

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
January 2020



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). Matilda has been invited to present at a daylong workshop sponsored by Herkimer County Cornell Cooperative Extension on the siting of solar energy systems on farmland. The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 7th in Utica.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 9th in Canton and heard one full review project: the Town of Massena's local law to regulate solar energy facilities. The local law was approved with conditions.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC meeting in January featured Dr. Jon Rosales, Associate Professor and Chair of Environmental Studies at St. Lawrence University, and a former member of the EMC (2007-2011). Jon spoke about work that he and his colleagues at SLU have done in Alaska to assist Native communities to plan for adaptation to their changing climate.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB TF met in Ogdensburg at Northwest Tech BOCES on Park Street. The meeting was held in Ogdensburg in order to interact with BOCES students who had found Emerald Ash Borers on school grounds in December. Now that EABs have been confirmed in Ogdensburg, a future meeting with Ogdensburg City Council and the Mayor will be scheduled to bring them up to date with the necessity of addressing this problem.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). No FHTF meeting during the month.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. Staff are working with County and local officials to organize the County's Complete Count Committee. Planning staff attended the "New York Counts 2020 State Convening" meeting in Syracuse on Jan. 15th. On Jan. 28th, staff attended a meeting in Albany with Lieutenant Governor Hochul, at which time further information about the State's plans to fund local Complete Count activities was discussed.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.

- Staff provide project oversight and management for redevelopment activities at J&L. In January, staff participated in a meeting with DANC and the IDA to discuss and review the closeout of Phase 2 activities and funding.
- Staff participated in a DEC technical (clean-up) conference call on January 28th. Final draft of the feasibility study is undergoing internal review by DEC; expected to be released to stakeholders in approximately three weeks.

Space Study. Staff is assisting with an assessment of County space needs in the City of Ogdensburg.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abbé Picquet Trail Project Management. Final close out of this project is anticipated in the next several months.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers two open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); and the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program. The County completed and closed out its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program, Round 2 (CHRP 2) for housing rehabilitation.

In January, staff prepared and submitted Annual Performance Reports for its grant awards.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to up to 52 households throughout the county. During January, the Planning Office worked with partner agencies at SLC Public Health and the North Country Housing Council to ramp up production.

NYS EFC Septic Repair and Replacement Program. Work on this program is complete. In all 40 households were assisted during the two-year span of the program. The Soil and Water Conservation District contributed \$40,000 to help cover administrative and program delivery costs. This program had been envisioned to be a five-year effort, but funding for subsequent rounds has not materialized.

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. The group met in January and anticipates reviewing project funding requests at its February meeting. The project website is: <https://potsdamdri.com/>.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Mapping Upgrades. County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County.

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. Up to \$225,000 in funding was awarded for a required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In January, the RFP for contractual services was finalized, and staff participated in a conference call with NYS DHSES and FEMA to discuss start-up activities and project strategy.

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 Coordinating

Committee is working with a selected consultant, and has compiled an extensive desk study regarding the watershed. The consultant team is now looking for ideas, proposals and comments from the general public. See <http://fcswcd.org/partnerships/st-lawrence-river-watershed-partnership-slrwp/> for additional information, or to fill out an on-line survey.

Town of Brasher Zoning Revisions. Matilda has been finalizing updates to the Town of Brasher’s zoning regulations. Many thanks to Jamie Alexander from the County Highway Department for her involvement with this project.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 6th and 20th, Matilda met with County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to review the mileage and trip count for 2019, and to prepare a draft 2020 budget for bus operations. On the 13th, Matilda spoke with Arc staff for the preparations of a grand opening of the Massena shuttle, tentatively scheduled for March 2nd. On the 15th, Matilda visited The Arc’s transit office to conduct a monthly review of trip sheets for randomly selected bus routes and dates. During the week of the 20th and 27th, Matilda prepared the 4th quarter STOA report; submitted the 2018 Mobility Management reimbursement request; prepared and submitted an Alternate Distribution Plan for surplus STOA funds; finalized the submission of the 2017 Mobility Management reimbursement request; participated in a 5311 funding application webinar; and drafted a resolution and legal notice to apply for 2019-2020 5311 transit funding.