

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
January 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. On the 13th, Matilda met with the Pierrepont Planning Board via Zoom and reviewed the distribution of prime soils, soils suitable for cultivation, satellite imagery and hydric soils that are present in the town, and how this information can be used when drafting a solar energy facilities law for the Town Board’s consideration. On the 14th, Matilda met with newly appointed AFPB member Margaret Finen via Zoom to review the Agricultural Districts program, highlights from the County’s Agricultural Development Plan, and how these resources influence the County Planning Board’s review of solar array projects. On the 20th, 26th and 29th, Matilda met with Cooperative Extensions’ search committee and/or candidates to fill a newly created Local Foods Marketing and Development specialist position.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met via Zoom on the 14th. Two projects (subdivision and area variance) were returned for local action. There were no projects for full review.

Presentation: Casey Kirkpatrick, Director, Distributed Generation (DG) Ombudsperson, National Grid, presented on “Distributed Generation Interconnections.” The presentation and Q and A are available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/DiHrkJh780>. Notable points from the presentation: Since 2015 there have been applications for 7,407 MW of DG projects (primarily solar), only 589 MW are connected, NYS push to meet 70% renewable energy by 2030 is driving solar project applications, and DG projects, <= 5 MW, are trackable via the NYS Dept. of Public Service SIR (Standardized Interconnection Requirements) Inventory.

Additional topics that were discussed: Vaccine sign up, Brown’s Bridge in Colton ongoing work and replacement, COVID impact to all County Departments, and upcoming County-wide broadband access survey.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met in January. The speaker was EMC Chair Catherine Bennett, who established her company, Milkweed Tussock Tubers, in DePeyster in 2017. Bennett spoke about regenerative agriculture, which she practices on her farm. Per Bennett, regenerative agricultural techniques could greatly contribute to sequestration of carbon, and slow climate change.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB Task Force met in January. Reports were made by Task Force members about EAB-related activities since the last meeting in November.

The Environment and Economy Subcommittee This group met to discuss and plan how to move forward on projects with results. The subcommittee is going to focus on one project at a time, members will conduct research, provide speakers, and end with a public report.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Task Force did not meet in January. The next meeting of the FHTF will be held on Thursday February 18th.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. We await release of preliminary data from the 2020 Census. These data will be used to re-apportion Congressional districts across the country, and to redistrict NY Assembly and Senate boundaries, and locally to adjust BOL district lines.

COVID Response. Heidi has been spending several days a week in the County's COVID call center, fielding calls from individuals regarding insulation, quarantine and any other question that is COVID related. Staff have also volunteered to assist in County vaccination PODs (Points of Distribution).

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in a technical conference call with DEC on January 28th. Mild temperatures have allowed product recovery to continue. Draft ISMP is expected in March.

Title VI Coordinator. The County Planning Director has been selected by the Board of Legislators to be the County's Title VI Coordinator. The County recently passed a Title VI Plan, which safeguards against discrimination in the distribution of federally funded programs. Material on Title VI was distributed to Human Resources for distribution at new employee orientation.

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff is working with DANC and a consultant to assess the deficiencies throughout the County. The assessment involves an on-line and paper survey that will go public in February and a physical inspection of broadband infrastructure.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers three open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3). During January, staff submitted to NYS OCR Annual Performance Reports for each of these grants.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to low- and moderate-income households throughout the county. In January, the Planning Office, in consultation with its partners, the North Country Housing Council and the SLC Public Health Dept, continued its Lead Hazard Abatement program.

Statement of Interest: The County issued a Request for Statement of Interest for managing Housing and Community Development initiatives countywide. The statements were due back to the County on January 29th. Several County Department Heads will be reviewing the Statements that were received.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Enterprise GIS. Dakota assisted the Emergency Services Department with setting up access to web based mapping.

County Mapping Upgrades. County GIS users will begin to meet once per quarter to discuss best practices for shared GIS resources.

COVID19 Mapping. Since March 31st, Dakota and Matilda have prepared daily maps for the County's Public Health Department to track positive, active, and regional cases of COVID-19.

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY). Staff, Dakota, is working on submitting GIS data to PTNY that highlight recreation trail infrastructure in the County. Data for this project was recently received from the County trails web application and will be submitted during the winter 2021.

Public Transportation Bus Routes. Throughout the second half of January, Matilda updated Public Transit's route maps to indicate which routes are proximate to State, County, Hospital and Pharmacy COVID19 vaccination sites.

Staff GIS Production

- Town of Colton Dept. of Public Works mapping assistance for their roads outside of the Blue Line.
- Emergency Services mapping assistance with search and recovery on Black Lake snowmobile incident.
- COVID vaccine distribution sites mapping for County Administrator.

GRANTS

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.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, 5-Year Update. Staff are assisting Emergency Services with the required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. County stakeholders participated in a kick-off Zoom meeting on January 14th. Staff from Barton & Loguidice to present at February BOL committee meeting.

BridgeNY. NYSDOT announced the 2021 round of BridgeNY; funding is available for up to three bridges and five culverts. Pre-applications for culverts are due April 14 and May 5 for bridges. Final applications are due May 19 for culverts and June 9 for bridges. Staff had initial conversation with highway staff about plans for this funding round. The County secured over \$9.4 million in the last round (2018).

PLANNING MATTERS

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff is making progress on a 6-8 month process of reviewing and drafting updated land use regulations. There are two working options: zoning as a single district (rural residential) and zoning as a dual district (shoreline and rural residential). Staff met with Committee members on the 21st to review the most recent draft and edits were noted. Staff will continue to edit and prepare for the next meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 24, at 6pm, via Zoom.

Town of Rossie Land Use Regulations Assistance. Staff continues to assist the Town's Planning Board chairman with updating the Town's land use regulations. Staff assisted with: understanding the CPB referral process, training resources for board of appeals members, and sharing area and use variance templates.

Town of Waddington. Staff reached out to the Village of Waddington to discuss the possibility of Staff assisting the Village with a revision to its land use regulations. The Village had asked about Planning Staff assisting with the project previously.

Website. Lisa and Dakota, with staff input, continue to work on updating/editing the Planning Office page on the County's new website.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 6th, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo held a virtual meeting with The Arc staff to review the organization's preliminary response to draft findings in a 2018 STOA audit, and to identify additional documentation that is needed to submit to the auditors. On the 8th, Matilda held a virtual meeting with DOT representative Laura Hacker to review revised Part Cs for the 2020 quarterly STOA reports. During the week of the 4th, Matilda prepared and submitted the 4th quarter STOA report to the Board office for the County Chair's signature. During the week of the 11th, Matilda reviewed VTC's 4th quarter Mobility Management report and forwarded their invoices for payment. On the 11th and 12th, Matilda met with Frank Doldo to finalize The Arc's response to the audit, and held a teleconference with college representatives about the timelines to resume full service of Routes 67, 68 and 69. On the 14th, Matilda and Frank met with DOT representative Bill Telovsky to discuss the projected award amount from the FY 2021 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, and proposed uses of those monies. On the 27th, Matilda spoke with Laura Hacker to review 5311 capital assistance funds requested by the County. Matilda also met with Frank on the 27th to verify trip and mileage calculations for the 2018 STOA audit.