



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **August 7, 2018** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Funding Approved to Help Address Problem of Cayuga Lake Algal Blooms

The Legislature, without dissent, authorized funding and a contract with the Community Science Institute (CSI) to perform laboratory testing to help address harmful algal bloom in Cayuga Lake. (Chair Martha Robertson was excused.) The Legislature appropriated \$4,150 from the Contingent Fund to supplement a \$5,000 emergency grant from the Park Foundation. The funding from the County requested by CSI will cover the cost of test kits and supplies for the next two months.

The resolution notes that 24 suspicious algal blooms were identified in Cayuga Lake and 2017, and 18 reported since July of this year. The Community Science Institute, Cayuga Watershed Network, and the Floating Classroom have set up a network of volunteers to patrol the Cayuga Lake shoreline through September and collect samples of any suspicious algal blooms observed and to bring them to the CSI lab for processing. It is noted that analysis of the cyanobacteria samples can cost \$150 to \$200 per sample to support test kits and supplies.

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

Legislators Updated on Airport Expansion Project

Airport Director Mike Hall provided the Legislature an update report on the complex and fast-paced \$24.7 million dollar Airport expansion project. Bids were opened August 3rd for the first phase of the project, the Main Terminal (cost estimated at \$5 million) with a proposal due to the FAA as of tomorrow, to be considered for Airport Improvement Funding for the current federal fiscal year. Phase 2, focused on geothermal energy conversion plus the airport concourse (cost estimated at \$4 million) will go out to bid in early fall. Phase 3, focused on solar energy improvements and the new federal customs facility (\$8 million cost) will be bid early in 2019.

Director Hall and Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability Katie Borgella told Legislators that active ongoing discussions are in process with officials from NYSEDA, NYSEG, and the New York State Department of Public Service regarding support for the energy conversion of the Airport from natural gas to ground source heat pump, promoting this as a time-limited opportunity to significantly address energy issues right in the area of the current natural gas moratorium. Hall noted that the conversion would enable powering of a terminal that will be one-third larger for \$50,000 less, creating a model project that would also provide the moratorium area significant gas relief.

County Administrator Jason Molino commended Hall and Borgella for the strong relationships they have achieved at the State level and in maintaining ongoing communication regarding this important project.

Contact: Airport Director Mike Hall, 279-2662; Katie Borgella, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability, 274-5560.

Proclamation Honors the Life and Legacy of Civil Rights Pioneer Dorothy Cotton

The Legislature, through a proclamation from Vice Chair Anna Kelles, honored the life and many contributions of the beloved late local civil rights and Tompkins County community leader Dr. Dorothy Foreman Cotton, prior to the community-wide celebration of her life August 11th. The proclamation pays tribute to Dr. Cotton's

service as a prominent leader in the human and civil rights movement from the 1960s (when she served with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the highest-ranking female member in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as Director of its Citizenship Education Program) through the end of her life. The proclamation states that “we in Tompkins County have been blessed and honored to share in Dr. Cotton’s wisdom, teachings, love, and support—an act made most significant after her passing away June 10, 2018.”

The Legislature “celebrates with the highest regard the life of Dr. Dorothy Foreman Cotton and acknowledges her legacy of unyielding service to humanity,...expresses its members’ admiration for ‘the seriousness and devotion with which [she} held [her] noble charge,” and urges all county residents to remember Dorothy Cotton’s “many contributions to the civil rights movement and to the cause of social justice and equality here in Tompkins County.”

Contact: Legislator Anna Kelles, Vice Chair of the Legislature, 342-2036; Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, 277-5104.

Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding Awarded for Study of Downtown Conference Center

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, awarded the Downtown Ithaca Alliance \$42,675 in County tourism funding under the Strategic Tourism Implementation Program to support continued study of a Downtown Ithaca Community Conference Center, as recommended by the County’s Strategic Tourism Planning Board. (Chair Martha Robertson was excused.) Tourism-funded programs are supported by proceeds from County room occupancy tax.

Strategic Tourism Implementation (STI) funding supports “significant implementation of critical actions identified in the (County’s) 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan and related tourism implementation plans

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

County Extends Contract with Town of Covert to Provide Assessment Services

The Legislature, without dissent, approved a four-year agreement (through the 2022 assessment roll) to continue to provide assessment services to the Town of Covert (Seneca County.) The joint agreement is authorized under New York State Real Property Tax Law and General Municipal Law. Tompkins County has provided appraisal services, exemption services, and assessment services to the Town since 2014. The resolution notes that the agreement provides residents of the Town of Covert access to a full-time assessment office while still paying for a part-time assessor salary, and that the agreement will further the coordination and cooperation between government entities in furtherance of Governor Cuomo’s agenda of increasing municipal shared services.

Contact: Jay Franklin, Director of Assessment, 274-5517; Dan Klein, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 272-7582.

Among other business

The Legislature approved creation of a Tompkins County Historical Commission and adopted bylaws for the new commission. The purpose of the commission is to advise the Legislature and County Historian on matters related to all facets of the history of Tompkins County, such as commemorations, events, monuments, historical publications and grant opportunities, and to undertake additional related duties as requested by the Legislature.

Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on County sales tax receipts through June. He told Legislators that the County’s share of receipts during the year’s second quarter came in nearly 9% above receipts for the second quarter of 2017, and for the year to date, receipts are running just over 6% above this time for 2017.

The Legislature authorized the County’s filing of grant applications with the Federal Transit Administration to support \$19.5 million in transit projects, on behalf of the County and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), as approved by the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council as part of the County’s 2018 Transportation Improvement Program.

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