

**Tompkins County Legislator**  
**Michael Sigler**  
**May 2024**

Hello and thank you for having me again. I want to thank Dominick Recckio for his County reports that I draw liberally from.

I sat in on a report on our parks grant program at the County. Congratulations to the Village of Lansing on being awarded money for its parks. There's still \$22,000 left out of \$50,000 so I'm hoping the Town of Lansing puts in an application.

There were surveyors out for the Silverline Industrial solar project last week. This is the one that stretches from Van Ostrand Road to Auburn Road and North past Buck road, about 1200 acres. It would abut the CS Power projects that's 800 acres of just panels and goes from Van Ostrand East into Groton. Silverline owned by NextEra, a subsidiary of Florida Power and Light, has not put in an application yet into NYSERDA which just renegotiated all of their solar contracts to boost the state subsidies.

The Ithaca Downtown Conference Center is almost finished. They are taking bookings starting in July and expect it to open next month. I'll be taking a tour of the facility on May 28<sup>th</sup>. It will prioritize hosting mid-week conferences to attract visitors to the community, encouraging increased business at hotels, restaurants, and other downtown establishments.

The Downtown Conference Center is funded in part through the collection of hotel room tax in the County and is the first fossil fuel free conference center in the country.

A resolution passed 9-4 (Legislators Sigler, Brooks, Black, and Dawson opposed; Legislator Koreman excused) removing 465 acres and adding over 1,200 acres of agricultural land located on the west side of Cayuga Lake to Agricultural District 2, as recommended by the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board.

An amendment to the resolution that included an exception of a 62-acre parcel located within the Town of Ulysses' Conservation Zone failed 5-7 (Legislators Sigler, Brooks, Black, Dawson, and Champion in favor; Legislator Koreman excused). The Conservation Zone was created to protect natural resources including Taughannock Falls State Park, and other properties adjacent to Cayuga Lake.

We talked about the Legislature's recent budget retreat at the end of April at our last meeting. The tax cap calculation stands at 5.09% and a maintenance of effort budget would require a 5.9% increase, the sense of the Legislature was for Administrator Holmes to produce a budget with only a 2% tax levy increase, requiring approximately \$2 million in cuts.

Right now, everyone is talking about the rise in assessments. I've been to three homeowner/resident meetings. Some folks in Lansing have seen dramatic increases, over \$100,000 and it's left some wondering how they will afford increase. We've set the County on a path for cuts, but other entities like the Ithaca School District have not so the vote on their budget should give a good sense of where the community is on tax increases which will lead to escrow and rent increases.

Thank you.