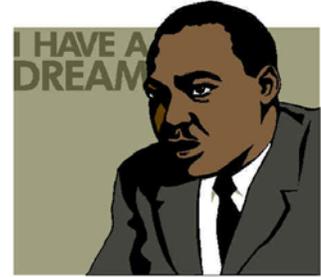


**St. Lawrence County Planning Office**  
**STAFF WORK REPORT**  
**January 2019**



Martin Luther King, Jr.

**ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT**

***Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB).*** Matilda has been participating in Cooperative Extension’s Local Foods Advisory Group and assisting with the preparation of a Local Foods Winter Social that will be held at The TAUNY Center in February. Matilda also met with Cooperative Extension Director Patrick Ames about the possibility of applying for grant monies to fund an agricultural careers in-service for guidance counselors and undergraduate high school students.

***County Planning Board (CPB).*** The Planning Board met on the 10<sup>th</sup> in Canton and heard a presentation by County Chamber of Commerce Director Brooke Rouse about the Chamber’s recently launched SLTrails website which serves as an online database of various trail systems throughout St. Lawrence County. The Planning Board also reviewed one full review project for a nine-lot, waterfront subdivision in the Town of Edwards, which was approved with conditions.

***Environmental Management Council (EMC).*** The EMC met in January. The speaker was Matilda Larson, of the County Planning Office. Matilda spoke about the recent increase in interest in placing solar arrays on agricultural lands. She described some of the land-use considerations that should be incorporated in any such proposals.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) met in January. Discussion involved the process of taking down, and peeling the trunks of, numerous “sentinel trees” (trees that had been purposely girdled last spring; if EABs are in their immediate vicinity, the EABs would be attracted to infest those trees). This process is the most accurate way to determine where EABS have spread.

***Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF).*** John and Matilda reviewed a draft agenda prepared by Joe Paperone for the Housing Advocacy Training session scheduled for April. John also invited other affordable housing experts in Northern New York to participate in the event.

**BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***Clean Energy Communities Initiative.*** Staff from Planning and Buildings & Grounds collaborated to complete and submit an application for \$250,000 to complete a series of energy-efficiency projects in County buildings, including indoor and outdoor LED upgrades. The County has received a NYS contract, which is under review and awaiting authorization for signature.

***Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.***

- Staff provide project oversight and management for redevelopment activities at J&L.
- Staff continued to facilitate administrative aspects of Phase 2.
- Staff participated in a DEC technical (clean-up) conference call on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

- Total funds committed for Phase 2 stands at \$1,715,000.
- Contractor has de-mobilized for the season. Structures visible from SH 3 are completely down; debris piles will be re-positioned for crushing in spring 2019. DEC presence reduced for season; wells will be gauged manually through the winter.

**Space Study.** Staff continue to assist the Space Committee with space allocation. More work in this arena is anticipated in the new year.

## **COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Abbé Picquet Trail Project Management.** County Planning Staff is helping with the financial administration for a trail project in the City of Ogdensburg. The majority of the work has been completed, however an extension was requested to allow for the completion of all paperwork and a final assessment of the tree plantings in the 2019.

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).** The Planning Office administers two open grants: Direct Homeownership Assistance Program (DHAP 22) and the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program, Round 2 (CHRP 2) for housing rehabilitation. Both are countywide awards. In January, John wrote Annual Performance Reports for each of these grants.

At the end of the month, the Planning Office was notified that it had received one award under the NYS CDBG program: \$300,000 to fund a septic tank replacement program for low-income households. This grant is envisioned to supplement the already-awarded NYS EFC grant to repair or replace deficient septic systems in certain watersheds as defined by NYS.

Another application, to fund a 23<sup>rd</sup> round of the County's Direct Homeownership Assistance Program (DHAP), was not funded by the NYS HOME Program.

**Lead Hazard Abatement Program.** A mandatory webinar series for grantees was postponed due to the Federal government shutdown. Staff await notification from HUD regarding rescheduling of these webinars. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development will provide lead-based paint stabilization or abatement assistance to up to 52 households throughout the county. The grant will help address lead-based paint hazards that are present in homes with children living with elevated lead levels. The grant award also includes funds for the County Public Health Department to raise public awareness about the dangers of lead-based paint hazards through community outreach and education.

## **GRANTS MANAGER**

**Grants Notice Distribution.** The Grants Notice is distributed to County Department Heads, Legislators, Superintendents of Schools, local municipal officials and approximately 350 additional individuals representing organizations throughout the North Country.

**U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant FY19.** Staff worked with Gary Bowitch, the County's environmental counsel, the County Attorney's Office, and Potsdam Planning and Development to

complete and submit an application for \$300,000 to conduct environmental assessments on properties in and around Potsdam, including three tax delinquent parcels. Potsdam was chosen as a target area because staff believe its characteristics will enhance the application's competitiveness based upon program guidelines. EPA brownfields grants are highly competitive and recent changes in the program are anticipated to yield fewer awards than past years.

## **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM**

***County Mapping Upgrades.*** County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County. A group travelled to Jefferson and Lewis County's in January to view alternative GIS platforms.

***State Ortho Imagery Capture.*** Staff received notice that the State would be updating the ortho, or top down, imagery for the County in 2019. Depending on funding, there may be an opportunity to upgrade the imagery to a higher resolution for the higher population areas in the County.

***State Septic Repair and Replacement Program.*** Work will continue on this initiative in the spring.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

***North Country Energy Taskforce.*** Staff continue to work with the Taskforce on how to fund a Green and Healthy Homes Initiative.

***Potsdam Local Government Conference.*** Staff, along with CPB member Dawn Mullaney, sit on the planning committee for the annual Local Government Conference. The Committee met on January 17<sup>th</sup> to start planning for the October conference.

***Shoreline Resilience Study.*** Keith, Matilda and John met with the project consultants by phone throughout the month of January to prepare for the project's first stakeholder meeting that will be held in February at the Dobisky Center in Ogdensburg.

***Town of Fowler.*** Keith completed the draft of a Development Guide for the Town that would look to properly codify several preferred options, would be defensible if legally challenged, and would support the efforts of the Town to ensure safe, sound and compatible land use development in various geographic areas of the Town. The "first draft" document is now pending with the Town Attorney.

***Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan.*** Staff grouped SWOT results from the November outreach and presented the information to the Town's Comprehensive Planning Committee. The Office also assigned topic areas for each staff member to begin drafting for the Plan.

***Village of Gouverneur.*** The Planning Office has a signed memorandum of understanding with the Village to do a comprehensive revision of Gouverneur's zoning regulations. Staff extended this MOU through April of 2019 to allow the Town to bring a new Board member up to speed on the revisions.

*Town of Brasher.* Matilda met with the Code Enforcement Officer, Town Planning Board members, and Zoning Board of Appeals members on 28<sup>th</sup> to provide an overview of subdivision regulations, and discussed adopting a six-month moratorium to prepare subdivision regulations for Brasher.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

*County Transit System.* Throughout January, Planning staff have met with the County's mobility manager to: submit documentation to the DOT to satisfy the agency's Title VI funding requirements; secured signatures for the County's new 5311 funding contract; reviewed responses to the County's Request for Proposals to provide Mobility Management Services and administer the County's First Mile, Last Mile program; contacted with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Franklin County representatives about establishing a Massena Shuttle with stops in Akwesasne; reviewed and revised draft versions of the County's draft Coordinated Transportation Plan; and developed a timeline to present the draft plan for public review and comment before it is presented to the County Board of Legislators for adoption this spring.