

***St. Lawrence County Planning Office***  
***STAFF WORK REPORT***  
***October 2020***



**ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT**

***County Planning Board (CPB).*** The Planning Board met via Zoom on the 8<sup>th</sup> and had a thorough discussion on how the County Planning Office and Board can better assess the numerous solar projects that are referred. Discussion ranged from how to ensure timely development of solar projects to the new State regulations for projects over 20 MW in size. It was also mentioned that Matilda will be stepping back from Planning Board staffing duties due to transit time commitments.

***Environmental Management Council (EMC).*** The EMC met in October; there was no speaker. Committee reports were provided and discussed.

The EMC is continuing to keep its “Earth Day 50” program open. 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](mailto: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 in October. John Tenbusch and Aaron Barrigar reported on the presentations they made about EABs to the BOL Operations Committee on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>.

***Fair Housing Task Force (FHFF).*** The Fair Housing Task Force currently has two vacancies on its board, and is seeking a representative from the lending community, as well as a representative from a community service organization.

***Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB).*** On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Matilda attended Cooperative Extension’s annual meeting via Zoom.

**BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***Census 2020.*** The Census ended its data-gathering operation on October 15<sup>th</sup>, on orders from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Pursuant to its grant agreement with NYS, the Planning Office had planned to end its promotional efforts by September 30<sup>th</sup>; therefore the sudden extension, and then sudden end, of Census field operations was not especially problematic. Staff will prepare to close out the grant.

***Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.*** Participated in a technical conference call with DEC on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion focused in the draft feasibility study; stakeholders to submit formal comments to DEC.

## **COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).*** The Planning Office administers three open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); the 23<sup>rd</sup> round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3).

***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 October, 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.

## **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM**

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

***Public Transportation Bus Routes.*** Dakota continues to work on a countywide public transit map which displays all routes.

***County Mapping Upgrades.*** Installation of ESRI's Enterprise GIS software began at the end of July and is up and operational. Emergency Services, with the help of the Planning Office, has been successful with implementing Enterprise workflows into their operations with the Sheriff's Department and NYS State Police. The Planning Office will begin to experiment with sharing public GIS datasets via the Enterprise website which is: [www.gis.stlawco.org/portal/home](http://www.gis.stlawco.org/portal/home).

***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 in November.

## **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.

***Updates.*** Received notice of two funding awards:

- Community Services received \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice's Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP)-to implement evidenced-based treatment and recovery services for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of SLC received \$245,152 from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program to advance local foods initiatives. Both applications were submitted in May.

***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.

***Misc.*** Participated as a panelist in a Regional Arts Roundtable event about grant writing sponsored by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

***Land Use Training.*** On the 15<sup>th</sup>, Matilda attended American Farmland Trust's final webinar regarding the siting of large scale solar arrays in New England. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Matilda attended NY Reef's webinar on municipal tree ordinances and incorporating tree planting elements in site plan review.

***Town of Canton Zoning Revisions.*** On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Matilda met with Town Board members Bob Washo and Jim Smith via Zoom to discuss the conceptual expansion of a residential district in the Town.

***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. For further information, see <http://fcswcd.org/partnerships/st-lawrence-river-watershed-partnership-slrwp/>

***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. Staff met with the Town and Village committee on October 14<sup>th</sup> in Hammond. Discussion focused on existing conditions and options for updating. The Planning Office will draft three land use regulation examples for the next meeting: a continuation of existing regulations, a single zone format, and a dual-zone (shoreline and rural residential) format. The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, at 6pm, Village Hall.

***Town of Rossie Land Use Regulations Assistance.*** Staff assisted the Town's Planning Board chairman with interpreting its telecommunications local law and updating its appeals process. Also, the Town is considering updating its land use regulations for which it will contract with the Planning Office to conduct.

***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 1<sup>st</sup>, Matilda met with County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to draft a budget for the 2020 Accelerated Transit Capital funding application. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, Matilda conducted a field visit with Highway Engineer Andy Willard, Buildings and Grounds Superintendent Dale Grant, and Social Services Commissioner Cynthia Ackerman to discuss the striping of a bus lane on Judson Street, and to identify where a bus shelter would be installed in front of the DSS building. Based on this meeting, Andy provided Matilda with a cost estimate for the project. Both the 2020 application and the revised 2019 applications were submitted to DOT during the week of the 19<sup>th</sup>. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, the St. Lawrence County Health Initiative held a ribbon cutting for the installation of a solar powered bus

shelter off Main Street in the Village of Potsdam. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in the Public Transit Task force meeting and provided an update on the implementation of the Coordinated Transportation Plan. On the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, Matilda met with Frank to prepare a tentative 2021 budget that was reviewed with DOT representatives on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, Matilda submitted two draft draw requests to the DOT for CARES Act monies for The Arc and for VTC. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Matilda drafted a resolution that would authorize the County Chair to sign a two-year contract with The Arc for bus operations. During the second half of the month, Matilda and Jason worked with County Attorney Steve Button and Assistant County Administrator Dylan Soper on the preparation of a Title VI plan which administers and enforces provisions of the Civil Rights Act.