

**Ruth Groff**  
**Town Board Member Report**  
**October 2023**

- **Food Systems Summit – September 28, 8:45am – 4:15pm at the Treman Center**
  - A collaboration of the Tompkins County Food Policy Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and The Food Bank of the Southern Tier
  - The sessions I attended were:
    - **“Growing Together: How Farms and Communities Can Thrive by Expanding Food Production in our Region”** – presenters were farmers from around the county, discussing their challenges; safety issues for black, Latino, and LGBTQ workers on farms; cooperation and collaboration with fellow farmers; support is generally from private equity, rather than government; suggestions of similar partnerships, such as Community Arts Partnership provides for artists; and suggestions that there needs to be an additional tier of Ag assessment exemptions.
    - **“Hunger 101”** – an exercise facilitated by The Food Bank of the Southern Tier, where attendees played the role of an assigned underserved individual, going through the process of purchasing food from a pantry (or being rejected by one because they lived in the wrong area), applying for SNAP and the challenges of that process, and then allocating their limited funds to buy food for their family. Defining, understanding, and identifying the causes of hunger were the goals of the exercise.
    - **“Resourcing a Successful Food System in Tompkins: How Funders and Community Based Organizations Can Collaborate and Grow”** – discussions around gathering resources toward a multitude of food system organizations, projects, and farmers who contribute to the Food System Plan. Implementation is a shared responsibility stressing greater collaboration with private and public funders.
- **Capital Improvement Committee: October 4, 9:00am**
  - The committee followed up on the items from the previous meeting, which was that the list of projects has been essentially completed, the next step is for descriptions of each project to be written for inclusion in a formal report. Several committee members agreed to write those descriptions as they pertained to their areas of expertise – Mike Moseley, Patrick Tyrrell, and Dave Herrick. I will be preparing financial snapshots for each project. Due to time constraints this time of year, we agreed to extend the deadline for completing reports.
- **Conservation Advisory Council (“CAC”): October 5, 6:30pm**
  - Final review and discussion of the Open Space Index (“OSI”) to move the document to the next phase
  - There will be a public meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, to focus on the OSI
- **Parks, Recreation, and Trails Committee: September 25, October 5 and 12**
  - Patrick Tyrrell, Ruth Hopkins, and Ruth Groff have periodic meetings with Ellie Peterson, Intern from Cornell, regarding her work on potential plans for the Jonas Falls area. Since she has completed a majority of the work on that project, but still has many hours left on her contract with the Town, she has begun converting the study that was done by the Cornell Design Connect team, into a format consistent with that of a trails master plan.
  - The Trails Committee has been meeting weekly to share lessons learned as several groups are working on different segments of the trail. The focus has been on learning about easements, and identifying multiple options for each segment, but the primary discussions have been around landowner outreach, and possible funding sources.
- **Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council (“ITCTC”): October 17, 10:00am**
  - I will report on this next month, as the meeting was too late in the month for me to include in this report