



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **February 17, 2015** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislature Receives Comments on Proposed Comprehensive Plan Update**

The Tompkins County Legislature took public comment tonight on the draft 2015 Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, representing the first full update of the Plan since it was first adopted by the Legislature eleven years ago. Sustainability, regional cooperation, and fiscal responsibility are overarching principles of the Plan, presented to the Legislature two weeks ago, and the Plan addresses climate adaptation for the first time.

At the half-hour-long public hearing, eleven people spoke, and comments were overwhelmingly positive. Many praised the Planning Department for its thoroughness in preparing the document and its extensive community outreach, then incorporating opinions expressed into the Plan. Strong support was voiced especially for the Plan's continued goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, and many of the speakers urged that the goal be made even more ambitious—to achieve that benchmark perhaps 15 or 20 years earlier. Three members of the County's Planning Advisory Board spoke—among them, Chair Martha Armstrong who said she thinks the county can be proud of this Comprehensive Plan, which she said provides a “terrific foundation” for planning for the future. Ithacan Theresa Alt said that, while she likes everything in the Plan, including its support for bringing economic development that brings good living wage jobs, she would have liked some focus on mental health care and how divisions that exist in the community, such as racial or other types of discrimination, can be addressed. Joe Wilson, of Dryden, urged Legislators to not be passive, but to use their influence to support the energy and economic development goals contained in the proposed Plan.

The draft Plan, which still must be acted upon by the Legislature, is available for review on the County website at <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/compplan>.

*Contact: Planning Commissioner Ed Marx, 274-5560; Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 257-7453.*

#### **Legislature Awards Bids for Jail Modifications Project**

By a vote of 10-3 (Legislators Carol Chock, Kathy Luz Herrera and Leslyn McBean-Clairborne voted no; Legislator Mike Sigler was excused), the Legislature awarded just over \$730,000 in contracts for the Tompkins County Jail Modifications Project, with Andrew R. Mancini Associates, Inc., of Endicott awarded the General contract; King & King Mechanical, Inc., of Auburn, the Mechanical contract; Matco Electric Corporation, of Vestal, the electrical contract; and Kimble, Inc., of Elmira, the plumbing contract. The project will construct a covered outdoor inmate recreation area, and will convert the current indoor recreation space to dormitory space for seven inmates—a change expected to reduce the number of inmates who need to be boarded out to other counties.

Before the vote, Legislator Chock thanked all involved who worked hard to make this a better project, but she said she cannot support any expansion of beds in the jail. Legislators heard two public comments at the beginning of the meeting expressing continued opposition to the project and asking that the Legislature at least hold off on tonight's vote.

*Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-564-7243.*

### **Contract Awarded for Newfield Covered Bridge Preservation Project**

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Mike Sigler was excused), awarded McPherson Builders, Inc., of Ithaca, the construction contract for preservation of the historic Newfield Covered Bridge . McPherson's bid was \$218,602.80. The Newfield Covered Bridge, built in 1853, is owned and Maintained by Tompkins County and the Town of Newfield. The bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The project will repair and replace various bridge features—including such elements as replacement of abutments, installation of timber curbs, and installation of a fire protection system. The Legislature also authorized the County to execute a construction funding agreement with the State Department of Transportation governing the covered bridge preservation project.

*Contact: Highway Director Jeff Smith, 274, 0300; David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243.*

### **Industrial Development Agency Appointments**

The Legislature appointed Legislators Nathan Shinagawa, Jim Dennis, Will Burbank, and Martha Robertson to new one-year terms as members of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency, and non-Legislator members to new two year terms—Chamber of Commerce president Jennifer Tavares as representative of Tompkins County Area Development, and at-large members Grace Chiang (term expiring at the end of 2016) and City of Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick (term to expire at the end of this year). The action also appoints Legislator Dennis to continue as chair of the IDA.

The vote was 12-1, with Legislator Dooley Kiefer voting no and Legislator Mike Sigler excused. Legislator Kiefer said she voted no because she thinks it would be better to have some variation in membership.

*Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair, Economic Development Committee, 272-0584.*

Among other business, the Legislature

- Welcomed new District 9 Legislator Glenn Morey, elected to fill the vacant District 9 seat February 10. He will represent the Town of Groton and portions of the Towns of Lansing and Dryden for the remainder of the current Legislature term. Legislature Chair Mike Lane congratulated Legislator Morey on his win and said he looks forward to working with him.
- Authorized the County to apply to the State Department of Transportation for Federal Transit Administration funds (total project budget: \$2.6 million) , under the Section 5311 Rural Application program. Funds will purchase five replacement buses for TCAT, renovation and construction at the TCAT facility, as well as mobility management programs under the Way2Go program, which the County operates under contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.
- Approved acceptance of several grants—nearly \$28,000 from the State Division of Criminal Justice Services to help defray the costs of implementing Leandra's Law and the monitoring of Ignition Interlock Devices; \$7,000 in State Traffic Safety funds to the Sheriff's Office for the County's Child Passenger Safety Seat program; and nearly \$15,000 awarded the Solid Waste Division from the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute for a food waste prevention program.

**- END -**