

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
February 2020



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The Board met on February 27th and heard a presentation from Bruce Green and Patrick Kelly about solar exemptions and pilots. The Board asked Planning staff to draft an advisory memo and resolution for the Board of Legislators' consideration to encourage property owners to utilize their least productive lands when signing leases for solar arrays. Also on the 27th, Matilda spoke with the Herkimer County Cornell Cooperative Extension Director to discuss her presentation for an upcoming Solar Workshop in Herkimer on March 7th.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 13th in Canton and heard two full review projects: Site plan review for Fort de La Presentation in the City of Ogdensburg; and the Town of Fowler's local law to establish Development Districts. The site plan for Fort de La Presentation was returned for location action, and the Town of Fowler's local law was approved with conditions. Matilda and Jason presented highlights from the 2019 Planning Board Newsletter which satisfied one-hour of land use training for the Board's annual, four-hour land use training requirement. The Board also created a work group and met on the 27th to review and discuss NYSERDA's model law and permit for solar energy storage facilities.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC meeting in February included a discussion with Bob Flavin and Don Lucas of the St. Lawrence County Fish Advisory Board. They are concerned about the sale of fish from the St. Lawrence River and other spots in the County; the NYS Department of Health has issued health advisories about consumption of fish from these waters, including statements that women younger than 50 and children under 15 should not eat any fish from these waters. For more information, please see www://health.ny.gov/publications/2800.pdf

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB TF met in Canton. Task Force members gave updates on activities in their communities. Aaron Barrigar displayed a map of potential EAB Trap Trees and Sentinel Tree locations for 2020. These sites for 2020 are set inland from the St. Lawrence River shoreline, since the Task Force believes that EABs are moving away from the River.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF met on Feb 27th to continue planning for its annual training sessions, which are typically held in April, in conjunction with Fair Housing Month. The focus of training in 2020 will be the recently-enacted laws regulating landlords and tenants.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. Staff are working with the County's Complete Count Committee. The Committee met twice during February to plan strategies for ensuring a complete count for the Census.

During February, staff assisted the Canton Unitarian-Universalist Church to host a public presentation by Nicole Jordan, a Participation Specialist with the Census Bureau.

Planning staff submitted an application to the NYS Census 2020 Complete Count Outreach Grants Program for funds to support outreach, promotion and public education activities regarding the Census.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.

- Staff participated in a DEC technical (clean-up) conference call on February 25th Stakeholders to review draft feasibility study prior to March DEC technical call.

Space Study. Staff is assisting with an assessment of County space needs in the City of Ogdensburg.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abbé Picquet Trail Project Management. Final close out of this project is anticipated in the next several months.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers two open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); and the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to up to 52 households throughout the county. During February, the Planning Office worked with partner agencies at SLC Public Health and the North Country Housing Council to ramp up production. The partners hold production meetings every two weeks. Staff from the Planning Office and partner agencies participated in a HUD grantee conference call on February 13.

Village of Potsdam Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The Planning Office is participating as a project partner on the Local Planning Committee (LPC) for the Potsdam DRI. The group reviewed 47 projects during a day-long review session in February. The project list will be further paired down in the coming months. The project website is: <https://potsdamdri.com/>.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Mapping Upgrades. County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County.

Public Transit Route Maps. Matilda finalized maps for Routes 12, 61, 63, 68 and 69 which are now available online at: <http://www.slcnypublictransit.com/transit-schedules>

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.

Community Services. Staff assisted Community Services with two grant applications to NYS OASAS:
Telepractice Capacity Expansion to Increase Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder, \$15,000
Mobile Treatment Vehicle to Increase Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder, \$225,000

PLANNING MATTERS

St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan. This planning project encompasses the entire St. Lawrence River watershed in New York, including some or all of eight counties. The Coordinating Committee is working with a selected consultant; they have published a Final Watershed Characterization Study for the watershed (http://fcswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SLR-Final-with-maps-Jan_16_2020-resize.pdf). This Watershed Characterization Report has been developed as a component of the St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan (WRP), scheduled for completion in 2020.

Short-Term Vacation Rentals Presentation. On the 12th Matilda traveled to Star Lake and delivered a presentation to the Town of Fine Town Board about regulating short-term vacation rentals.

Town of Brasher Zoning Revisions. Matilda finalized updates to the Town of Brasher's zoning regulations and are now under review by the County Planning Board.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Two 28-passenger buses were delivered to the County on January 27th and put into service by its bus operator. On the 6th and 11th, Matilda met with Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to prepare and finalize the County's 5311 Rural Transit application for 2019-2020. The application was submitted a week before the deadline, and was the first in the state to be submitted to the DOT. On the 20th Matilda attended the Public Transit Task Force meeting at the Best Western and heard a presentation about community bike rental programs. On the 26th Matilda conducted a monthly review of randomly selected daily trip sheets and vehicle inspection reports at The Arc's Transit Office.