

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
June 2020



NOTICE:

St. Lawrence County shut down normal operations on Wednesday March 18th, in order to deal with the State of Emergency caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. On Monday, June 29th, the Office resumed operations at 100% staffing capacity, and is open to the public by appointment.

IN MEMORIAM

The County Planning Office is sad to report former Office Manager Denise Henophy died on Wednesday, June 24th after a difficult battle with cancer. Denise served as the Office Manager for the Planning Office from June 2002 to August 2019. She was a valued colleague who kept the office organized and was an immense help at keeping staff on task with projects, whether it be record keeping for land use projects; communicating with municipal officials and their advisory boards; accounting and budgeting for a wide variety of community development projects; and preparing meeting packets for advisory boards. In addition to her contributions as a skilled Office Manager, Denise was a dear friend to current and former Planning Office staff. She will be greatly missed for her caring honesty, her willingness to help, and for her sense of humor.

ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). On June 1st the County Board of Legislators adopted Resolution 160-2020 to add six parcels totaling 583 acres to Ag District 2. The final report was prepared and submitted to the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets for certification at the end of the month. On the 25th, Matilda listened to a webinar by the NYS Association of Counties about Federal and State programs available to farm operations during COVID19.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met online via Zoom on the 11th and heard six full review projects: A special use permit for 3.4 MW solar array in Stockholm; a site plan review for a soy processing facility in Massena (T), two site plan reviews to add a drive thru aisles in Massena (V), a site plan review to establish a micro-brewery in Massena (V), and a special use permit for a brewery in Louisville. The special use permits and site plan review were approved with conditions and non-binding comments.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met in June via Zoom. The speaker was Jason Pfothenhauer, St. Law. Co. Planning Director; Jason spoke about large-scale solar projects being

proposed for the Massena-Brasher area, and for the Town of Canton immediately south and west of the Village.

In addition, the EMC is continuing to keep its “Earth Day 50” program open. As noted in last month’s Work Report,

As part of our Earth Day 2020 planning, we would like to invite individuals and environmental groups from around the County / around the region to submit something in writing, photo(s), or audio or video format, about their impressions about Earth Day, or about how they, or their group have developed during this 50-year period since the first Earth Day (accomplishments; goals for the future; challenges that lay ahead; etc.).

Please email your submission to jtenbusch@stlawco.org When you email, please have the subject line read “Earth Day 50”.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB Task Force met by conference call in June. Task Force members reported on their activities.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF has suspended 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. There was not a meeting during June.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Emergency Response to COVID 19. The Planning Office has been assisting with the County’s COVID-19 response in several ways. Efforts include helping to staff the Emergency Operations Center (see separate section below) and mapping and locational analysis of COVID cases.

Census 2020. Staff are working with the County’s Complete Count Committee. The Committee did not meet during June.

During June, staff worked with local colleges; worked with the League of Women Voters to send out Census info for distribution in students’ lunches and at food distribution sites; compiled a weekly update of Census response rates by towns in SLC; published a weekly series of graphics that can be further distributed by other members of the Complete Count Committee; etc.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.

➤ The DEC technical (clean-up) conference call for May was cancelled by the DEC.

Space Study. Staff are assisting with an assessment of County space needs in the City of Ogdensburg. This project is on hold at the present time.

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).

In June, the Planning Office, in consultation with its subrecipient, the North Country Housing Council, re-opened its CDBG programs, while adhering to rules put forward by Gov. Cuomo for construction work during the COVID19 pandemic.

Staff submitted the Environmental Review Record (ERR), and submitted a Request for Release of Funds (RROF) from OCR.

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 up to 52 households throughout the county. In June, the Planning Office, in consultation with its subrecipient, the North Country Housing Council, began to re-open its Lead Hazard Abatement program while adhering to rules put forward by Gov. Cuomo for construction work during the COVID19 pandemic.

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. This project is currently on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project website is: <https://potsdamdri.com/>.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

Daily Activity. Staff, on a rotating basis, share in the daily EOC duties from their respective offices in Public Safety Complex. EOC operation consists of answering phones and logging and distributing COVID-19 medical resources requests, completing daily operations records, and mapping (see below).

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

COVID19 Mapping. Since March 31st, Dakota has prepared daily maps for the County's Public Health Department to track confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Public Transportation Bus Routes. Dakota and Matilda continue to prepare maps as time allows for existing and new bus routes. To date, draft maps were completed for existing Routes 18, 22, 62, 65 and 66. A map for new Route 70 (Massena shuttle with service to Akwesasne) is complete, and maps for new Routes 71, 72, 73 and 74 are underway.

County Mapping Upgrades. County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County. Installation of ESRI's Enterprise GIS software is planned for the end of August or early September. One of the goals of this upgrade is to easily share GIS data within the county and to the public.

DANC IMA (Internet Mapping Application) Training: During the first week of June, DANC held virtual trainings on updates to their IMA. This was attended by several Planning staff.

BOL Highway Project Update: Planning staff created a map which displays the location and completion year of large culverts, bridges, road projects, and salt storage sheds in the County.

BOL Find My Legislator IMA (Internet Mapping Application): Planning staff created an IMA for use on the County website to better show district geographic boundaries and supporting information. This

will go public when the County's new website goes live.

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' Substance Abuse Clinic on an application to a U.S. Department of Justice's Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP); this application requested \$900,000 to implement evidenced-based treatment and recovery services for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

Other Grant Assistance. Staff assisted Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County with the development of an application to the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program requesting \$248,892 to further advance local foods initiatives.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, 5-Year Update. Staff is assisting Emergency Services with the required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In May, staff participated in a DHSES webinar and reviewed proposals from potential consultants.

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 St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan (WRP), is scheduled for completion in 2020.

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY). PTNY hosted their last webinar on June 4th with a focus on the New York State Greenways Plan, the Empire State Trail, and an open discussion on the status of recreational trails in the state. Dakota participated in all of the webinars. He is also planning to submit comments on adding the NYS portion of the U.S. Route 11 corridor to the Empire State Plan, submitting SLC GIS trail data, and assisting with publicizing PTNY's Public Plan Survey.

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. During the week of the 8th and the 29th, Matilda met with County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to prepare draw requests for CARES Act funds to reimburse VTC and The Arc for eligible transit operating expenses. On the 18th, Matilda and Frank met with the County's DOT representative by phone to review a preliminary draw request for The Arc. Throughout the month, Matilda worked with County Attorney Steve Button to draft new College Connector contracts that will be executed with Clarkson, SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam. Contracts for Clarkson and SUNY Canton were finalized and forwarded to each university for signature, and work on the SUNY Potsdam contract is underway. On the 29th, Matilda delivered an update to the County Board of

Legislators about transit operations during the COVID19 pandemic. Matilda and Jason also presented a resolution to the County's Finance Committee that authorizes the Chair to sign the College Connector contracts. On the 30th, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo participated in the State DOT's webinar about drawing CARES Act monies to offset public transportation operating expenses that were incurred from January 20th to the present. Signed copies of the CARES Act award contracts issued by the DOT were returned to the DOT, as was a signed hard copy of the County's 1Q STOA report for 2020.