

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
December 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The Ag and Farmland Protection Board met virtually on the 2nd and heard updates about a Smart Solar Siting Roundtable discussion by American Farmland Trust; New York State's new assessed valuation model for wind and solar energy systems; and North Side Energy Center's Article 10 Application for a large scale solar array in Brasher, Massena and Norfolk. The Board also had a discussion with staff about responding to possible requests for land removals from Ag District 2 during the eight-year review in 2022, and adopted a 2022 meeting schedule. The AFPB is scheduled to meet in 2022 on February 3rd, April 7th, October 6th and December 1st at 6:00 pm. On the 9th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting of CCE's Local Foods Advisory Board.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met via Zoom on December 9th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). One full review was presented, discussed, and approved with non-binding recommendations and conditions: Village of Potsdam, special use permit, site plan, and sign permit for a Stewart's Shop at 124 Market St. Furthermore, there were three resignations, Mark Gazin (32 years), Brian Murray, and Joanne Cameron, and appreciation remarks were shared from Staff and Board Members. A new slate of officers were voted in, Chair: Kitty O'Neil, Vice-chair: Eric Alan, and Secretary: Julia Rose. The draft 2022 Work Program was also adopted and the fall land use training session (Overview of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board) was held on December 7th via Zoom, with about 25 participants. CPB agendas and minutes can be accessed here: <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/Planning/AdvisoryBoards/CountyPlanningBoard>.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). There was no EMC meeting held in December.

Staff are continuing to work with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. In November, staff made presentations to the Town Boards in DePeyster, Hammond, Macomb, Morristown, and Oswegatchie; in December, staff presented to Rossie. A third Black Lake Summit meeting was held on December 1st for interested stakeholders. A website for this project is here: <https://stlawco.org/node/2777>.

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet during December.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Fair Housing Task Force did not meet in December.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census Data / Redistricting. A public hearing was held on December 6th regarding the revision to County Legislative District boundaries. The BOL, later in its meeting the same night, adopted the new boundaries.

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continues to work with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the recently completed broadband study. Staff produced maps and material for use in stakeholder meetings and a presentation to the BOL. An RFP was issued to solicit ISP interest in applying for USDA ReConnect Program funds in coordination with the County.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in a DEC technical conference call on December 2nd. DEC has proposed to move from monthly to less frequent calls.

County Budget. Jason participated on the County Budget team this year. Multiple meetings were held to finalize the County's 2022 budget.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers three open grants: the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3), and the recently-funded SLC-CARES award to conduct housing rehabilitation for populations vulnerable to COVID-19.

During October, Planning staff had submitted an application under the NYS CDBG program for funding to do a fourth round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 4). We received word in late December that this application has been approved. Huzzah!

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 reports that 11 units have been completed, and 5 units are in process.

Canton Housing Task Force. On the 7th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting coordinated by the Town and the Village of Canton to continue discussions about the limited availability of affordable housing, and limited availability of turn-key market rate housing, and to create a housing strategy.

Recreation. Staff are actively following a handful of organizations and attending webinars that address developing recreational assets in rural communities.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

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. On the 14th, Matilda and Dakota delivered a virtual training session to Lisa Ciccicarelli from the Real Property Office who will assist with the daily preparation of COVID-19 maps.

County Enterprise GIS.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>
- GIS Web App: Proposed Solar sites in the County:

<https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/apps/View/index.html?appid=6f3d7fb0923448ed90c3385eb0f8a872>

- GIS Web Map: 2021 Septic Repair Program Waterbodies with 250' Buffer:
<https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d8a8b0c7e637400a9c269323b7670a19>

Emergency Management Services. Staff continue to provide GIS assistance to this department as their GIS workflows evolve. Staff assisted with recent license upgrades to the County's Enterprise GIS infrastructure.

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. Outreach has been successful: the update will have 100% participation by municipalities.

Septic Repair Program. The County has been awarded \$340,000 to repair or replace deficient septic tanks along specified waterbodies in the County. The program is currently taking in prospective participants.

BridgeNY 2021. Staff were notified that the County was awarded \$4.8 million to replace the Lazy River Road Bridge over the Grasse River in the Town of Russell.

New York State Dept. of Ag & Markets 2022 Farm to School Grant Program. Staff assisted St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES in the development of a \$99,099 proposal to expand and strengthen its Farm-to-School Initiative. The existing partnership between BOCES Food Service, Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County (Extension), and Big Spoon Kitchen (Big Spoon) has developed a successful model for production and delivery of fresh, local products to 21 school districts in St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Lewis Counties.

PLANNING MATTERS

County Residents.

- Staff prepared:
 - Site elevation maps for a property owner in the Town of Louisville.
 - Wetland maps and flood zone information for a property owner in the Town of Lawrence.

Large Scale Solar.

- **Rich Road Solar:** Staff is collecting publically available informational resources for this project to better understand its impacts.
 - <https://www.edf-re.com/project/rich-road-solar/>

Town of Depeyster. Staff is preparing a review of their draft solar local law.

Town of Pierrepont. Staff is preparing a review of their draft wind local law.

Town of Rossie. Staff attended a joint Town Board and Planning Board meeting on December 15th to discuss updates to the existing land use regulations. The Town is planning to pursue modern zoning regulations via a single townwide zone/district and this would incorporate many elements from existing conditions. The Planning Office Staff is considering a contract to assist on this project.

Presentation to CCE's St. Lawrence University Intern. On the 6th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with Cornell Cooperative Extension employee Nick Hamilton Honey and CCE's SLU intern to review and discuss the redevelopment work of Grasse River Heritage in Canton, which included park development at Falls Island, Willow Island, and the Dwight Church property, and the redevelopment of the Gray Lanes Building on Main Street.

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

- Updates continue to be made for events, meetings and content on some pages.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 1st, 2nd and 8th, Matilda met with Regional Mobility Manager Frank Doldo, County Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen, Michael Gehl from the NYS Department of Labor, and Patrick Massaro from SUNY Canton CREST to discuss the job announcement for a CDL Class C Passenger Vehicle Instructor, and to recruit candidates to enroll in the training program to become new Public Transit drivers. On the 6th, Matilda submitted an electronic draw request to the State to reimburse the County for 2019 Mobility Management expenses. A draw request to reimburse 2020 Mobility Management expenses was uploaded on the 20th. On the 7th, Matilda held a virtual meeting with The Arc's finance office to review year to date bus wrap advertising revenue. On the 15th, Matilda and Sonja participated in a virtual meeting with a DOT representative to review how the remaining balances of previously awarded funds will be spent down. On the 16th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with the DOT, and representatives from The Arc and VTC where Regional Mobility Manager Frank Doldo presented the County's 2022 proposed operating budget for Public Transit programs. During the 2nd half of the month, Matilda reviewed VTC's 2nd and 3rd quarter draw request for 2021 Mobility Management funds. On the 22nd, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with DOT representatives to finalize the County's 2021 Accelerated Transit Capital agreement, and to revise a 2018 ATC agreement in order to purchase mobile column lifts, and to outfit the County's fleet of Public Transit buses with communications equipment. During the last two weeks of the month, entered Route 22 into the NY511 website, and revised the route's static maps for the Public Transit website.