

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
March 2022



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. During the month of March, Lisa and Matilda prepared postcards informing property owners about addition or removal of their lands to Agricultural District 2. As a result of these postcards, Planning Office staff fielded phone calls from persons asking additional questions about the implications to property taxes and development rights if their land was added or removed from the District. Throughout the month, Matilda also contacted persons by phone or email to inquire of their interest in being considered for appointment to the Board. On the 9th, Matilda delivered a summary presentation to municipal assessors about the Agricultural District program. On the 18th, Matilda and Jason participated in the County Planning Directors virtual meeting to discuss recommendations for the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Preservation Working Group. On the 23rd, Matilda and Lisa distributed a press release to local media reminding the public that March 30th is the last day to submit requests to add property to, or remove property from an Agricultural District.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met via Zoom on March 10th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). There was further discussion on a few projects: a subdivision in the Town of Oswegatchie, a special use permit for an event space in the Town of Brasher, and a special use- and sign permit for a dog daycare in the Town of Canton. Staff reminded Board members about financial disclosure form submission. Also, Open Meetings Law virtual meeting permission expires on 4/15/22 and CPB meetings will transition to in person. There is a possibility that a virtual option may exist in the future to incorporate a hybrid approach (in-person and virtual). Finally, Staff have a few new members that are in the Board of Legislators' approval process. CPB agendas and minutes can be accessed here: <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/Planning/AdvisoryBoards/CountyPlanningBoard>.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on March 16th; There were three speakers: Blake Lavia and Tzintzun Aguilar-Izzo, two community organizers from the North Country based environmental storytelling collective [Talking Wings](#), discussed the [North Country Rights of Nature](#) virtual Symposium that was held on March 22.

Thomas Linzey, lead attorney for the [Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights](#), then discussed "Rights of Nature" law, and specific case studies about how the Rights of Nature have been implemented across the country.

Staff have created a Facebook page for the EMC. Please check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/St-Lawrence-County-Environmental-Management-Council-105829918672342>

Staff are continuing to work with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. A website for this project is here: <https://stlawco.org/node/2777>.

- Staff coordinated a meeting with SUNY Canton Professor Adrienne Rygel to strategize her students' Black Lake water quality project.

Staff continue to work with four subcommittees, and the County's Youth Advisory Board, on a variety of projects, such as: pollinator gardens, NYS DEC Deer Management Program, Earth Day events, invasive species, and commenting on the [NYS Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan](#). Also, Staff coordinate with speakers who present on a variety of environmental topics in monthly EMC meetings.

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet during March. The next meeting of the EAB Task Force will be held on Friday, April 15th.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Fair Housing Task Force is planning to hold a public event for Fair Housing Month in April. In March, the Office forwarded biodata sheets to the Board Office for the reappointment of members to the Task Force. On or before the 10th, staff prepared and submitted a draft resolution to the Board Office for the County Legislators' consideration to proclaim April as Fair Housing month.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continues to work with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the completed [broadband study](#). In March, staff coordinated and participated in one Committee meeting; had six working sessions; participated in a webinar re: Federal infrastructure funds for broadband; and delivered public comments to the NYS Public Service Commission. The near-term goal is to validate and refine the list of unserved addresses in the County.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in a DEC technical conference call on March 24th.

Riverview Towers Fire Relief Effort. Staff assisted at the County EOC at Wadhams Hall March 9-12.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers four open grants: the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program; the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3); the recently-funded SLC-CARES award to conduct housing rehabilitation for populations vulnerable to COVID-19; and the even more-recently awarded fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4).

During March, the Planning Office received a Release of Funds for the SLC-CARES program.

Staff completed the Environmental Review for CHRP 4, and submitted a Request for Release of Funds (RROF) to OCR as part of getting CHRP 4 ready to expend funds.

The Office of Community Renewal notified the Planning Office that they would be monitoring the DHAP 23 and CHRP 3 programs in the month of April. Staff assembled and submitted grant materials that will be reviewed during the auditing process in April.

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. By the end of March, the Planning Office reports

that 15 units have been completed, 4 units are in the construction process, and 9 clients are in an application phase.

Recreation. Staff are actively following a handful of organizations and attending webinars that address developing recreational assets in rural communities.

Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies. On the 2nd, Assistant Professor Larry Danforth delivered a summary of the 2021 community survey to County Department Heads, and invited Department Heads to suggest questions to include in the next annual survey. On the 28th, Matilda participated in a stakeholder work session with Center staff to identify current issues and questions to include in a tri-county survey that will be conducted this spring.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

Board of Elections (BOE). Staff completed a project that updated election district boundaries to comply with the new legislative districts. Final products, static .pdf maps and a digital web map, were shared with the BOE and the County Administrator.

County Enterprise GIS.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>
- GIS Web App: Proposed Solar sites in the County: Updated with recent Madrid solar project (Acer Solar).
<https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/apps/View/index.html?appid=6f3d7fb0923448ed90c3385eb0f8a872>
- GIS Web Map: 2021 Septic Repair Program Waterbodies with 250' Buffer:
<https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d8a8b0c7e637400a9c269323b7670a19>

Emergency Management Services. Staff continue to provide GIS assistance to this department as their GIS workflows evolve. In partnership with SLC Real Property, Staff is assisting with the publication of an address dataset that will be frequently updated and easily accessible for County GIS users.

SLC IDA. Staff are assisting with a project to access GIS data for the Arconic property in Massena.

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. The County and its consulting team are awaiting comments on the draft HMP from NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Septic Repair Program. The County has funds from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to repair or replace deficient septic tanks within 250 feet of the St. Lawrence River in communities west of Ogdensburg, and along the lower portion of the Raquette River (from Norfolk through Massena). To

date, twenty-one applications have been received; 15 agreements have been executed with homeowners.

Misc. Staff met with/discussed funding opportunities with Community Services, County Highway, Town of Madrid, and the Development Authority of the North Country.

PLANNING MATTERS

Large Scale Solar. Staff is monitoring two projects in the County: [Rich Road Solar and Storage](#) and [North Side Energy Center](#).

Town of Gouverneur. Staff assisted with sharing solar project documentation (Notice of Action and application material) with the Town supervisor. Solar projects in the Town are changing ownership and creating record keeping challenges.

Town of Hammond. Staff assisted with all phases of amending the Town and Village's land use regulation law. This involved editing the text, completing SEQR, and coordinating with Town and Village officials, and the Town's attorney, to ensure that the correct law is adopted and submitted to the NYS Dept of State.

Town of Potsdam. Staff completed their GIS zoning map changes and shared the final content with the Town, and with DANC to update the parcel viewer IMA (Internet Mapping Application).

Town of Rossie. Staff is preparing to assist the Town in revising the Town's existing site plan and subdivision regulations to reach full state land use regulation compliance.

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

- Updates continue to be made for events, meetings and content on some pages.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 7th and 11th, Matilda virtually met with Volunteer Transportation Center staff to review and discuss parameters for the First Mile Last Mile program. Throughout the month, Lisa and Matilda collected information to finalize the 5311 Annual Report for 2021. On the 11th, 15th, 23rd and 29th, Matilda reviewed the report with stakeholders from the DOT, The Arc, VTC, the Treasurer's Office, and the Planning Office. During this month, Matilda and Lisa finalized 2021 payments to The Arc for transit operations, and to VTC for Mobility Management services. On the 17th, Matilda and Jason virtually participated in a County Public Transit Task Force meeting. On the 22nd, Dakota attended a Public Transit stakeholder meeting at Clarkson to discuss an e-bike pilot project that will be based out of Potsdam.