

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
October 2022



ADVISORY BROAD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. On the 5th, the Office received correspondence from the State Department of Agriculture and Markets about a proposed 2.2 MW (AC) solar facility at 1040 CR 21 in the Town of Russell. On the 13th, Matilda attended Cooperative Extension's Local Food Advisory Board at the Learning Farm. On the 24th, Matilda attended the Farm Bureau's Annual Dinner at the Ol' Smokehouse in Madrid. On the 28th, the Office received correspondence from the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets certifying changes to Agricultural District 2 from this summer's eight-year review.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met in person and via Zoom on October 13th. Two projects were presented for full review: a convenience store with gas pumps in the Village of Gouverneur (Stewart's Shop); and a 5 MW Solar array in the Town of Canton. The Stewart's Shop was approved with conditions and the solar project was denied.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on October 19th. The speaker was Steven Heerkens, a Wildlife Biologist with NYS DEC. Mr. Heerkens spoke about how DEC handles deer management issues. Heerkens repeatedly referred to the Deer Management Plan, which was updated in 2021. See <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/123167.html> for the Deer Management Plan.

Staff have created a Facebook page for the EMC. Please check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/St-Lawrence-County-Environmental-Management-Council-105829918672342>

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force met on October 21st. Discussion involved treatment of ash trees with pesticides or parasitic wasps. The other topic discussed was taking down trees. The general opinion is that EABs have spread almost to their limit across the County (primarily north of USH 11). The focus moving forward must concentrate on removal of ash trees.

Fair Housing Task Force. The Task Force held several Fair Housing Stakeholder Sessions on October 4th (in the afternoon at the Public Safety Complex, and in the evening at the Massena Community Center), and again on the 5th (in the morning at the Public Safety Complex). Twenty-one persons representing themselves as tenants, or as representing a service organization or local government were in attendance. Topics discussed revolved around housing discrimination, housing conditions, landlords and tenants.

Planning staff were subsequently invited to speak at a meeting of the Massena landlords association. On Tuesday October 25th.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continue to work with a BOL committee to develop an

implementation plan for the completed broadband study. In October, staff assisted in evaluating proposals submitted in response to County RFP 2022-31, St. Lawrence County Broadband Development. The purpose was to identify one or more internet service providers interested in and qualified to submit a proposal to the USDA ReConnect Program (Round 4). Staff participated in ISP interviews, one broadband committee meeting and a USDA webinar.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. No DEC technical conference calls have been held since March 24th 2022.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

The Planning Office currently operates two awards that address housing rehabilitation needs:

- SLC-CARES award to conduct housing rehabilitation for populations vulnerable to COVID-19. During October, the Planning Office requested, and was granted, a six-month extension until mid-March 2023 in order to complete the grant.
- The fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4).

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. By the end of October, the Planning Office reports that 19 units have been completed, no units are under construction, and 14 clients are in an application phase.

During October, the Planning Office was granted a nine-month extension in order to finish this grant. Staff attended the 2022 National Lead and Healthy Housing Conference (Baltimore), coordinated by the Lead and Environmental Hazards Association (LEHA).

GRANTS

U.S. Department of Justice FY 2022 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP). Staff was notified of an award of \$1,299,998 for Community Services to expand medication-assisted treatment (MAT), peer support and harm reduction activities for underserved and high risk populations, including incarcerated individuals at the County Correctional Facility and victims of recent overdose. St. Lawrence County received \$900,000 in FY 2020 COSSAP funds to implement an Opioid Treatment Program.

NYS OASAS RFA #SUPP103-Statewide SUD System Support. Staff assisted Community Services in preparing an application for \$105,667.

St. Lawrence County Animal Response Team (CART). Staff prepared and submitted an application for \$13,310 to the Dr. D. Susan Badenhausen Legacy Fund to support the purchase of an emergency response trailer equipped with necessary supplies to provide safe sheltering options for pets and livestock during evacuations. The purpose of the St. Lawrence County Animal Response Team is to plan for, and aid in, meeting animal needs during a disaster, thereby aiding the protection of public health, the food supply, companion animals and livestock in the event of a declared emergency.

Grant Writing 101. Staff presented a Grant Writing Class at the Madrid Hepburn Library; there were 12

participants.

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 heard this month that the plan was approved from the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Septic Repair Program. The County has funds from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to repair or replace deficient septic tanks within 250 feet of the St. Lawrence River in communities west of Ogdensburg, and along the lower portion of the Raquette River (from Norfolk through Massena) and the Little River (Towns of Clifton and Fine). To date, 15 projects have been completed.

The County was notified that it will receive a third round of funding in the amount of \$635,000.

PLANNING MATTERS

New York Planning Federation – Planning and Zoning School. On October 6, Staff attended a training session in Lake Placid.

Large Scale Solar. Staff are monitoring two projects in the County: [Rich Road Solar and Storage](#) and [North Side Energy Center](#). On the 12th, Matilda participated in a field visit around the perimeter of the Rich Road Solar Project along Old Canton-Dekalb Road and Old Route 11. Other persons in attendance included with Town of Canton officials to view existing land conditions and to assess the visual impact the array will have on the public. The North Side Project is currently on hold.

Raquette River Advisory Council / West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Council. John Tenbusch serves as the County's representative to these Councils. Both Councils met on October 19th. No projects are currently being considered for funding.

Town of Rossie.

Staff continues to assist the Town with a comprehensive revision of its land use regulations. On October 26th Staff discussed the County Planning Board's conditioned approval of the document. Final approval is anticipated in November.

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 6th, Matilda participated in a DOT webinar about the Notice of Funding Availability and application process for Section 5311 Rural Transit funding for 2021, 2022 and 2023. On the 11th, Matilda attended a ribbon cutting for the installation of a solar-powered bus shelter along Munson Street in the Village of Potsdam. During the first two weeks in October, Matilda worked with The Arc's STOA Clerk to finalize trip and mileage counts for every bus route in September. This data was included in the 3rd quarter trip and mileage report that is filed with the State Department of

Transportation. On the 19th, Matilda visited The Arc's Dispatch Office to review randomly selected trip and mileage sheets for September. On the 20th, Matilda attended the Public Transit Task Force Meeting at the Fairfield Inn in Canton. On the 20th and 21st, Matilda and County Mobility Managers Sonja Jensen and Frank Doldo met to review and prepare preliminary data for the 2022 and 2023 5311 funding application. From the 25th to the 27th, Matilda attended the New York Public Transit Association's Mobility Innovation Conference in Albany. On the 26th, Matilda reviewed VTC's First Mile Last Mile invoice for September services, and were approved for payment. On the 28th, three additional 16-passenger buses were delivered to The Arc, inspected, and put into service. At the end of October, Matilda drafted a St. Lawrence University Public Interest Corps application to request a summer intern who will assist the Office with a variety of Public Transit projects. During the final week of October, Matilda held in person and virtual consultations with Public Transit partners and a DOT representative to finalize the County's 5311 funding application.