, and some language in the resolution is specific to the requirements for the grant application. Tyke said the Town of Groton took no action last night on supporting this application because council members were not familiar

with the project. Martha said the explanation provided to PDEQ members had language segments taken directly from the RFP. The added Resolved clause was further **amended** to change the contact from the Chair of the Legislature to the County Administrator. A special meeting will be set up for Tuesday, 11/20 at 5 PM, prior to the Legislature meeting. The RFP will be examined and the cleaned up resolution will be the action item. Martha Armstrong will provide documents to Kathy Wilsea for that meeting. Frank urged Martha to check on how flexible the language can be.

1 Strategic Tourism Planning Board

a) Introduction of Community Arts Partnership Director, Brett Bossard -- Jackie Kippola introduced Brett Bossard, who started recently as CAP Director following the resignation of Richard Driscoll and interim directorship of Dick Charsky. Brett spoke briefly, stressing that the local arts community clearly appreciates the support of County government.

4 Transportation

a) Draft Coordinated Transportation Plan – Fernando de Aragon said this type of plan is required in order to qualify for some federal funding. Information will be shared with various service agencies. Dwight Mengel said the transportation partners are also participating in outreach programs with the County Office for the Aging. A survey of human services agencies will go out very soon and results will be organized for a transportation summit in January. This will also complement the TCAT Transit Development Plan. He sees long-term coordination among agencies. Frank requested copies of the draft report for PDEQ members. Jim voiced disappointment in the delay of the car share program.

b) **Resolution:** Authorizing County Bus Lease with First Transit, Inc. for TCAT Rural Public Transportation Services – Resolution moved by Jim, seconded by Pam. Dwight explained that the County holds title for all federally-funded buses in use by TCAT and contractors. TCAT conducted a competitive selection process, and chose First Transit. The existing lease has terms of termination and establishing equity for closing out the lease with Tioga Transit. Frank said he was not supportive of the last change, nor this one. He feels the process is flawed. He remains concerned about First Transit's operation history in Tioga County. This is strictly a monetary decision, which he recognized as substantial even though gas price fluctuation is separate. Vote 3 yes: 1 no (Frank).

c) **Resolution:** Sponsoring First Transit, Inc. for NYS Transit Operating Assistance Program – Moved by Jim, seconded by Pam. Frank said First Transit had two representatives at the TCAT meeting. First Transit will allow Tioga Transit employees to apply for jobs. It is not clear if they will have a terminal in Tompkins County. Their terminal is in Nichols, and they have no personnel here. Vote 3 yes, 1 no (Frank).

5 Tompkins County Planning Department

a) **Resolution:** Acceptance of Small Cities Grant – Homeownership VIII -- Resolution moved by Frank, seconded by Tyke, and passed 4:0.

b) Update on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory – Leslie Schill distributed information and said this is information based on 2006 data. A final inventory is expected for 2009, since our target was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% over the period from 1998 to 2008. Some data was revised in the 1998 baseline using new methodology or data. Leslie said we were emitting more than originally thought for 1998, and current numbers are definitely past what we expected. In order to meet goals, the County will have to look at further options for improvement, which Leslie expects to come from the energy study proposed in the Planning Department next year. Three ideas have been passed by Facilities & Infrastructure Committee and will go to Government Operations for review. They are establishment of an environmental purchasing policy, waste reduction, and a conservation education program for County employees. Frank said he received a memo from a constituent who suggested County vehicles be shut down when stopped, which falls in the conservation education program.

c) **Resolution:** Acceptance of Grant from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Water Quality Improvement Project Program for the Tompkins County Stream Corridor Protection and Management Program – Moved by Jim, seconded by Tyke. Frank asked if any of the Flood Hazard

Mitigation Program funds would to to this stream corridor protection program. Scott Doyle said those projects are separately funded. Ed Marx said the FHMP projects would count as matching funds to leverage this grant. Vote 4:0.

d) Community Housing Trust Update – Ed Marx said this is part of the Housing Strategy. Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Service got a Park Foundation grant to work with an attorney to develop standard language that could be used here and elsewhere. Cornell University has made a commitment to invest \$20 million over ten years in the community, and half will be for transportation and half for housing. One idea is to capitalize a housing trust. CU wants collaboration, and Ed suggests contributing \$500,000 from the CDBT repaid loan funds. The first six homeownership grants have brought in repayments, which currently stand over \$800,000. We also have \$2.5 million in outstanding loans, which we will receive payments on. This concept appears to meet HUD parameters. This would then be announced as a million dollar trust with CU and Tompkins County contributing, and Ed hopes it would bring commitment from other agencies and banks. He anticipates it would be administered by INHS and Better Housing for Tompkins County. A homeowner would buy the house, but not the land, and there would be a cap on equity available at time of sale. The program would work with municipalities to match land with developers under model parameters. Infrastructure development might be part of the trust or done by developers to make the property suitable.

e) Report on the Route 13/366 Corridor Study – Ed Marx said this was one of the pilot studies conducted with federal grant funds. It examined Route 13 from the Cortland County line to NYSEG and 366 from NYSEG to the Ithaca town line. The objectives were to examine patterns of development that would mitigate the level of service anticipated with development on this road. 366 has a very high accident rate, so if 13 developed like 366, an increased accident rate would be projected. The consultant worked with a stakeholder group from the municipalities to examine preferred development scenarios. Zoning can help set the mix of uses allowed, and the Village of Dryden is already zoned. The area by NYSEG was identified for medium density, and Varna for some infill and improved sidewalks. Varna is hampered by topography to the east, Cornell Plantations to the north, and CU agricultural land to the south. The consultant provided sketches of suitable nodal development.

f) Commissioner's Report – Ed Marx had nothing further to report.

6 Committee Administration

a) Approval of Minutes from 10/18/2007 – Moved by Frank, seconded by Jim and approved without change by vote of 4:0.

b) Review of 2007 Committee Goals – Goals were not addressed.

7 **Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Dept.