

*St. Lawrence County Planning Office*  
**STAFF WORK REPORT**  
*October 2021*



**ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT**

***Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.*** The Ag and Farmland Protection Board held a virtual meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> and discussed Horizon Dairy's announcement that it will not renew contracts with organic dairy operators who are more than 300 miles from its Buffalo processing plant. Other agenda items included an update on solar projects reviewed by the County Planning Board; reporting on the annual review for Agricultural Districts 1 and 2; an update on the Article 10 application process for the North Side Energy Center; and the USDA's funding announcement for its Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in the Local Foods Advisory Group's virtual meeting. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in American Farmland Trust's virtual Smart Solar Siting Roundtable, which included an overview of survey results from farmers and municipal officials, and AFT's proposed revisions to mitigation measures that have been negotiated between NYSEDA and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for solar projects with footprints that exceed 30 acres.

***County Planning Board (CPB).*** The CPB met via Zoom on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). Three full reviews were presented, discussed, and approved with conditions: The Ogdensburg Comprehensive Plan, a waterfront subdivision in Morristown, and the Town of Fowler's solar law. The Town of Hammond was glad to report on the adoption of their new land use regulations, which the Planning Office Staff assisted with from beginning to end. Also, it was noted that the Northside Energy Center solar project held a public hearing on October 26<sup>th</sup> and there will be a training on PILOTs by the County's IDA staff before the next CPB meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

***Environmental Management Council (EMC).*** The EMC met on September 15<sup>th</sup> for its monthly meeting. The scheduled speaker was Dr. Glenn Johnson, Professor of Biology at SUNY Potsdam, who talked about Blandings Turtles, a locally-endangered and environmentally-significant species.

Staff are continuing to work with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. In October, staff made a presentation to the Black Lake Chamber of Commerce, and held a Black Lake Summit for all interested stakeholders.

In addition, in response to comments from County legislators, the EMC will develop a comprehensive plan for management of invasive species across the County.

***EAB Task Force.*** The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet during October. The next meeting will take place on Friday November 19<sup>th</sup>.

***Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF).*** The Fair Housing Task Force will meet next on Thursday November 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***Census Data / Redistricting.*** Staff are a part of the BOL redistricting committee and successfully submitted a County-wide map and 15 individual legislative district maps for the BOL to consider for adoption. The primary changes were in the following areas: Ogdensburg, Canton, Potsdam, and Massena.

***Countywide Broadband Assessment.*** Staff is working with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the recently completed [broadband study](#).

***Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.*** Staff participated in the DEC technical conference call on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

***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 two open grants: the 23<sup>rd</sup> round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3).

During September, Planning staff worked on an application under the CDBG-CARES program for funding to do additional housing rehabilitation activity, directed at populations most vulnerable to COVID-19. We received word in late October that this application has been approved.

At the end of October, staff submitted an application for NYS CDBG funds to support the next round of CHRP housing rehabilitation funds.

***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 reports that 8 units have been completed, and 8 units are in process.

***Canton Housing Task Force.*** On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting coordinated by the Town and the Village of Canton to discuss the limited availability of affordable housing, and limited availability of turn-key market rate housing, and to create a housing strategy.

***Recreation.*** Staff is 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. Between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 these maps were published twice a week. The County has since resumed the publication of these maps on a daily basis effective August 23, 2021.

### ***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.

***Village of Potsdam.*** Matilda assisted the Village of Potsdam with revisions to the Village's Zoning District map to eliminate its Health Care Zone 2, and redraw the boundaries for Health Care Zone 1. At the end of the month, Matilda created a locator map to depict the proposed locations for electrical vehicle charging stations off Main Street and Raymond Street.

### **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. Staff participated in a project meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

***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. To date, 13 requests for funding have been received; 9 households have returned signed award letters.

***Other.*** Staff are continuing to monitor incoming information regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) programs, as well as developments surrounding the Federal infrastructure and other bills.

### **PLANNING MATTERS**

***CLEAR.*** Staff participated in the Public Input session on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The consultant is working toward a water level management strategic plan. An interesting mapping interface was shared that shows shoreline assets along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. CLEAR stands for Coastal Lakeshore Ecological and Resiliency. A final input session will be held on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

***Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies Advisory Board.*** Matilda virtually attended the Center for Community Studies' Advisory Board meeting on the 21st and received an update about proposed changes to their data collection calendar, and updates on current and upcoming projects.

***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/>
- **North Side Energy Solar Project.** On the 26<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in a virtual public statement hearing held by the project's Administrative Law Judges. Five persons provided statements in support of the project. The ALJs said the project is anticipated to go before the Article 10 Siting Review Board in May or June 2022, and statements can be submitted online to the NYS Department of Public Service until February 1, 2022.
  - <https://www.northsideenergycenter.com/> Case Number 17-F-0598

***Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions.*** The Town of Hammond successfully adopted their new land use regulations on October 13<sup>th</sup> and they are available on the [Town's website](#). Staff shared digital and hard copies of the new law, with maps, to the Village and Town. This project is now complete.

***Town of Lawrence.*** Staff assisted the planning board chair and a solar developer with guidance on submitting a subdivision for solar projects on Ferris Road.

***Town of Pierrepoint Solar Regulations.*** On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Matilda attended a Town of Pierrepoint Planning Board work session to discuss the final version of the Town's proposed solar regulations.

***Town of Rossie.*** Staff continues to assist the Town's planning board chair with guidance on updating their land use regulations.

***Village of Waddington.*** Staff await a response from the Village Board regarding a revision to the Village Zoning Code.

***Virtual Land Use Training.*** Throughout the month, Matilda, Jason and Dakota participated in virtual training sessions sponsored by the New York Planning Federation and American Planning Association. Training sessions included: Accessory Dwelling Units as Affordable Housing; Exploring Today's Housing Crisis and Housing Solutions; and Innovative Zoning Codes.

***Presentation to St. Lawrence University Students.*** Jason made a presentation to students in an introductory planning class on October 29<sup>th</sup>. The topic of discussion was land use challenges and solutions in St. Lawrence County.

***Participation in Cooperative Extension Solar Program.*** Staff gave an overview of the role of the County Planning Board in the review of solar projects and were available for questions at the end of the CCE solar program that was presented on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

***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 6<sup>th</sup>, Matilda met with County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to calculate 2022 funding requests for public transportation programs. Matilda also attended an informational meeting regarding a pilot project funding request to NYSERDA for an ebike lending program that would begin in Potsdam and Canton, if the proposal is successfully awarded. On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in virtual meetings with DOT's GTFS consultant to learn how to revise and finalize Public Transit's bus schedules on the State's 511 website, which included Routes 66 and 72. On the 14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Frank held a teleconference with NYS Department of Labor representative Michael Gehl about the creation of a CDL Class C instruction program at SUNY Canton CREST, and efforts to recruit training candidates and an instructor. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Matilda visited The Arc's dispatch office to randomly review September trip sheets for select routes. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Matilda participated in the Public Transit Task Force's virtual meeting. Throughout the month, Matilda worked with DOT representative Laura Hacker and Stephanie Kerr in the County's Purchasing Office to order mobile column lifts and automatic vehicle locator (AVL) systems off State contract, and to prepare a request for bids to order bus shelters that will be installed in front of the Department of Social Services in Canton, and off Depot Street in Potsdam.