

Christine Montague
Town Board Member Report
March 2025

NY Association of Towns Annual Meeting, Feb 17-19

- I attended the following sessions:
 - Control your community's economic destiny: a guide to economic investment and job creation (presented by Delaware Engineering and Mathes Public Affairs). How to attract investment through reviewing zoning, existing infrastructure, approval process and regional cooperation.
 - Avoiding insurance pitfalls (by NYAOT and NYMIR). Using Prior Written Notice laws, managing risk.
 - Building a safer town: five cybersecurity tips for meeting compliance requirements (by CST Group). Increasing security through software, a firewall, updating, backing up, enforcing passwords and multi-factor authentication, and owning our own domain.
 - Using infrastructure to lay the foundation for community revitalization (by C.T. Male Group). Grants, infrastructure and tools to induce development include water and sewer, traffic improvements, housing investment, property acquisition, PILOTS, grants to developers, zoning and incentives.
 - Local leaders' toolkit for attracting housing investment (by MRB Group). How to understand the market, developer incentives, regulations, and public interest. Accessing data on housing availability, population and land resources to increase affordable housing.
 - Turning plans into action: strategies for effective implementation (by LaBella PC). Make planning and implementation a continuous process, get input from the public, ensure partnerships and accountability.
 - Municipal infrastructure funding parts 1 & 2 (by NYS DOS, HCR, DEC & EFC, and USDA). Granting sources available for projects including engineering planning, government efficiency, water infrastructure, green resiliency.
 - Emergency incident command: flexible response to dynamic situations (by Town of Amherst). The supervisor from the Town of Amherst, NY gave examples of emergency orders he made after disasters in his town.

Tompkins Co. Youth Services Advisory Board, Feb 24

- The director reviewed the agencies funded by the Youth Services Dept and the areas they serve: community, economic security, education, engagement, family, or physical and mental health. These agencies include Family & Childrens Services, Ithaca Youth Bureau, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Learning Web.

- We also discussed the facilities available for runaway and homeless youth or young adults.

Lansing Housing Authority, Feb 24

- The settlement from a class action lawsuit (the Franconia claim award) is on its way to LHA. The board discussed the priorities for using this money. They will start with the deferred maintenance of windows, roof and siding.
- The residents asked for action on a tenant that continues to smoke even though Woodsedge is a non-smoking facility. Many have had medical emergencies because of the smoke. The management said that complaints are forwarded to the lawyers, who say that tenant rights in NY are very strong and it's difficult to remove people without years of complaints.

Conservation Advisory Council, March 5

- John Negley from the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District presented the programs they help municipalities with, such as agricultural environmental management, municipal conservation assistance (with local highway departments), municipal stormwater assistance, landowner conservation, invasive species control, and public outreach (like septic system maintenance).
- CAC determined they will not need to develop guidance for plantings for buffers at developments.
- They do need guidance on whether they should designate Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). They could use maps from DEC or the Army Corps to start with wetlands, since both regulate wetlands.

Visit with Tompkins County Health Department, March 10

- Ruth and I met with Samantha Hillson at the building on Brown Rd. She discussed the work done by the health department, including the community health assessment, environmental health, communicable disease services, maternal/child health, lead and rabies teams, special needs children services, healthy neighborhood programs for areas with low income and older housing stock, mental health, immunizations, and emergency preparedness training.