



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **March 6, 2018** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Leaders of Ithaca's "Students United" Recognized as Distinguished Youth

The Tompkins County Legislature honored as Tompkins County Distinguished youth the leaders of Ithaca's "Students United," who contested practices of the Ithaca City School District's performing arts program. Recognized as Distinguished Youth were Eamon Nunn-Makepeace, Annabelle Mead-VanCort, Ari Cummings, Prachi Ruina, and Maddi Carroll.

Introducing the award, Legislator Henry Granison quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Students United Ithaca is a group of student activists...who saw injustice in our school system," Mr. Granison said. "Instead of running from those injustices, they had the courage to face them head on and demanded to be heard ...By pointing out these issues, these students have faced negative reactions from their school and local communities. Moreover, when Fox News, Brietbart New and the Daily Stormer picked up this story, many trolls came out to harass, threaten and intimidate these students and their families. When confronted with such darkness and hatred these students and their families did not run and hide nor did they lash back at the trolls. They doubled down by asking for the community to support their efforts even more! They sought light and love to combat the darkness and the hatred. For their courage to start and continue their efforts in the face of such hatred, this is why we are honoring the students tonight with the Distinguished Youth Award."

The Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by Bangs Ambulance Service, Specialty Trophy and Awards, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.

Contact: Legislator Henry Granison, 342-8643; Legislature Office, 274-5434.

Related to "Students United," Legislature Passes Resolution Supporting Inclusion and Rejecting Hateful Threats Made Against County Residents

In response to "Students United's" activism, and racially-based threats that student leaders and their families have received, the Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), approved a resolution, advanced by Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, that supports inclusion and rejects hateful threats made against Tompkins County residents, noting that "all acts of hatred, bigotry, and violence spread fear and run counter to the principles that we have always adhered to in Tompkins County." The Legislature

- Applauds the leaders of Students United for standing on principle and raising awareness to the issue of equity and inclusion, thus educating and reminding school and community leaders of the existing problem;
- Recognizes the Ithaca City School District for its decision to support a new student production, *Hairspray*, a play that confronts issues of racism and inclusion in our society;
- Denounces the hate language and horrifying atrocities to which the student leaders and their families have been subjected; and
- Sends a message that such actions will not be tolerated or accepted in this County, and that any and all resources available under law will be employed to repel such behaviors and protect the citizens of Tompkins County from any form of unspeakable hatred.

Contact: Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, 277-5104.

Legislation Opposes Charter/Spectrum Programming Changes

In two separate resolutions, both approved without dissent (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), the Legislature asked Charter Communications/Spectrum and the Federal Communications Commission to restore WENY-TV to its basic cable package in Tompkins County, and Charter/Spectrum to continue public television station WSKG as part of the basic cable tier. Both resolutions point out that FCC rules do not prohibit Spectrum from continuing to offer the stations as part of the basic lineup, that providing those channels would constitute a public service, and be in the public interest of the people of Tompkins County, and that numerous residents of Tompkins County have communicated their anger at Spectrum's decision and asked County officials to speak up on their behalf.

Contact: Dan Klein, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 272-7582.

Legislature Opposes Romulus Incinerator Proposal

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), passed a resolution opposing the proposed garbage incinerator in the Seneca County Town of Romulus, urging the Town of Romulus to stand in opposition to the proposal advanced by the firm *Circular enerG* and calling on Governor Cuomo to reject the incinerator proposal. The measure maintains, in part, that proposed incinerator's smoke stack will produce hazardous emissions, such as dioxins, furans, lead and mercury; that it will draw 238 garbage transportation trucks per day, more than 148,000 per year; that it will withdraw 445,000 gallons of water daily from Seneca Lake; that it is inconsistent with the area's agriculture, wine, and tourism industries; and that garbage disposal, including trash incineration, is not compatible with the region's current or future economic development goals. Before the vote, many members of the public spoke in support of the opposition resolution.

Contact: Anna Kelles, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 342-2036.

Legislature Opposes CNG/LNG as Potential Option Under NYSEG "Non-Pipe Alternative" RFP

The Legislature expressed its opposition to the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in response to the New York State Electric and Gas "non-pipe alternative" Request for Proposals to address natural gas demand in the Lansing area. The vote was 12-1, with Legislator Mike Sigler voting no. The NYSEG RFP, issued last December, included the introduction of CNG or LNG as one potential option, but that potential resource would be considered "to the extent allowed and supported by the community." The resolution indicates that such injection would result in expanded use of natural gas, which is counter to the County's goal to decrease natural gas use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and that CNG/LNG transportation introduces significant safety risks and adds wear and tear to our roads. "We are voting to oppose an alternative for Nat Gas that hasn't been proposed yet," Legislator Sigler said. "Every year, natural gas use is going up in Tompkins County...I suggest we look at our own doorsteps."

Contact: Anna Kelles, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 342-2036.

Among other business

The Legislator did not yet consider a scheduled resolution advocating a statewide ban on single-use retail plastic bags. Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee Chair Anna Kelles said the resolution was withdrawn, since it was discovered that the State Senate and Assembly recently introduce bills that would be more progressive than the current proposal would be (requesting a ban on both plastic and paper bags), and the intention is to introduce a resolution aligned with the State proposal. Many people addressed the Legislature supporting a statewide ban. Legislator Mike Sigler said the Legislature should proceed cautiously, that such a ban could be misguided, not actually decrease the County's carbon footprint, and have unintended consequences.

The Legislature authorized the County to submit a proposal for technical assistance to develop a system of integrated mobility services, known as Mobility-On-Demand (MOD), under the Federal Transit Administration's On-Ramp program. The Mobility-as-a-Service concept was recommended as part of the county's Age-Friendly Community planning process. If approved, the County would receive a year of technical assistance from the FTA's contractor, and would be eligible to apply for future rounds of MOD funding.

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