

***St. Lawrence County Planning Office***  
***STAFF WORK REPORT***  
***April 2023***



**ADVISORY BROAD SUPPORT**

***Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.*** The AFPB met on the 6<sup>th</sup> to review this year's requested additions to Ag Districts 1 and 2 and recommended all requested parcels be added to a district. The Board also heard a virtual presentation from Department of Agriculture and Markets Environmental Analyst Jason Mulford about the Department's Farmland Preservation Work Group, and the siting of renewable energy facilities on agricultural lands in ag districts. During the week of the 10<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Lisa prepared and distributed legal notices to the County's official newspapers, property owners, and affected municipalities for posting about a public hearing on the 20<sup>th</sup> to receive public comment on the recommended additions to Ag Districts 1 and 2. No one from the public attended the hearing. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Matilda attended Cooperative Extension's Local Food Advisory Group meeting at the Learning Farm. During the final week of the month, Matilda prepared a memo and draft resolution for the County Legislators' consideration to accept the recommended additions.

***County Planning Board (CPB).*** The CPB met on April 13<sup>th</sup> in the second floor conference room of the Public Safety Building. Two full review projects were discussed: a site plan for a bio-digester in the Town of Lisbon; and, a special use permit for a gravel pit in the Town of Pierrepont. The bio-digester project was conditionally approved and the gravel pit was returned for local action with comments.

***Environmental Management Council (EMC).*** The EMC met on April 19<sup>th</sup>. There was not a speaker.

Several new members were announced, including Shannon Hurlbut, Adam Pearson, and Neil Woodworth.

Election of Officers was held: officers include Sue Rau as EMC Chair; Brian Washburn as Vice-Chair; and Catherine Bennett as Secretary. Officers serve one-year terms; elections are typically held at the March meeting (the EMC did not meet in March this year).

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>

***Fair Housing Task Force.*** On the 5<sup>th</sup>, the Fair Housing Task Force hosted CNY Fair Housing Executive Director Sally Santangelo who delivered fair housing training session at the Dobisky Center in Ogdensburg. Landlords, Fair Housing Task Force members, representatives from stakeholder agencies, and news media attended the two-hour session.

**BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***SLC Water/Waste Water Infrastructure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Initiative.*** The BOL allocated \$3 million for municipal water and waste water projects. Twelve municipalities have been awarded a total of \$2,969,563. Staff are managing the contract process and coordinating with the Treasurer's Office to develop a reimbursement/reporting process for these funds.

**Countywide Broadband Assessment.** In April, the BOL ratified award recommendations and staff are managing the contract process. All 16 contracts awarding a total of \$2,955,145.00 have been prepared and submitted for review and signature. Staff also coordinated with DANC on the scope of work for a proposed Northern Border Regional Commission application.

**OCF Repurpose Committee.** Staff have been assigned to the County's Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. The group met last on February 17<sup>th</sup> and took a tour of the facility. Multiple local, County and State representatives were in attendance.

## **COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).***

The Planning Office currently operates one CDBG award that addresses housing rehabilitation needs:

- The fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4). During April, the County's Subrecipient reported that 4 projects have been completed; 2 projects are under construction; 3 projects are ready to start, and 4 additional projects are ready to be bid out.
- The County is beginning to prepare to apply for the 2023 round of CDBG-funded housing rehabilitation activity.

**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 April, the Planning Office reports that 19 units have been completed, 1 unit is under construction, and 14 clients are in an application phase. In addition, staff attended HUD's required Program Manager's School/Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes annual conference.

## **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.

**NYS OASAS RFA #SETT-23005 - Outreach and Engagement Services, Clinic Model.** Staff assisted Community Services in the preparation of this \$306,000.00 proposal.

**CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: Overdose Data to Action: Limiting Overdose Through Collaborative Actions in Localities (OD2A: LOCAL).** Staff is working with Public Health and Community Services to develop and submit this proposal; deadline is May 8, 2023.

**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, 25 projects have been completed.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

***Homeless Housing Working Group.*** There is an ad-hoc group working to address issues of homelessness in St. Lawrence County. No updates in April.

***Large Scale Solar.*** On the 25<sup>th</sup>, Matilda attended a presentation by EDF Renewables about their 94-C application submission to ORES to establish the Rich Road Solar Energy Center in Canton. EDF staff highlighted contents of the application's exhibits, and answered questions by municipal officials, planning board members, and local residents.

***New York Planning Federation Conference.*** On the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Jason attended the NYPF's annual conference in Saratoga Springs. Training topics included climate resiliency planning; land use regulations to accommodate accessory dwellings/tiny homes; SEQR; and sign regulations.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

***County Transit System.*** On the 4<sup>th</sup>, Matilda finalized and submitted a proposal to SUNY Potsdam to provide continued Public Transit bus service to and from their campus. During the first half of the month, Matilda met with DOT representative Beth Brown, the County Treasurer, and Deputy Treasurer to revise and finalize the 5311 annual report for 2022. During the week of the 10<sup>th</sup>, Matilda, The Arc's Transit Managers, and the County's Mobility Manager participated in interviews and product demonstrations from vendors who submitted proposals to outfit the County bus fleet with Automatic Vehicle Location system, surveillance system, and mobile Wi-Fi. During the first half of the month, Matilda prepared and submitted a signed copy of the first quarter STOA report to the DOT. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Matilda reviewed and approved VTC's invoice and back up documentation for First Mile Last Mile trips for March. During the week of the 17<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen conducted reference checks of bus technology vendors, and virtually met with The Arc's Transit Managers to score proposals. During the final week of the month, Matilda prepared, submitted and reviewed procurement documents with County Purchasing staff and DOT rep on the selection of vendors to outfit the bus fleet. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Sonja held a work session to prepare draft revisions to a handful of bus schedules.