

Minutes

Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee Tompkins County Legislature

Regular Meeting

February 12, 2007 3:30 PM Legislature Chambers

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

Joint meeting with Budget and Capital Committee: Mike Hattery, Kathy Luz Herrera, Michael Koplinka-Loehr, Nathan Shinagawa, Mike Sigler

Staff: Diane Bradac, Tompkins Workforce New York
Kate Hackett, TCPD
Joan Jurkowich, TCPD
Michelle King, Ithaca Journal
Jackie Kippola, T C Administration
Marcia Lynch, T C Public Information
Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning & PW
Julia Mattick, Tompkins Workforce New York
Dwight Mengel, TC Dept. of Social Services
David Squires, T C Finance
Steve Whicher, T C Administration
Kathy Wilsea, TCPD

Visitors: Martha Armstrong, TCAD
Fred Bonn, Convention & Visitors Bureau
Richard Driscoll, Community Arts Partnership
Jean McPheeters, Chamber of Commerce
David Sparrow, Strategic Tourism Planning Board
Steve Wampler, WHCU Radio
Scott Wiggins, STPB

1 The meeting was called to order at 3:40 PM by the Chair, Martha Robertson, with members Jim Dennis, Pam Mackesey and Frank Proto present. Martha welcomed the members of the Budget & Capital Committee for joint discussion of the first agenda item. She passed out information on community development seminars being arranged by CARDI. Introductions were made around the room.

2 Strategic Tourism Planning Board

a) Background on STPB and Room Tax Grant Programs – Jackie Kippola and members of STPB were present to give members of PDEQ and Budget & Capital committees background on STPB and the grant programs funded by hotel room tax income. David Sparrow provided STPB history, Fred Bonn talked about the impact of the room tax on our economy, and Scott Wiggins talked about changes in the room tax since 1986 and how it is directed to the grant programs. Celebrations Grants have expanded, but otherwise the percentages are close to the recommendations of the “white paper” of 2001, which outlined the purposes of the room tax program. Mike Hattery said the Budget & Capital Committee is considering ways to put the room tax money to work differently. Pam Mackesey wondered if there are more categories within tourism that can be examined. STPB is considering trails. Frank pointed out the laws creating the room tax rates were very specific, and might need to be changed for new ideas. Jackie Kippola will distribute copies of the 2001 white paper and the Tourism Strategic Plan to legislators for their possible review in the future.

b) **Convention & Visitors Bureau 2006 Year End Report** – Fred Bonn quickly made four points based on the report he provided with the agenda. The return on investment is \$8.50 for each dollar spent at

CVB, there was a 32.9% increase in group sales, there was a 20% increase in room bids, and there was a 13% increase on website hits.

Members of the Budget and Capital Committee left.

3 Water Resources Council

a) Status Report on WRC/Cornell Monitoring Discussions – Kate Hackett provided a handout that identified the five points under consideration for the scope of the project. The partners seek the most effective use of resources (funding, staff, and analysis) for developing a monitoring program for the southern end of Cayuga Lake. WRC members are participating in the development of a draft monitoring plan, and then it will be discussed in the community. Partners will try to leverage other resources in the community, too. WRC will facilitate the public participation process and then help develop a plan for the entire lake with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization. This monitoring program goes beyond Cornell's commitment to its SPDES permit for Lake Source Cooling, and the process allows WRC to share the dialogue on what is most important to monitor, identification of sites, and program parameters.

4 Tompkins County Planning Department

a) Indicators Report – Martha Robertson asked members to read this before the next PDEQ meeting, when we will make more time to comment and ask questions.

b) 2007 Work Program – Ed Marx briefly reviewed the goals and objectives for the Planning Department. He expects the year to include examining goals in terms of what is the role of the Planning Department and what is the role of County government. The County can influence development through their GML 239 reviews, but the influence is limited; in instances when the Planning Department recommends modification or rejection of a project, for example, the municipality can go ahead and the only constraint is that they need a supermajority. Jim says he sees ways some professional help would provide perspective in the municipalities and help resolve some disputes. Frank said the Planning Committee used to hold public meetings in the municipalities, and always got accused of opposing their rights to home rule. We need to allow municipalities to approach the County if they want technical assistance. The Planning Department does still enter into contracts with municipalities to provide professional services. Martha said she hopes the TC Council of Governments will help improve intermunicipal perspectives. [Tyke Randall arrived at 4:58PM.] Jim moved to accept the Work Program, which was seconded by Pam and passed unanimously.

c) **Resolution:** Reduction in Hours – Senior Planner and Principal Planner – Planning Department: Moved by Jim, seconded by Tyke. Joan Jurkowich and Ed Marx pointed out this balances the Department's budget, and does not result in extra funds. Resolution passed unanimously.

d) Budget Adjustment – Moved by Pam, seconded by Frank, and passed unanimously.

e) **Resolution:** Authorizing Submittal of 2007 Small Cities Community Development Block grant Program Application to Continue the Tompkins County Homeownership Program (VIII) – Moved by Frank, seconded by Pam, and passed unanimously.

f) **Resolution:** Amending the Tompkins County Homeownership Program to Increase the Eligible Purchase Price for Homes – Moved by Pam, seconded by Jim, and passed unanimously.

g) Draft Housing Strategy – Pam asked if the “new non-student” phrase in the first sentence was legal. Ed Marx said the student population was removed from the analysis, so the phrase is appropriate as a way of describing the type of housing that is desired, but once the units are built, students can't be excluded. This draft will be a topic before TCCOG next week. Pam asked how a developer could include units in a price range, and Ed said there are several ways, but the municipality needs to put the requirement into a local law. The County would not buy into any developments. This strategy is what communities have said they need to further their own goals. Martha felt the strategy is reasonable and flexible. Ed said people who want to

support housing in our community seek a statement like this. This was drawn up during discussion with all types of agencies and professionals, and there will be more opportunities for discussion. Pam suggested listing the involved partners in the document. Jim said it shows a general way to go, and we would never get complete agreement on details. Ed pointed out that, as a strategy, it is not a binding agreement. Frank will not be able to attend TCCOG next week, but would like to receive the minutes. Pam moved committee endorsement of the strategy, which was seconded by Jim and passed 3 (Mackesey, Dennis, Robertson): 2 (Proto, Randall). Further comments can be sent to Ed.

7 TCAT, Inc.

a) Resolution: Authorizing 2007 Federal Section 5307 Grant – TCAT, Inc. – Moved by Jim, seconded by Pam and passed by vote of 4:0 (Frank absent).

8 Tompkins Workforce New York – Julia Mattick introduced Diane Bradac, the new Director of Employment & Training.

a) Resolution: Reduction of Hours Transition Workforce Specialist Positions and Workforce Development Coordinator – Tompkins Count Office of Employment and Training – Julia said this resolution reduced the hours for four staff members in the youth program due to less funding from grant programs than was anticipated when the budget was drawn up, and differences between the fiscal years of the grant program and Tompkins County. The cut is \$60,000. Moved by Jim, seconded by Pam. An explanatory note will be added. Resolution passed unanimously.

4 Tompkins County Planning Department (continued)

h) Resolution: Making a Negative Determination of Environmental Significance in Relation to Resolution No. ___ of 2007 – Copies of the short Environmental Assessment Form were distributed. Resolution moved by Pam, seconded by Tyke. Ed provided background. Resolution passed unanimously.

i) Resolution: Appropriating Funds for the Babcock Tract from the Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection – Moved by Pam, seconded by Jim. Ed said the Town of Ithaca is discussing contributing to this, also. The property is already off the tax roll because Finger Lakes Land Trust has purchased it with a loan from an internal program. Frank asked for information on the appraisal and the assessed value, which Ed will provide before the next Legislature meeting. Kathy Wilsea will provide page 2 of the letter from Andy Zepp at FLLT. Resolution passed unanimously.

j) Commissioner's Report. Ed reported that Planning Department staff did a 239 review of Bolton Estate subdivision in the Village of Lansing. Part of the property is in a UNA, and it is on the cliffs. Staff is working with the Village and the property owner to protect portions of the property. They are getting an appraisal of the most fragile part, and will work out the details for protection and public access.

5 Committee Administration

a) Committee Goals and Calendar – Martha asked members to look these over for discussion next month.

b) Appointment of Liaisons – Jim Dennis will be liaison to STPB capital grants committee, and other liaisons were as listed on the chart distributed with the agenda.

c) Resolution: Appointments to Industrial Development Agency – Moved by Pam, seconded by Jim, passed by vote of 4:1 (Proto).

d) Appointment to Empire Zone Administration Board – Appointment of JR Clairborne to a zone resident seat through 12/31/2008 was moved by Frank, seconded by Pam and passed unanimously.

e) Approval of Minutes from 1/2/2007 – Moved by Frank, seconded by Tyke and passed unanimously without change.

6 Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

a) Resolution: Establishing a Public Hearing for Additions to Agricultural District No. 1 – Moved by Frank, seconded by Pam and passed unanimously.

The committee meetings will remain on the second Monday of the month. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Dept.