



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **April 19, 2016** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Accepts “Tompkins County Energy Roadmap” Report

Following up a presentation at its last meeting, the Legislature, by unanimous vote, formally accepted the report entitled *Tompkins County Energy Roadmap: Evaluating Our Energy Resources*.

The Roadmap was developed to help guide activities around energy-related decision making and includes an assessment of the potential of various local renewable energy sources to power the community, as well as the role that energy efficiency and demand management can play in reducing energy demand. The Roadmap puts those assessments into the context of the overall community energy picture today and projected in 2050 to identify scenarios for how both energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions goals can be met. While the report includes a number of conclusions and recommendations that identify priority actions the County should take to meet 2050 energy needs and emissions goals, which will be considered in this year’s update of the Tompkins County Energy Strategy, the Legislature’s action accepting (and not adopting) the report does not commit the Legislature to formally endorsing and committing to, the report’s recommendations.

Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee Chair Martha Robertson said, “This really does show that we are leaders... This is a very unusual document in the country and in the world.” She said that she is looking forward to the next step, updating of the County’s energy strategy and predicted that the next part will probably be harder, that of deciding the investments and priorities that will have the greatest impact in achieving those goals. Legislator Carol Chock said much of the “delivery” of the plan will involve a wide-ranging program of public education, policy, and incentives. Chair Mike Lane said the report shows “we are the best county in New York State, when we set ourselves tasks, we spend the time, we spend the staff work, bring in the expertise...do our best...when we end up with a report it is a good one...It is a great document.”

The Tompkins County Energy Roadmap report, and the presentation to the Legislature earlier this month, are posted on the Planning Department website at <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/planning/energy-climate>.
Contact: Tompkins County Planning Commissioner Ed Marx or Deputy Commissioner Katie Borgella, 274-5560; Martha Robertson, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 272-0584.

Other actions:

Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on first-quarter sales tax receipts, which are down by just over 2%, compared to the first quarter of last year. He said the issue of sales tax will continue to be studied, and County Administrator Joe Mareane said that sales tax appears to be the largest challenge as his office begins to plan for the 2017 budget, and might affect this year’s operations, as well.

Mr. Mareane also reported positive developments at the Mental Health Department: a performance improvement plan has been accepted by New York State, licenses have been secured for operation of clinics in the schools, and the State has renewed the County’s certificate to operate the Mental Health Clinic. He recognized the diligence of the Mental Health Department and everyone who works there, also reporting that ground floor renovations to the Mental Health building are scheduled to be completed next month.

Reacting to a project changes included as part of an update on status of the Old Library site redevelopment to the Legislature's Old Library Committee last week, some Legislators questioned when a project could be considered to have changed so much that it could be considered different from what was accepted at the time the Legislature granted Travis Hyde Properties preferred developer status last year, and what might be parameters for working with developers on these issues. Among changes identified by some as potential concerns were whether the project was to remain senior-focused housing, the inclusion of larger, three-bedroom units, and the changed status of the Lifelong organization as part of the project.

The Legislature authorized the Solid Waste Division to file an application with New York State seeking up to \$44,102 in reimbursement and to sign the associated State contract to fund 50% of reimbursable expenses of the County's Household Hazardous Waste program (total program cost: \$132,695).

The Legislature also authorized the Department of Social Services to accept a one-year \$5,000 pass-through grant from the State Division of Criminal Justice Services to assist The Advocacy Center in providing domestic violence services in the community.

Several members of the Legislature paid tribute to long-time Ithaca retailer and business leader Stu Lewis, who died April 15. Acknowledging his many contributions to the community and to Ithaca downtown development, including the Ithaca Commons, his mentoring of other business people, and ongoing contributions to the community, Legislator Jim Dennis said, "He was an amazing guy...he was never shy to offer his advice to elected officials...he walked the walk and talked the talk, and made a great contribution to Ithaca and Tompkins County as a whole." Legislator Carol Chock said, "You can't really overstate how important he was to small business in the City of Ithaca and beyond." Legislator Rich John added, "If we could all channel a little bit of Stu Lewis, it would be a good thing."

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