

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

May 9, 2019

Public Safety Complex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 49 ½ Court Street, Canton, NY

**I. Call to Order**

- a. **Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.** K. Bellor called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. A quorum was not present.

**Members Present:** K. Bellor, W. Davis, D. Duff, D. Fay, M. Gazin, M. McCluskey and K. O’Neil. **Members Absent:** C. Betz, K. Bisonette, J. Cameron, D. Chambers, R. Hotte, D. Mullaney and B. Murray. **Staff Present:** M. Larson and J. Pfothenhauer. **Others Present:** Carrie Tuttle, Development Authority of the North Country.

- b. **Adoption of the Agenda.** No action was taken on the agenda as a quorum was not present.
- c. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** No action was taken on the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes as a quorum was not present.

**II. Public Forum** None.

**III. Land Use Training**

- a. **Municipal Dissolution Process.** Tuttle began her presentation by identifying the primary factors that lead to dissolution: Population and employment decline which lead to a decreasing tax base while municipal level of services remain; and the decreasing capacity of remaining residents to serve in elected and appointed positions. Tuttle said the outcome of a dissolution process depends on how real property taxes are affected. Tuttle reviewed population trends for communities in the county, and compared the dissolution process that’s initiated by a municipal government versus public referendum.

Tuttle explained the dissolution process begins with a planning study that is prepared with oversight from a local committee consisting of five village and five town residents, followed by funds made available for implementation purposes. Tuttle said that when village dissolution occurs, the affected tax payers benefit from a tax credit that is equal to 15% of the combined tax levy of the town and former village that is credited in perpetuity. A discussion ensued about the intent of the dissolution process and the source of implementation funds. Tuttle said the intent is to help local governments become more efficient at delivering services, and noted that if more services are delivered by a village that is dissolving, the dissolution study becomes more complicated. Tuttle reviewed the

dissolution process and outcomes for the Town of Hermon, the towns of Clifton-Fine, the Village of Richville, and the Village of Morristown.

After Tuttle concluded her presentation, she was asked if new investment by businesses occurred after the dissolution process. Tuttle replied not in Hermon, but would need at least 10 years to see the long-term impacts of dissolution on a community. Davis noted the population charts convey disinvestment in local communities, and asked about positive assets. Tuttle noted the county's proximity to the St. Lawrence River, and said the local economy needs to transition from manufacturing, and towards natural resources and tourism. Tuttle said Clayton is a good example of a river community that transformed itself after the installation of an anchor project. Tuttle was asked how Northern New York communities compared to other rural counties in the US. Tuttle talked about the region's previous gap to high speed broadband and steps taken to address it, and noted the high quality of life in the region that can accommodate telecommuting. Bellor thanked Tuttle for her presentation, which satisfied 1.5 hours of the 4-hour annual land use training requirement for County Planning Board members.

Before departing, Tuttle provided an update on the remediation of the former J&L site: All buildings have been demolished to 2' below grade, and will use the balance of contingency funds to abate asbestos tunnels that are underground.

#### **IV. Project Reviews**

##### **a. Projects Returned for Local Action.**

- i. Brasher (T): Bed and Breakfast Regulations for the Hamlet and Rural Districts. Larson highlighted sections of the proposed zoning text and recommended the proposed amendments be returned for local action. Because a quorum was not present, the Board concurred with staff recommendation.

##### **b. Full Reviews.**

- i. Stockholm (T): Mining permit for a 15-acre sand pit by the Town of Lawrence off the Priest Road Extension. Larson described the project location and excavation process, and said this permit will represent the first 5-years of the sand pit which is anticipated to have a 50-year life cycle. Larson described the proposed reclamation process, and said the applicant should contact the Town of Stockholm about road dressing, and contact the County Highway Department in the event the haul route to the staging area involves the use of County Routes. Davis and O'Neil asked about land use activities in the area. Larson said the aerial imagery indicates selective cutting has occurred in the adjacent state and county forests, and suspects the logging roads are used for motorized recreational vehicles. Because a quorum was not present, the Board concurred with staff recommendation to return the project for local action with non-binding comments.

## V. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee.** Bellor said the Executive Committee met on April 25<sup>th</sup> to set tonight's agenda.
- b. **Board of Legislators.** Fay discussed a recent resolution presented to the County Board of Legislators that called for County Legislator Curran's resignation for a recent post on Facebook concerning Muslims. Fay said he thinks diversity is important, but knew the Board of Legislators can't pass a resolution that forces a Legislator to resign, and would rather pass resolutions that focus on public health, County roads and jobs. Fay congratulated the Planning Office for securing a \$1 million award for lead abatement work, and noted the Office will be working to organize a Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census.
- c. **Highway Department.** None.
- d. **State of the County.** Davis said United Airlines has operated out of the Ogdensburg Airport for one week and flights are less than half full. Davis said wind turbine components are arriving by ship at the port for rail transport to Pennsylvania. Davis also said 135,000 passengers have since used Allegiant since 2016, and flights to Orlando are now running through the summer.
- e. **Staff Report.** Pfothenauer said staff will be traveling to Minneapolis to attend HUD training on the administration of the lead abatement grant. Pfothenauer said the Office held its spring land use training session with 47 persons in attendance, and work for the Complete Count Committee will be ramping up. Pfothenauer also said Ames is scheduled to participate in a webinar about Opportunity Zones.

## VI. Other Items

- a. **Correspondence.** Pfothenauer said this month's correspondence consisted of standard notices of action from local municipalities.
- b. **Next Meeting Dates.** An American Farmland Trust webinar on solar siting is scheduled for noon on June 17<sup>th</sup>, and a day-long Complete Streets training session is scheduled for June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Gouverneur Community Center.

The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 pm in the Planning Office. The Planning Board will meet on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of the County Public Safety Complex, located at 49 ½ Court Street in Canton.

## VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
for Renee Hotte, Secretary

Minutes prepared by M. Larson

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