



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer  
607-274-5555, Office  
607-227-2152, Cell  
March 20, 2012  
TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **March 20, 2012** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislature Fails to Support Request to Permit Rifle Hunting**

Responding to a proposal from local hunter, the Legislature considered, but declined to support making a request to the State Legislature to enact legislation to allow rifle hunting for Big Game (deer) in Tompkins County. The vote was 4-10, with Legislators Peter Stein, Jim Dennis, David McKenna, and Brian Robison voting in favor (Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera was excused).

Under the measure, the Legislature would have asked that special legislation be adopted amending the Environmental Conservation Law relating to the use of rifles for Big Game hunting within the County, and that such action be completed so that it could be in effect by the 2012 deer season. Advocates point out that many counties throughout the state permit rifle hunting, that nearby Cortland, Schuyler, Ontario, and Madison Counties have passed similar resolutions supporting such legislation, and that there has been no increase in the incidence of hunting accidents since such rifle hunting has been permitted in the state.

Before the matter was considered, two citizens spoke in favor of rifle hunting and three against. John Morey of Groton and Duane Hartman of Newfield told Legislators such rifle hunting is already taking place in Tompkins County for special purposes and other types of game, and is much more accurate than shotgun hunting. Those speaking against included Ithaca Town Supervisor Herb Engman and Ulysses Deputy Supervisor Liz Thomas, who voiced both their personal concern and their municipalities' formal opposition to the measure.

A number of Legislators said they had carefully considered the issue since it was first proposed—reviewing data and consulting their constituents on the issue. Public Safety Chair Stein said his analysis showed no significant increase in deaths in counties that have allowed it over the past four years, and that there is insufficient evidence of danger from permitting the practice. Acknowledging that “this is an issue that goes to each individual person’s core” and that rifle hunting and ammunition is already being used in the county, Legislator Brian Robison observed it would almost be safer to allow such hunting, rather than to not allow it.

While crediting many careful, safe hunters, many Legislators, however, said they did not see the need to request State action, especially in light of concerns constituents have expressed. Legislator Dooley Kiefer said she sees “no compelling reason to do this,” especially in light of public concern. Legislator Carol Chock noted that Department of Environmental Conservation rules unfortunately do not allow such hunting to be permitted in some areas of the county and not in others. Legislators Pat Pryor and Mike Lane both said the change does not need to be requested now, Pryor calling for more public education to address public concern.

*Contact: Peter Stein, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 266-7579*

#### **Legislature Accepts Funds for Community-Based Care Transitions Program**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote of those present, formally accepted more than \$71,000 in federal funding, through the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to support the Community-Based Care Transitions Program, a collaborative multi-agency effort to provide care transitions services to high-risk Medicare beneficiaries, avoiding unnecessary re-hospitalizations. The County Office for the Aging will administer the program, in collaboration with Visiting Nurse Services of Ithaca, Hospicare and

Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County, and Cayuga Medical Center. The program is estimated to potentially serve the needs of more than 850 clients over a two-year period.

Health and Human Services Committee Chair Frank Proto noted the local program is one of only 30 of its type in 19 states, and one of only four in New York State. He said he is excited about what he termed a “really, really good program.” Among those actively involved in bringing the effort to Tompkins County is the Health Planning Council of Tompkins County, and Proto recognized Council director Betty Falcao for her ongoing contributions to the effort.

*Contact: Frank Proto, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 277-4875; Lisa Holmes, Director, County Office for the Aging, 274-5482.*

### **William Sanders Honored as Distinguished Youth**

Dryden High School student William Sanders, of Freeville, has been honored as Tompkins County’s latest Distinguished Youth. Nominated by Rachel Dickinson, Will was recognized for his long-time prowess in music and technical theater, his academic achievement, and community service. The accompanist at services at the Freeville Methodist Church from the age of 14 or 15, Will has served as lighting designer and master electrician for a number of theatrical productions, and has participated in many community service projects, including Community Building Works, which helps with housing projects providing environmentally conscious housing for low-income families. In addition to all this, Will works at Jason’s Grocery, where he supplements traditional store jobs with information technology project, and has been on the high honor roll throughout his academic career. Dickinson’s letter of nomination concludes, “I will miss seeing him in the little village or on the stage at Dryden High School when he goes to college, but I know that he has a very bright future ahead of him.” The Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by A&B Awards and Engraving, Bangs Ambulance Service, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.

*Contact: Legislature Office, 274-5434.*

Among other actions, the Legislature

- Set two public hearings, on April 3 and May 1, 2012 regarding housing, public facilities, and economic development needs related to the County’s fund application under the 2012 Community Development Block Grant program, which will seek housing, public facilities, or microenterprise funds. Both hearings will be held at Legislature Chambers, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- Authorized the County’s application for more than \$13 million in Federal Transit Administration funds, including federal, State, County, and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) sources. The grant application supports TCAT operations, planning and capital projects, and County project administration and mobility management program expenses, as approved by the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council.
- Approved an agreement between the County and the State of New York to transfer a vacant two-and-a-half acre parcel on West King Road in the Town of Danby, taken three years ago for delinquent taxes, to the State of New York. The parcel buffers the Finger Lakes Trail Spur to Buttermilk Falls State Park.

**- END -**