

**September 23, 2009  
Meeting Minutes****Location**

Exhibit Room of the Broome County Public Library, Court Street, Binghamton, NY

**Attendance**

**Constituent Members:** Mike Marinaccio, Town of Dickinson; Peter Andreasen, Town of Vestal; Tim Whitesell, Town of Binghamton; Gordon Kniffen, Town of Kirkwood; Dave Hamlin, Town of Fenton; Tarik Abdelazim, City of Binghamton; Louise Vanderkalk, League of Women Voters

**Other Attendees:** Jan Young, Rick Sowers and Carolyn Pulford, Census Bureau; Beth Egitto, Broome County Planning

**Convene** - Supervisor Michael Marinaccio convened the meeting at 4:05. The group agreed to postpone the agenda item regarding the 2010 agenda to the next meeting so that members could attend the County Executive's budget address.

**2010 Census**

Janice Young, from the US Census Bureau, spoke to the group about the part of local government in the upcoming 2010 census count. Jan is the Partnership Census for the Elmira region which covers nine counties including Broome. The Census Bureau is undertaking a campaign to try to eliminate the anticipated undercount. Since local community leaders are some of the most trusted, more so than the federal government, the Bureau seeks their help in order to gain the public's trust and encourage them to submit their questionnaires.

The census is a mandate that all residents are counted every ten years. The data determines congressional representation and the distribution of funds. Therefore, everyone needs to be counted or they may not be adequately represented. Typically Broome isn't difficult to count. However, Census Bureau representative have been seeing an increase in distrust of government officials which may negatively impact the accuracy of the count. In order to reach the community and encourage people to participate a Complete Count Committee will be formed to develop and carry out methods for public outreach.

The census questionnaire will be mailed out in March and the acceptance of responses will be completed in April. Numerators will then go out and investigate those that didn't complete and return the questionnaire. The next phase of the program is the group quarters verification and group numeration.

Federal law states that private information received through the census will be kept private for 72 years. The data that is extrapolated from the census is what goes public. Only a badged employee can extrapolate data and they go through a thorough FBI background check. There is some concern about a partnership between the Census Bureau and ACORN. While they were a partner, the group had and has no access to the raw census data.

The census count has impacts on state and federal grants and county sales tax distribution, among other things. Therefore everyone who is not counted has an impact. This makes promotion and public awareness very important. One of the problems in this region is the “snowbirds” that live here for most of the year but travel south in the winter. They are counted in the location where they reside on April 1<sup>st</sup>, but may not be in their primary residence at that time of year. Students are also counted where they reside on April 1<sup>st</sup> and, therefore, those on campus in Vestal are counted there. Those that reside off campus are more difficult to keep track of. The inmates at the County Jail are counted as part of the census and are included in the Town of Dickinson’s count. Anyone that has questions about how to respond to the questionnaire can contact the questionnaire assistance centers. It is important that people are counted and counted correctly.

The group wondered when the data from the census would be available for use in comprehensive planning and housing, among other issues. The data from the census will go before the president on December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2010 so the data will not be released until around March of 2011. For now, there is available data on the census website in the form of demographic reports, based on random sampling, that have a 2 year gap. The 2007 data is now out with the 2008 data on the way.

The group wondered if there was an undercount in Broome in 2000. In Broome County, Lisle was hard to count, and the City of Binghamton had a couple of census tracts located in the downtown area that were difficult. very downtown, possibly due to college students. There are also difficulties where recently immigrated communities are located. One of the reasons that people may not respond is due to a communication problems resulting from language barriers. The Bureau has questionnaires in 9 languages and enumerators that are fluent in additional languages. Although, Broome county does not typically have major problems, census representatives have increasing seen distrust from demographics that typically would be compliant.

The group wondered if there was a PSA that could be used to educate the public on the importance of the census. There are PSA’s available and they can be obtained form the Boston Office.

**COG Agenda** - This item was postponed until the next meeting.

**Adjourn** - The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM

Recorded and edited by: Beth Egitto