

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 20, 2024

Village of Central Square, 3125 East Avenue, Central Square, NY 13036

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Scriber, Keller, and Mdm. Chereshnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Paul Baxter, and Jennifer Harvill. Guests – Randy House, Central Square mayor; Mudd Murphy, Central Square deputy mayor; Melissa Snavlin; Lee Willbanks, commission attorney.

Attendance

On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members approved the agenda as presented.

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Chereshnoski, members approved the minutes of March 18, 2024.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone and thanked the village of Central Square for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made. The Local Government Conference at Turning Stone Casino May 1 and 2 was a success. The location is a good venue. The survey ratings look very good. The percentage overall shows 67% attendees like the venue and 62% like the location. Thank you to the commission staff for the preparation and planning that was done.

Welcome

The appointment process led us to look through our bylaws with some questions about policies and procedures. A bylaws subcommittee with Commissioners Chereshnoski, Scriber, Boxberger and Keller have been reviewing the bylaws with Mr. Willbanks. This includes the mission statement, internal policy, sexual harassment, IT policy, outside region policy, employee handbook, ethics, financial and operating sections. Mr. Willbanks is taking all the relevant documents and creating a consolidated procedures, principles, and policies document for the commission. Commissioners on the subcommittee agreed that Mr. Willbanks has been very helpful with the guidance and drafting.

Financial disclosure filing was due last week for commissioners.

The commission strategic plan is due to be updated this year. Chair Bogdanowicz would like members to be active in reviewing the previous plan. It is an Important document, and we should look at local leadership training, allocating our services, what communities want, the needs of the commission, the commission's focus, and more funding for the commission.

Executive Director's report followed.

ED Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported Mr. Smith's last day is Wednesday. We are advertising for senior planner and received a few resumes but will give it a few more weeks for more. We are looking for mid-level experience instead of entry level but may go back to that. Planners are difficult to find. The salary is comparable with others advertising for planners. We also have it listed on the college sites that have programs to attract college students. We have a lot of planning work to be done. Phil Street has agreed to being a contractor to fill in for specific

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projects, possibly in the communities of Albion, Orwell, Williamstown. A line was added to the budget for this.

We have reapplied for \$50,000 GTSC grant funding for 10/01/2024 through 09/30/2025.

**Governor's Traffic
Safety Committee**

The LGC survey (handout) shows the venue and location is well received by attendees. We have already reached out to Turning Stone to secure a date for 2025, hopefully in April and get state rate for rooms. We could not get the state rate for rooms this year so we will lose money this year. Exhibitors like Turning Stone location. A few liked JCC location. Members agree Turning Stone is good, as shown on the survey results.

LGC

The survey shows in the region outdid outside the region this year. Unaffiliated flatlined as we have more in our COGs. CTHC number are low, not sure why. The COGs are bronze sponsors, except for CTHC. NOCCOG offers one free registration for municipalities. The commission works hard to keep registration pricing down, but next year may need to raise the cost.

A discussion took place with members on how to get more interest. Ideas included a grant or scholarship program to assist with registration cost; testimonials from those who attended the conference, one of each position, to share at municipal meetings.

The home rule legislation chapter amendment for the town of Lorraine law (A8498/S8045) was signed into law last month.

**Minimum Maintenance
Roads**

The Montague MMR bill passed the Senate, in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

Mrs. Malinowski attended the Rural Resources Fair in Albany March 27 and was a good networking event.

Albany Visits

Fort Drum Day in Albany on May 7 was busy, top officials from Fort Drum were in attendance, and there was a lot of interaction with both Tug Hill legislators and other legislators involved in military and veterans' affairs. An article was in the May 17 issue of the Tug Hill Times.

Mr. Petrie is on vacation, which has delayed the report. Mrs. Malinowski will email the report to members.

Laird Petrie Summary

We will be reviewing strategic planning August to December.

Strategic Planning

The Black River Watershed Conference (handout) is June 13 in Old Forge. If members would like to attend, please let us know.

**Black River Watershed
Conference**

Registration is open for the NYSACC conference held September 18-20. Day 1 includes a virtual speaker schedule and a social hour in Boonville that evening, an option for in-person attendance at locations in Boonville. Day 2 includes field trips with dinner that evening. Day 3 includes field trips.

NYSACC

We will have Katie Petronis DEC natural resources deputy commissioner as keynote for our annual dinner September 19 at the Hayloft at Moonshine Farms in Port Leyden.

Annual Dinner

We released a housing paper and are almost ready to release a revised ambulance paper. A press release will go out on these.

Issue Papers

CFA grant writing requests are coming in and trainings are being held. Staff will potentially be working on salt sheds, ZOO NY, fiddlers, and we expect to have more.

CFA

We have been contacted by New Leaf Climate Partners LLC (handout) about collaborating with them on a grant program that would create money to implement forest related projects that would help landowners. They feel the commission would be effective at providing workshops, outreach, and technical assistance to landowners.

New Leaf Climate

Commissioner Scriber shared his concern that they are an LLC and more research into them should be done to know more about them. Commissioner Keller suggested Mrs. Malinowski reach out to Mark Pacilio at THTLT about grants and to get feedback.

A discussion with members took place regarding solar taking over farmland.

Mr. Baxter reported there has been a heavy demand for planning services, some are trying to catch up, and others are dealing with the impact of Micron and land sales and assessments going up. Route 49 study is ongoing. West Monroe is working on zoning update and needs to do comp plan. Constantia is updating zoning and working on sewer project; Cleveland decided not to do sewer. Central Square differed their decision on electric buses as grid could not accommodate them. Richland is interested in joining Salmon Rivers but has not yet formally requested membership. Orwell is working on water project. Parish is updating their comp plan. Albion is interested in updating zoning. Parish changing their emails and website for security purposes.

COG Report

The 2023-24 year to date financial statement (handout) lines are good, we are not over budget.

Finance Report

2024-25 proposed budget (handout) \$1,200,000 general revenue. Special revenue went from \$50,000 last year to \$150,000 this year. We reapplied for the \$50,000 traffic safety grant. Total revenue of \$1,400,000.

Expenses include \$1,116,000 for salaries, cost of living, and steps; a new senior planner budgeted for seven months; Mr. Baxter retiring no later than 03/31/2025; budgeting for six months overlap with new circuit rider working with Mr. Baxter; six months half planner/half circuit rider which would be floater and part remote; 15 FTE's; longevity payments.

Nonpersonal services include Mr. Petrie \$5,000 contract: Mr. Street \$5,000 contract for planning assistance; estimate for changing to online database \$25,000; contract with Turning Stone estimated to be more this year; training costs.

On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members approved the 2024-25 proposed budget as presented.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Snavlin suggested getting the word out about our Local Government Conference when municipalities are working on their budgets might help them prepare for the cost.

Public Comment

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary