

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
August 2020



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met via Zoom on the 13th and heard four full review projects: A local law to regulate solar energy facilities in the Town of Oswegatchie; two site plan reviews for large scale solar arrays in the Town of Oswegatchie; and a special use permit for a sand and gravel pit in the Town of Brasher. All projects were approved with conditions.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met in August via Zoom. There were two speakers: Kitty O’Neill and Maria “Flip” Filippi, from the Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County. They spoke about farming, both large- and small-scale operations, organic and alternative approaches to farming.

In addition, the EMC is continuing to keep its “Earth Day 50” program open. As noted in July’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 did not meet in August.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF met in August. There are plans to hold a training session for landlords and service providers at 10:00 am on September 24th, via ZOOM. Guest presenter will be Sally Santangelo, Executive Director of CNY Fair Housing. There are also plans to hold a training session later in the fall for town/village justices, about the eviction process.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. Staff are working with the County’s Complete Count Committee. The Committee met once during August.

In August, Planning staff were informed by NYS ESD that the grant application that had been submitted in February for funding to promote the Census had been approved – at half the requested amount, or \$127,556. Staff prepared and submitted a revised scope of work; this was accepted by ESD, and a Grant Disbursement Agreement was executed.

Activities to be done with the received grant funds include:

- Wrapping three busses and one van. These will be rolling billboards for the Census.
- Full-page color advertisements in North Country This Week newspaper (7 weeks).
- Distribution of Census tote bags, facemasks, “We Count” activity books for children. In coordination with the North Country Library System.
- Local radio promotional spots; direct-mail (large print) and telephone calls to visually-impaired persons. In coordination with the North Country Association for the Visually Impaired.
- Direct mail to residential addresses across the County.

The deadline for completing the Census is currently set as September 30th.

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.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Participated in a technical conference call with DEC on August 25th.

Marine Sanctuary Assessment. Staff have been researching the proposed Lake Ontario Marine Sanctuary. A representative from NOAA and the Oswego County Administrator made a presentation to the Board of Legislators in August.

Space Study. Staff are assisting with an assessment of County space needs. 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).

The Grant Administration Plan is in progress and staff are compiling required documentation to submit to NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) before we are allowed to request funds under CHRP 3. The Plan covers such things as: program summary, program requirements & policies (eligible activities, national objectives, required program policies), and the grant administrative cycle (contract execution & start-up, environmental review, project implementation, compliance files & reporting).

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 August, the Planning Office, in consultation with its partners, the North Country Housing Council and the SLC Public Health Dept, continued to ramp up its Lead Hazard Abatement program.

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 moving forward, with several virtual meetings held in August. 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 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 positive, active, and regional cases of COVID-19.

Public Transportation Bus Routes. In August, maps for all existing bus routes were finalized and uploaded to the public transit website. Through the end of this year, Matilda and Dakota will meet with Transit Manager Rena Ryan and Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to identify how some of the longer routes in the county can be revised.

County Mapping Upgrades. Installation of ESRI's Enterprise GIS software began at the end of July and should be up and operational during the first week of August. The initial focus is to have Emergency Services Enterprise GIS needs established first and then Real Property and Planning will come next.

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.

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.

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.

Town of Hammond Land Use Reg. Revisions. Staff is beginning a 6-8 month process of reviewing and then drafting an updated land use regulations document. The Town, with support from the Village of Hammond, has signed a MOU with the Planning Office to conduct the revision. Notable suggestions from the Town are new regulations for solar and an industrial zone.

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY). Staff, Dakota, is working on submitting GIS data to PTNY that highlights recreation trail infrastructure in the County. This is ongoing

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. The College Connector (routes 67, 68 and 69) began operations at the beginning of August on a reduced schedule as the universities reopened, and resumed to full operations on the 31st. On the 14th and 28th, Jason, Matilda and Mobility Manager Frank Doldo participated in a teleconference with the County Administrator's Office to provide an update to College Connector operations. On the 13th, Matilda and County Attorney Steve Button met with SUNY Potsdam representatives by phone to finalize the SUNY Potsdam College Connector contract. Throughout the month, Matilda consulted with the County's DOT representative on the preparation of an RFP for Mobility Management Services, and a Request for Statements of Interest for bus operations. On the 18th, Matilda met with Transit Manager Rena Ryan and Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to review Goals and Strategies from the Coordinated Transportation Plan that are completed to date, and developed time frames to pursue the remaining Goals and Strategies over the next few years. On the 25th and 27th, Matilda met with Rena and Frank to discuss budget contingency planning for the remaining of this year, and for winter 2021 due to the ongoing presence of COVID19. At the end of the month, Matilda consulted with County Attorney Steve Button to draft and revise a bus advertising agreement to be signed with area businesses and organizations. Matilda also drafted three resolutions for the County Board's consideration: authorization to sign a contract extension for First Mile Last Mile services; authorization to draw Access to Transit Capital (ATC) funds to pay the County's local match for buses delivered in winter 2020; and authorization to sign bus advertising agreements.