

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
May 2019



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). Matilda presented this year's recommended agricultural district additions to the Board of Legislators' Operations Committee on the 13th. On the 23rd, the County hosted a presentation by JJ Schelling from the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust about the State's Dairy Transitions Conservation Easement Program. Five people were in attendance. At the end of the month, Matilda participated in a couple of phone meetings in preparation of an American Farmland Trust webinar on solar siting scheduled for June 17th.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 9th in Canton and heard a presentation by Carrie Tuttle from the Development Authority of the North Country about the municipal dissolution process. The Board also heard one full review project for a 15-acre sand pit in the Town of Stockholm. Because a quorum was not present, the project was returned for local action with non-binding comments.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met in May; the speaker was Roy Horst, Professor Emeritus at SUNY Potsdam and former long-time member of the EMC. Dr. Horst spoke about "The Natural History and Conservation of the World's Bears".

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) met in May. Several TF members reported on their plans to establish sentinel trees along a line approx. 10 miles inland from the St. Lawrence River (where EABs have already been confirmed in every community along the river, with the exception of Ogdensburg). By establishing a line of sentinel trees several miles back, the EAB TF can monitor the progress of EAB infestation away from the River. To date, there have been no reports of EAB infestation anywhere in the County except in River communities.

The week of May 19-25 was observed as "EAB Awareness Week". The EAB TF developed a Press Release on recommendations for land owners, now that EABs have been found in St. Lawrence County.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). Did not meet in May.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. John attended the NYS Data Center Affiliates' Conference in Albany, at which he learned about current plans for the NYS Complete Count Commission to work with local governments to prepare for the 2020 Census.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.

- Staff provide project oversight and management for redevelopment activities at J&L.
- Staff continued to facilitate administrative aspects of Phase 2.
- Staff participated in a DEC technical (clean-up) conference call on May 28th. DEC anticipates

- release of remediation feasibility study in mid-summer 2019.
- Total funds committed for Phase 2 stands at \$1,715,000.
- Phase 2 work nearing completion.

Space Study. Staff continue to assist the Space Committee with space allocation. More work in this arena is anticipated in the coming months.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abbé Picquet Trail Project Management. County Planning Staff is helping with the financial administration for a trail project in the City of Ogdensburg. The majority of the work has been completed, however an extension was requested and received to allow for the completion of all paperwork and a final assessment of the tree plantings in 2019.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers two open grants: the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program, Round 2 (CHRP 2) for housing rehabilitation; and the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP).

The County awaits news about its recent grant application, for a 23rd round of its Direct Homeownership Assistance Program.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. Following the partial shutdown of the Federal government, staff has engaged in an abbreviated, albeit intense, series of events (webinars, communications, work plan development and registrations for accountability in national databases). Staff was finally able to engage with HUD staff on final review and revisions of the budget and work plan. Budget modifications are pending before the Board of Legislators and the environmental review is underway. Staff will be attending required training in May in Minneapolis. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development will provide lead-based paint stabilization or abatement assistance to up to 52 households throughout the county. The grant award also includes funds for the County Public Health Department to raise public awareness about the dangers of lead-based paint hazards through community outreach and education.

During May, Jason and John (along with Chrissie Martin, of the Housing Council), attended the four-day “2019 Program Manager School” (PMS) for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH). The conference was held in Minneapolis. The goal of this conference was to train grant recipients how to manage their Lead Hazard Control grant program.

State Septic Repair and Replacement Program. Work has restarted on this program with several new participants securing engineering work for septic replacement. The Soil and Water Conservation District has offered an additional \$20,000 to help cover administrative and program delivery costs.

Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies. Matilda attended the advisory board’s quarterly meeting on the 2nd in Watertown and heard updates from Center staff on current projects, and to help identify potential county residents who may be interested in serving on the board.

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.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (SNAP-Ed II). Assisted Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County in the development of an application to the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to administer SNAP-Ed programming in a six-county region including St. Lawrence County. The proposed project has a \$680,000 annual budget for a five-year period.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Mapping Upgrades. County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County. A working group met with representatives from ESRI, the company that provides GIS software to the County.

Route Mapping for County Transit System. Matilda has been preparing public transit route maps as time allows and is comparing the “bread crumb” reports from bus-mounted GPS units to the 511 draft routes prepared by a DOT consultant.

Development Authority of the North Country IMA. On the 7th, Jason and Matilda attended a training session at the Town of Potsdam Municipal Building about the Development Authority’s new online mapping platform (<https://maps.dancgis.org/ima/>).

PLANNING MATTERS

Potsdam Local Government Conference. Staff, along with CPB member Dawn Mullaney, sit on the planning committee for the annual Local Government Conference. Work continues with planning the October conference.

Raquette River / West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Councils. John attended semi-annual meetings of these two councils, which act to review, and to fund, recreational and environmental projects within 1 mile of the river channels for the Raquette and West Branch of the St. Regis Rivers.

St. Lawrence Leadership Institute. John was asked to make a presentation at the May class about current issues and initiatives in planning and environmental concerns.

St. Lawrence River Watershed Project – Watershed Revitalization Plan. John attended the kick-off meeting for this project, held in Tupper Lake. This project has a budget of over \$200,000; the Planning Office will help to coordinate activities under this project.

Shoreline Resilience Study. Planning staff and consultants held a second Stakeholders Meeting on May 8th; a dozen local officials attended. The consultants are on schedule to produce their written document

by the end of June.

Town of Brasher. Throughout the month of May, Matilda finalized Brasher's draft subdivision regulations which was shared with members of Brasher's Subdivision Committee on the 21st, and emailed to the Town Board on the 29th. Matilda is scheduled to deliver an overview of the draft regulations to the Town Board on June 19th.

Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan. During the month of May, Denise and Matilda compiled and organized public comments and votes from Morristown's Community Visioning session. Matilda and Jason shared this information with Morristown's Comprehensive Planning Committee via teleconference on the 21st; discussed the status of Morristown's online community survey; and reviewed the timeline for the remaining public meetings.

Village of Gouverneur. The Planning Office has a signed memorandum of understanding with the Village to do a comprehensive revision of Gouverneur's zoning regulations. Staff extended this MOU through May 2019 to allow the Town to bring a new Board member up to speed on the revisions.

New York State Zoo at Thompson Park. Staff facilitated a planning and visioning retreat for the Zoo Board of Directors and delivered a report on the visioning process.

Town of Potsdam Comprehensive Plan. Staff received a link to a working draft of Potsdam's Comprehensive Plan for final revision. Sections were reviewed, marked up and returned with comments to the Planning Committee Chair, Rose Revezzi.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 13th, Matilda presented background information to the County Legislators about a resolution to enter into a contract with Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. for Mobility Management Services. Matilda also worked with Purchasing staff to draft an RFP for mobile wifi equipment to install in the County's bus fleet. On the 17th, Matilda and Mobility Manager Frank Doldo met with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council seeking their support for the creation of a Massena shuttle that would include four stops in Akwesasne. During the last week in May, Matilda prepared and submitted a resolution for the County to establish three new routes that would service Clarkson University, SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam.

Emergency Services. Keith has been tasked as the interim Director of Emergency Services and some of the requirements of that Office have redirected his attention and energy temporarily away from the work of the County Planning Office.