

**Tompkins County IDA Meeting Minutes**  
**June 16, 2011**  
**Scott Heyman (Old Jail) Conference Room**  
**Ithaca, NY**

- Present:** Martha Robertson, Dan Cogan, Jeff Furman, Jim Dennis, Nathan Shinagawa, Will Burbank, Ed Marx, David Squires
- Excused:** Larry Baum
- Staff Present:** Ina Arthur (recording), Heather Filiberto, Mariette Geldenhuys
- Guests Present:** Julia Mattick (WIB), Pat Pryor (TC Legislature), Marsha Lynch (TC Information), Liz Lawler (Ithaca Journal), Connie Wilcox (Lansing Town Board), Andy Sciarabba (Lansing Town Economic Development Committee), Eric Goetzman, Female Intern (Arrowhead Ventures)

**CALL TO ORDER** Ms. Robertson called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** - None

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR** - None

**BUSINESS**

Arrowhead Ventures – Sales Tax Abatement, Mortgage Recording Tax Abatement Request

Mr. Goetzmann addressed the board regarding the request for sales tax abatement and partial mortgage recording tax abatements for the Arrowhead Ventures project. This would not be for the BJ's. These incentives would be for the preparation of the ground/pad under the BJs and the senior housing. Unforeseen expenses on the project came about due to the unusually rainy weather earlier this spring. Mr. Goetzman presented information calling this a "200 year flood". This set back their construction work and also added costs due to materials needed to prepare the pad. Also their fill site changed and created the need to drive further, thus incurring higher fuel consumption.

Ms. Filiberto commented that if the board were to move forward with this request a public hearing would be scheduled before coming back to the board for final approval.

Mr. Dennis asked if there were any other IDA projects that had asked for incentives separately like this? Ms. Filiberto stated that generally these incentives are part of a PILOT tax package. This project was different and did not consider asking for these abatements originally.

Mr. Burbank asked if this in anyway would support the commercial side of the project. It is not for the BJs directly – it would be for preparation of the pad site where the BJs would be located.

Ms. Robertson commented that these incentives would be for the senior housing and wetlands as well.

Ms. Geldenhuys commented that she could not recall other projects from the past coming back to the board like this.

Mr. Shinagawa stated that seems like an unusual request due to the weather conditions. Due to budget cuts to the County Budget, he cannot support this request.

Ms. Robertson commented that the board could vote to only abate the NYS portion of the sales tax.

**Jim Dennis moved to move the Arrowhead Ventures project request for sales tax abatement and partial mortgage recording tax abatement to a public hearing and to only allow the NYS portion of the sales tax abatement. Martha Robertson seconded the motion.**

Mr. Furman commented that there were a lot of businesses impacted by the weather. He stated that he never got a full understanding of the impact of the economics.

Mr. Dennis agreed that it is a late request. But that is why he recommended only the NYS portion of the abatements.

**A vote was called. No: Dan Cogan, Will Burbank, Jeff Furman, Nathan Shinagawa. Yes: Jim Dennis, Martha Robertson. The motion failed.**

#### Lansing Town Center Incentive Zone

Ms. Filiberto gave some background to the Lansing Town Center Incentive Zone. The town of Lansing has wanted to have a center for over 20 years. This is not a new idea. Lansing has come together to flesh out the idea of a true town center. Its 2006 comprehensive plan does talk about a town center area to support higher density and to increase the tax base. In 2009, TCAD talked with the town supervisor about a plan similar to the City of Ithaca's Density Policy but one that would be tailored to the town's needs. The town has a development plan for this and have begun to look at zoning changes. Areas have been identified where they want to include multifamily housing, light industrial and commercial development. The town board has endorsed this plan. A public comment period would be held and then the town board would finalize the policy and then come back to the IDA for approval.

Mr. Sciarabba commented that at this point the town of Lansing does not have any basic services (banks, laundromats, professional services, physician offices etc.) Infrastructure in the form of sewer lines are being worked on. Lansing also has a lot of land that can be used.

Ms. Wilcox commented that the town is looking to increase the tax base with the future of AES Cayuga uncertain. She stated that the incentive zone looks big but there is a need to fix up the area in order to attract banks, doctors etc. They are trying to be more than a bedroom community.

Mr. Burbank asked if the sewer would go to the Lansing schools? Yes, it would. The line would extend from the correctional facility on route 34 down to the schools and to the Meyers area. Mr. Burbank stated that he would be interested in hearing Ed Marx's comments on this.

Mr. Marx stated that this is a great initiative. It works with the County's development focus study that will be coming out in the next few months. The County's concept of nodal development is density and sewer is key to this. Nodes should be where you want to concentrate employment. He commented that developing local services will serve the local population and will not be a regional draw. The housing in the nodal plan is for 5-10 units per acre – this is denser than suburban planning.

Over all this can align very well with what the County is promoting. It is also important to maintain mixed use that combats sprawl.

Mr. Marx stated that he would welcome an opportunity to talk to the town regarding the County's focus study.

Mr. Burbank commented on the criteria that the City has for its policy. Mr. Sciarabba stated that the town of Lansing wanted to keep things simple in order to encourage development. Mr. Cogan commented that this is a good goal. He asked if the agricultural land would be rezoned? Yes. The rezoning discussion will be ramped up soon.

Mr. Cogan stated that the City plan used to be simpler and then was changed. He is happy that Lansing is going forward with this and would like to see the two plans aligned in the future.

Mr. Furman commented that the image of this is very inviting. From a taxpayer's point of view he is wondering if these nodes would pull from the City's downtown businesses?

Ms. Robertson stated that the County's housing study indicated that we need 4,000 more units in the next ten years. Also that the in-commuters have increased. The nodes will support this housing need and will be more than enough for sustainable communities.

Mr. Sciarabba stated that these town centers or nodes would capture the market that would not come downtown anyway.

Mr. Marx pointed out that regional shopping areas like downtown and the malls pull people that will drive further and less frequently in order to comparison shop. Local shopping in town centers or nodes provide basic services that the local communities will use frequently and will drive or walk to.

Mr. Dennis stated that this would be a good thing and that increasing the tax base is good too.

Ms. Robertson asked if there are goals for having a balance for industrial and commercial development? Not yet. Ms. Robertson also commented on the sewer line and her concern that having it along the route 34 corridor would promote sprawl.

Ms. Wilcox commented that there is not a lot of land available on that route and there is also a need in the Meyers area to protect the lake.

Ms. Wilcox stated that this policy and the application are still in draft form. Suggestions are welcome as well as the IDA's participation in the public comment period.

Ms. Robertson stated that there seems to be a sense of support for this initiative.

**Nathan Shinagawa moved to support the Lansing Town Center Incentive Zone and for the IDA Board to participate in the public meeting. Jim Dennis seconded the motion. Yes: Dan Cogan, Martha Robertson, Jim Dennis, Nathan Shinagawa, Will Burbank. No: Jeff Furman.**

Benefit Survey Report

Julia Mattick, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board, reported on survey results sent to companies that have benefited from IDA incentives – either directly or indirectly. Currently there is a 51% return. They will be continuing to gather and analyze the data.

Results will be used as a bench mark for future projects that come before the IDA.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**

None.

**MINUTES**

**Jim Dennis moved to approve the board minutes from the May 18, 2011 meeting. Martha Robertson seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:15PM