

Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency

ADMINISTRATION PROVIDED BY 

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
Tompkins Trust Company Head Quarters
July 6, 2015
6:00 PM
Town Hall of Ithaca
215 North Tioga Street, Ithaca NY

Present: Heather McDaniel (TCAD), Greg Hartz (Tompkins Trust Company), Jennifer Tavares (TCIDA), Jim Dennis (TCIDA), Will Burbank (TCIDA), Martha Robertson (TCIDA), Svante Myrick (TCIDA), Irene Wieser, James Brown, Gary Ferguson,

Ms. McDaniel called the public hearing to order at 6:03pm. She read the details of the project and potential incentives contemplated by the IDA from the public hearing notice. She opened the hearing for public comments.

Irene Weiser – She thanked the IDA for the opportunity to speak and acknowledged all the positive things Tompkins Trust Company does for the community. She reiterated what she said at the public information meeting that the City held. She understands the Trust Company met with community members after that meeting to discuss her concerns with using local labor and using alternatives to natural gas. She thanked the company for meeting with them. She felt they should not be eligible for the enhanced abatement without a commitment to local labor. Local construct labor spends money locally. She would support an abatement but would question the enhanced abatement. She would like to see ground source heat pumps and a commitment to not use natural gas.

James Brown – He spoke in support of the project. Tompkins Trust Company has had a huge impact on the United Way. They have enjoyed a 94-year relationship with the United Way. The last four United Way co-chairs were Tompkins Trust Company employees. He sees Tompkins Trust employees participate across all the organizations they deliver impact to. One example of the Trust Company's good work was when the United Way had to remove the carriage house from their property. There was asbestos and the building was a hazard but they could not afford to tear it down. The Trust Company funded removing the building and now they lease the land for parking for employees. Being downtown is important. We as an organization support this project.

Gary Ferguson – I want to speak today in support of the application on Tomkins Financial to the CIITAP tax abatement program administered by the Tompkins County IDA. We created this CIITAP program to encourage new growth and development in our urban core. We wanted to stimulate new development to look at downtown instead of the suburbs and we wanted to encourage our existing businesses to remain and grow here in downtown.

This is the case with Tompkins Financial. From DIA records, we know that Tompkins Financial is our largest private urban core employer. When their new project is complete, they will have approximately 300 employees strategically located here in downtown. Each one of those employees generates a spin off economic impact – buying breakfasts and lunches, shopping, and consuming the goods and services of

Tompkins County

Industrial Development Agency

our downtown economy. The company itself also buys local goods and services – further stimulating our downtown marketplace.

Tompkins Financial had multiple options for their growth and development. They could have followed the lead of firms like Tetra Tech and Sciarabba Walker, who chose to leave downtown and the City altogether. Instead, Tompkins Financial opted to build a new facility in the heart of downtown where their presence will deliver maximum impact to the community.

This is an organization we can be proud to call a local community business. Their record of charitable giving and support of scores of community nonprofits, programs, and projects help to make our city and county a more livable and sustainable place. Think of an organization or a community project and there is a very good chance that Tompkins Financial has either made a monetary or a personnel investment to it.

This is an organization that pays its employees well and provides them with a dynamic and robust set of benefits. It has a track record of respecting and working with its employees – promoting from within and growing employees who stay with the organization.

The new building will be ideally located – between Seneca Place and the Dewitt Mall. It fits the zoning for the parcel and contributes to the streetscape fabric of the block. It is being built on a dive-thru parking lot and represents a tremendous upgrade in the aesthetic palette of downtown.

CIITAP was created to ensure that projects like this happen in downtown. Without CIITAP, this urban core project would not be possible. On behalf of the downtown community and the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, I am pleased to support this application by Tompkins Financial to the CIITAP program.

Ms. McDaniel closed the hearing at 6:30pm.