

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
June 2019



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). On the 17th, Matilda participated as one of three presenters in a noon webinar sponsored by the American Farmland Trust on the preparation of solar energy regulations than can protect prime farmland. One-hundred seventy-five persons participated in the session online. Throughout the month, Matilda prepared and submitted this year's annual review submission to the Department of Agriculture and Markets for certification.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 13th in Canton and heard three full review projects: Site plan review for a 120,000 sq. ft. light manufacturing facility in the Highway Development District in the Town of Potsdam, a local law regulating the development of shooting ranges in the Town of Brasher, and a site plan review for a solar array in the R-3 zone in the Village of Potsdam.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on June 19th. A citizen made a presentation about County road crews spreading RoundupTM herbicide along roadways in a manner that the citizen felt was not appropriate. The EMC assigned the question/issue to its Conservation of Resources Committee for investigation/action.

The EMC also watched a video presentation by Dr. Sherri Mason on "The Perils of Plastic". Dr. Mason made her presentation at the 30th Annual Winter Conference, held in Clayton on February 2, 2019. The video can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Xaq4d3QuUE>

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) met on June 18th. Les Benedict, Assistant Director of the Environmental Division of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, reported on the "Akwasasne EAB Delimitation Survey". In this project, the Mohawks girdled over 200 ash trees during 2018 to serve as "sentinel" trees; these would attract any Emerald Ash Borers within the vicinity. In February 2019, they cut down these sentinel trees, then peeled the bark off specific sections of the trees to look for EABs. They found numerous instances of EAB infestation, most heavily in the northwestern portion of Akwasasne (that part of their territory closest to Ontario, Canada, where EABs have been observed to infest ash trees).

The EAB Task Force will not meet in July or August.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF met briefly in June. Planning began for a FH-related event to be held in the fall.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. John began working with local communities on Complete Count Committees 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 June 25th. DEC anticipates release of remediation feasibility study in late summer 2019.
- Total funds committed for Phase 2 stands at \$1,715,000.
- Phase 2 work nearing completion.

Shoreline Resiliency. On June 8th, John travelled to Rochester to represent the County at the rollout of Governor Cuomo's "Lake Ontario Resiliency & Economic Development Initiative" (REDI). Governor Cuomo pledged \$300 million to "develop a plan to protect and adapt infrastructure along the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River waterfronts while strengthening the region's local economies."

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

Employee Assistance Program. Planning Staff sit on the County's EAP Committee. Work is starting to gear up for the annual County Employee Health Fair, which will be held at a new venue this year, the HSC building on State Highway 310.

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. 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 June work has begun to secure qualified contractors for projects and environmental review processes are underway. Grant startup work is intended to take several months.

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.

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.

NYS Redevelopment Summit. Attended this event, conducted by the Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR), in Albany on June 11-22. CCLR is the Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) provider to EPA Regions 2, 9, and 10. Participated in sessions relevant to State, federal and private funding; opportunity zones; brownfield redevelopment and community development.

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 continues to prepare 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.

Village of Potsdam Mapping. This past month, Matilda prepared a handful of maps for the Village’s Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) submission, and a New York Main Street grant application.

PLANNING MATTERS

International Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Board (ILOSLRB). On June 26th, Planning staff facilitated a meeting between local officials from Riverfront communities and Tony David, a recent member of the ILOSLRB, to discuss high water levels, water management strategies, and how to make things better in the future. After this meeting, the local officials met with NYS Senator Patricia Ritchie to discuss Gov. Cuomo’s announced “REDI” program.

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.

Shoreline Resilience Study. The consultants delivered a draft of their written report during June. John and Keith reviewed it, and returned comments. A final draft is being prepared.

Town of Brasher. Matilda delivered an overview of the draft regulations to the Town Board on June 19th and forwarded a link to Town Planning and Zoning Board members for their review and comments.

Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan. On the 18th, Matilda and Jason participated in a monthly teleconference with the Comprehensive Planning Committee to discuss preparations for an outreach meeting scheduled for July 16th at the Brier Hill Fire Department. Discussion topics included making paper surveys available to meeting participants, finalizing the meeting agenda, and forwarding a

meeting invitation and link to the online survey to members of the Black Lake Chamber of Commerce and the Black Lake Association. Matilda and Jason also asked members of the committee to share high resolution photos of the Morristown area to include in the plan.

Town of Potsdam Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the month, Matilda reviewed final drafts of each section of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and provided both verbal and written feedback to the Planning Committee Chair Rose Rivezzi.

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. Work will restart on this project in the near future, with an anticipated County Planning Board review in August and final approval in the fall.

Health Initiative Complete Streets Workshop. On the 26th, Matilda, Jason and County Planning Board member Matt McClusky attended a day-long Complete Streets workshop sponsored by the St. Lawrence Health Initiative at the Town of Gouverneur Community Center.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. After the 5th, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo reviewed proposals for the purchase and installation of a mobile wifi system on the County's fleet of transit buses, and selected the lowest reasonable bid. A resolution to issue a purchase order for the project was prepared and submitted to the Board Office for the County Legislature's consideration. On the 18th, staff from the Planning Office, The Arc and Volunteer Transportation Center met to discuss 2020 budget projections for the County Transit system. On the 19th, Matilda and Frank met with representatives from SUNY Potsdam to discuss the College Connector service that will begin in the fall. On the 25th, Keith and Matilda met with Rena Ryan and County Highway staff at the Highway garage to review the refueling procedures for bus operators to follow. Matilda also prepared a reimbursement request for the County Administrator's signature that will be submitted to the DOT.

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.