

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
December 2020



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. On the 8th, Matilda participated in a Local Foods Advisory Group meeting via Zoom and provided the committee with an update on the known solar lease sites in the county. On the 16th, Matilda, Dakota and Jason attended the North Side Energy Center’s virtual open house for the proposed 180 MW solar array in the Towns of Brasher, Massena and Norfolk. On the 30th, Jason submitted staff comments and suggested revisions to the for North Side Energy Center’s proposed stipulations for the Article 10 review process. Those comments were forwarded to members of the Farmland Protection Board.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met via Zoom on the 10th. Seven projects (subdivision (2), site plan review (2), and area variance (3)) were returned for local action. There were three full review projects:

- Tree nursery special use permit and area variance in the Town of Potsdam. The project was approved with conditions that addressed: NYS highway access and satisfying required lot line setbacks from all buildings.
- Billboard area variance in the Town of Louisville. The project was approved with non-binding conditions that expressed the need to amend their current sign law.
- Wind tower special use permit in the Town of Potsdam. The project was approved.

Additional topics that were discussed: Fall 2020 land use training, the 2021 CPB Newsletter was updated and shared by Matilda, NYS Dept. of State Division of Local Government 2020/2021 Winter Webinar Series, North Side Energy Project Open House, and Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act future training.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC did not meet in December.

The EMC’s Environment + Economy Committee held a planning session during December; eight EMC members attended, as well as Brooke Rouse, Executive Director of the SLC Chamber of Commerce; Patrick Kelly, Executive Director of the SLC Industrial Development Agency. John Tenbusch and Dakota Casserly attended as staff.

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 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 December.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Task Force met on December 10th. A report was given about the workshop held on September 24th, on landlord and tenant rights. Another report was given on “Eviction Defense Training”. The Task Force adopted the following 2021 meeting schedule: February 25th, May 27th, August 26th and November 18th. Several prospective FHTF members also attended this meeting.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. Final paperwork needed for reimbursement expenses was submitted on December 29th.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in a technical conference call with DEC on December 17th. Discussion focused on regional stakeholder input on the Interim Site Management Plan (ISMP). Formal comments were submitted to DEC via letter on December 16; CPO staff worked with G. Bowitch to draft and circulate comments based on stakeholder discussion.

Title VI Coordinator. The County Planning Director has been selected by the Board of Legislators to be the County’s Title VI Coordinator. The County recently passed a Title VI Plan, which safeguards against discrimination in the distribution of federally funded programs.

COVID Response. Heidi has been spending several days a week in the County’s COVID call center, fielding calls from individuals regarding insulation, quarantine and any other question that is COVID related.

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). During December, staff prepared to draft Annual Performance Reports for each of these grants.

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 December, 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 31st, 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. Matilda finalized maps for new Routes 70B, 72, 73 and 74, which are scheduled to launch on January 4th.

County Mapping Upgrades. County GIS users will begin to meet once per quarter to discuss best practices for shared GIS resources.

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.

County Enterprise GIS. Dakota assisted the Emergency Services Department with troubleshooting GIS operations from dispatch to patrol cars.

Staff GIS Production

- Access to public building footprint data was shared with the Real Property Department.

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.

PLANNING MATTERS

Land Use Training. Matilda administered a training session on the 9th, which was attended by a variety of County, town, and village, officials and employees. The training covered site plan review, zoning board of appeals, and the CPB project referral process.

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. Final documents for the St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan (WRP) have been released. For further information, see <http://fcswcd.org/partnerships/st-lawrence-river-watershed-partnership-slrwp/>

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff is making 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 (rural residential) and zoning as a dual district (shoreline and rural residential). The Planning Office will share drafts with the Committee for review before the next meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 21, at 6pm, via Zoom.

Town of Rossie Land Use Regulations Assistance. Staff continues to assist the Town's Planning Board chairman with updating the Town's land use regulations. Currently staff is reviewing revisions to: telecommunications law, board of appeals, and outdated text.

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 1st, Matilda, County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo and The Arc senior transit staff met with Dr. Williams to arrange COVID19 testing services for public transit operations. On the 1st and 7th, Matilda met with Frank Doldo to finalize the 2021 public transit operating budget, which was included in a two-year contract that was signed between the County and The Arc. Throughout the month, Matilda consulted with the County Attorney to prepare a one-year contract extension that was executed between the County and Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. for First Mile Last Mile services. On the 22nd, Matilda and Lisa prepared and processed an accelerated 4th Quarter STOA payment to The Arc for bus operations. Also on the 22nd, Matilda, Transit Manager Rena Ryan and Frank Doldo held a virtual meeting to finalize the schedules and maps for Routes 70A, 72, 73 and 74 which are scheduled to launch on January 4th. Throughout the month, Jason, Matilda and Frank Doldo participated in teleconferences with the County Administrator's Office to provide updates on transit operations under COVID19.