

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
April 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The Ag and Farmland Protection Board meeting on April 1st and reviewed requests from 12 property owners to add land to Ag District 2 (no requests were received to add land to Ag District 1). After reviewing information for each petition, the AFPB passed a recommendation to the County Board of Legislators to add 13 parcels totaling 1,010.3 acres. A public hearing on the AFPB’s recommendation was held virtually on April 13th. One person attended the public hearing and did not have comments on the AFPB’s recommendation. Matilda prepared and submitted a report summarizing this year’s review to the County Board of Legislators. On the 8th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting held by Cooperative Extension’s Local Foods Advisory Group.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met via Zoom on the 8th. Staff returned nine projects for local action (subdivisions, site plan approvals, area variances, a special use permit, and a sign permit). The Board reviewed a 5 MW solar array site plan and special use permit in the Town of Oswegatchie, an advanced technology industrial greenhouse site plan in the Town of Massena, land use regulation revisions for the Town of Rossie; all were approved with conditions. A use variance for a mobile home in the Town of Norfolk was also reviewed and was denied.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on April 21st. The speaker for this EMC meeting was Tony David, Executive Director of the Environment Division, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. His presentation concerned the effects of dam removal on the St. Regis River in Hogansburg, including ice jams in/near Hogansburg, and upstream throughout the watershed.

The EMC partnered with the Youth Advisory Board (Youth Bureau) to observe Earth Day in the County. There were five sites at which Trash-Dash events were held: Gouverneur, Canton, and Potsdam on Saturday, April 24; Massena and Ogdensburg on Sunday, April 25. In addition, EMC members did research and submitted nominations for the Youth Advisory Board’s “Carbon Footprint” presentation, held April 29th.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB Task Force met on April 15th. Participants reported on their EAB management plans for 2021.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). Planning staff followed up on the memo re: eviction crisis delivered to the BOL in March by meeting with planners and social service providers from a three county region (Jeff., Lewis; St. Law.) to discuss how federal and state funding might be used to alleviate housing issues created or exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

County staff and members of the FHTF attended (via ZOOM) the Fair Housing Roundtable on April 21st. This Roundtable was hosted by the Jefferson County Fair Housing Task Force; the presenter was Sally Santangelo, of Fair Housing CNY.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. On April 26th, the Census Bureau released state population figure from the 2020 Census. These are the first numbers released from that Census; they will be used to determine apportionment in Congress. It was reported that New York State had a population of 20,215,751, which was up from the 2010 figure (19,421,055). It is projected that New York will lose 1 seat in the House of Representatives.

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff are working with DANC and a consultant to assess the deficiencies throughout the County. The assessment involves an on-line and paper survey that went live on February 19th and will continue through April 30th, and a physical inspection of broadband infrastructure.

COVID Response. Staff assisted at five (5) vaccination PODs (Points of Distribution) during the month of April.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in a technical conference call with DEC on April 29th. The County submitted comments on the draft Interim Site Management Plan (SMP).

Space Planning. Staff are assisting the Sheriff, District Attorney and Emergency Management Offices with space realignment.

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).

On April 8th, the Planning Office submitted an application for \$600,000 to fund the 24th round of the County's Direct Homeownership Assistance Program. Planning staff had held a required Public Hearing regarding this application on April 5th.

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 April, the Planning Office is pleased to announce that 5 units have been completed, 9 units are in process; and another 7 units are in the application/qualification pipeline.

Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies Advisory Board. Matilda agreed to serve on the advisory board for JCC's Center for Community Studies, which met virtually on the 8th. JCC's Center conducts a variety of robust community surveys in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties. JCC faculty members Joel Lalone and Larry Danforth presented highlights from the 2020 Annual Community Survey of St. Lawrence County residents to the Board of Legislators on the 19th.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Enterprise GIS. Dakota has successfully published data to the Enterprise system and has shared CPB reviewed solar projects as an interactive web mapping application. Also, a prime farmland dataset was published for public consumption and sharing.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>

COVID-19 Mapping. Since March 31, 2020, 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.

GRANTS

BridgeNY. Staff has been working with County Highway to prepare applications for three bridge projects. Pre-applications are due May 5; final applications are due June 9. The County secured over \$9.4 million in the last round (2018).

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 project meeting on April 8th.

Septic Repair Program. The County was made aware that it was a recipient of \$340,000 to repair or replace deficient septic tanks along specified waterbodies in the County.

PLANNING MATTERS

North Side Energy Solar Project. Staff is working with the County Administrator's Office and several legislators to determine what role the County may have in the review of the application for the 180 MW solar installation in the Towns of Brasher, Massena and Norfolk.

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff continues to make 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 (residential agricultural) and zoning as a dual district (shoreline and residential agricultural). Staff will meet with Committee members on the 28th for the final review of the draft documents. A new map was created to show the dual district boundaries. Some of the remaining steps are: final edits to draft documents, scheduling public meetings and hearings, and SEQR submission.

Town of Rossie Land Use Regulations Assistance. After CPB review and conditioned approval, staff continue to assist the Town's Planning Board Chair with targeted edits to their land use regulations.

Village 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. Staff will attend the Village's Board meeting on July 5th to discuss next steps.

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

- Updates were made to the EMC page and the home page hosted an advertisement for the CDBG public hearing.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda met with County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to draft and finalize the 2020 annual 5311 report that was signed and submitted to the DOT on the 23rd. Matilda and Frank also met throughout the month to provide responses to a 5311 audit, and uploaded back up documentation for the DOT's program auditors. On the 6th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting to learn about participation requirements for a bike lending program that was successfully piloted in Buffalo. On the 9th, Matilda submitted a monthly report to the DOT that identifies COVID related impacts on transit staffing levels. During the week of the 12th, Matilda and Jason submitted the first quarter 2021 STOA report with back up documentation to the DOT. On the 22nd, Matilda participated in the first of two DOT Civil Rights training webinars.