

**Orange County Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2019**

**Members Present:** E. McClung, T. Gottlieb, C. Best, J. Joy, M. J. Guinchard (by conference call)

**Guests Present:** S. Turner

**Staff:** J. Richmond, F. Budde, K. Schmidt, E. Russell

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

A motion was made by T. Gottlieb and seconded by C. Best to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2018 meeting, approved.

E. McClung announced that the Legislature has scheduled public hearings for the updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan. The first hearing will be held on February 20, 2019 at 5:00 PM at the Legislative Chambers and the second hearing will be held on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 3:00 PM at SUNY Orange Newburgh campus, One Washington Center.

F. Budde prepared a GML 239 Referrals Summary for 2018. There were 528 mandatory GML 239 referrals sent to the Department by municipalities throughout the County. A total of 3,017 dwelling units, 6.96 million square feet of mixed nonresidential development, 365 hotel rooms and 33 large scale solar facilities were proposed through the County. He prepared maps showing locations of the referrals and another map showing the larger developments and large scale solar facilities. About half of the referrals were located in Priority Growth Areas. Next month he will prepare a report for January and February, 2019.

Discussion followed on the large number of solar facilities. K. Schmidt said that the number reflects the amount of applications that were submitted with many projects not yet approved or completed. The state is constantly changing and improving the incentives and goals. Orange County is very popular for meeting these demands: 1) location near city where demand is for electric; 2) cost of land is less here than Westchester; 3) higher electric rates means good rate of return; and 4) the most important element is to be able to connect to the grid. We can receive a lot of applications, but it doesn't mean that they will receive municipal approvals. There is some public resistance. The solar classes have been well attended. The state incentives have decreased now. Residential locations who were interested, would have already installed solar. Solar is available for everyone to buy into and see a 10-15% savings on their electric bill.

J. Richmond said they went to the Rules Committee meeting last month and are on the Legislative Agenda for Lead Agency under SEQRA and set public hearings for the updates to the County Comprehensive Plan. They are going to the full legislature on February 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be two public hearings: 1) 2/20/19 at 5:00 PM to be held at Legislative Chambers, 255 Main Street, Goshen; 2) 2/27/19 at 3:00 PM to be held at SUNY Orange Newburgh campus, One Washington Center, Newburgh. The only comments we received at the committee meeting were about public outreach. They want us to reach out to the senior population by posting information in different locations, like senior centers, SUNY buildings, and city, town and village halls. We can reach out to the Office of the Aging. It was suggested to use the County Clerk's ready reference guide and reach out to all the municipalities informing them of the public hearing dates. Maybe they could post it on their individual websites. Information can be shared at the NY Planning Federation conference. The Legislature conducts the hearing. D. Church and J. Richmond will be present to do the presentation. Hopefully, Planning Board members will be able to attend also.

There were two board resolutions presented regarding the Climate Smart Communities recertification. 1) The Orange County Planning Board will serve as the Task Force for the County on the Climate Smart Communities recertification; and 2) The designated coordinator will be Kate Schmidt. A motion was made by T. Gottlieb and seconded by C. Best to approve these two resolutions, passed. Designating the Task Force and Coordinator were two of the actions towards obtaining bronze points. The goals are to engage and elevate local government and the County will help guide them. The villages and towns are able to apply for some things that the County can't since we have no control over zoning. Motivation to become certified is with grants. The state gives extra points for grants to certified communities. There are great elements like water efficiency, improved air quality and walkable centers, but the extra funding gets the municipalities to act. The

Climate Smart Communities certification framework is organized around ten elements: 1) Build a climate smart community; 2) Inventory emissions, set goals and plan for climate action; 3) Decrease energy use; 4) Shift to clean, renewable energy; 5) Use climate-smart materials management; 6) Implement climate-smart land use; 7) Enhance community resilience to climate change; 8) Support a green innovation economy; 9) Inform and inspire the public; and 10) Engage in an evolving process of climate action. Points are given for innovation and performance. The County is currently a Climate Smart Community certified at bronze level and we need to recertify. For recertification, we have to demonstrate that we are still working on what we started. Getting recertified to bronze should be fairly certain, but we would like to gain enough points for silver. Environmentally preferable purchasing policy is one item to work towards by purchasing energy efficient appliances and recycled paper, for example. That's where we need the support of the Planning Board to say it has been discussed and researched. Each of the action items has specific tasks to accomplish to get points for those items. For the purchasing policy, we will have to confer with the Department of General Services. The Planning Department will contact them. We will have to go through the list and determine for each item why it is important and how to improve the actions. Individual municipalities would apply on their own, but the County can assist them. The County would get incentive as liaison and that would apply under innovation. K. Schmidt will prepare the application by April 5th. The task force must meet two times per year. This board will designate two meetings per year for this. Representatives from focus groups, CACs, NGOs, a legislator, Green Committee Chair, for example, will be invited to participate. At the next meeting, we will work on the list of who should be invited and plan the first Task Force meeting. K. Schmidt narrowed down the list of action items for Silver Points from a very large list, to focus on the primary elements. Some of the action items come with potential for grant funding to get them done. The County has applied for at least three and the local match comes from in-kind services from our department. The board will review the action items before the next meeting. K. Schmidt will send the website.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2019. Motion was made by T. Gottlieb and seconded by C. Best to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 PM, approved.