

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
June 2022



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. During the first week of June, Matilda prepared and submitted a memo and resolution to the Board of Legislators to accept the proposed modifications to Ag District 2 as a part of the eight-year review process. On the 9th, Matilda attended the Local Foods Advisory Board meeting at TAUNY and toured Cooperative Extension's impressive local foods exhibit. On the 13th, Matilda watched a one-hour webinar about large scale solar facilities.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met via Zoom on June 9th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). Two full reviews were presented and discussed: Town of Gouverneur's solar law and a solar project in the Town of Canton. The solar law was approved and the solar project was denied because of its prime soils impact. The Board will continue to meet via Zoom while we can, however we are planning to transition to in person in the coming months. CPB agendas and minutes can be accessed here: <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/Planning/AdvisoryBoards/CountyPlanningBoard>. Staff led a land use training on 6/2/22 that covered board of appeals and variances, and solar use regulations. Participants consisted of town and village land use related board members and code enforcement officers. Also, Staff attended an [American Farmland Trust webinar](#) on the impacts of future land use scenarios on prime ag lands and a NY Association of Counties webinar on power transmission line development around the State. Staff is working with the County Forester to create a best practice resource for vegetative screening around large-scale solar projects to share with municipalities and developers.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on June 15th. The speaker was Scott Schlueter from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Scott discussed FEMRF, tributary assessments/fish passage efforts, St. Lawrence River Telemetry Project, and an American Eel guidance study.

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>

Staff have been sharing a bi-weekly environmental news email that contains links to news in the County and beyond. Please contact the Planning Office if you would like to be added to the email.

Staff and/or volunteers have participated to several events during June; these include:

- Indian River Lakes Conservancy Annual Conference on Water Quality;
- Water Chestnut pulling event, Oswegatchie River in and around Heuvelton.

Staff are continuing to work with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. A website for this project is here: <https://stlawco.org/node/2777>

During June, staff conducted two semi-public reviews of the draft Lake Management Plan for Black Lake. The first review was attended by local researchers on watershed issues; approx. 10 persons attended. The second review was for several stakeholders; at this meeting, the group agreed to

establish the Black Lake Working Group, to concentrate on watershed quality issues.

Staff began working with a DEC biologist and a Fort Drum Natural Resources Branch staff member on a project to better understand the DEC's Deer Management Program. This includes the [Venison Donation Coalition](#), a non-profit organization that assists with processing excess deer.

Staff assembled EMC members comments to the State's Climate Action Council Draft Scoping Plan and submitted them before the 7/1/22 deadline.

EMC members and staff continue to develop a Policy/Opinion on nuclear power, at the request of a member of the Board of Legislators. At this time, it appears that staff will be able to present the EMC's policy to the BOL Operations Committee on July 18th.

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet in June. The Task Force has moved to meeting on a quarterly basis; the next meeting will be held on July 21st.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continues to work with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the completed [broadband study](#). In June, staff coordinated and participated in two Committee meetings, and discussions with three internet service providers (ISPs). Follow-up discussions will be held in July and August, once ISPs have had sufficient time to review the provided household data.

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

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,
- 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 May, the Planning Office reports that 18 units have been completed, 1 unit is in the construction process, and 13 clients are in an application phase.

Recreation. Staff are actively following a handful of organizations and attending webinars that address developing recreational assets in rural communities. Staff attended an [Adirondack Futures](#) webinar on May 25th, hosted by the Northern Forest Center.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

Broadband.

Staff assisted with exporting a GIS dataset to table format for planning purposes for the County's Broadband Committee.

County Enterprise GIS.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>
- GIS Web App: Proposed Solar sites in the County: Updated with recent Canton solar projects. <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/apps/View/index.html?appid=6f3d7fb0923448ed90c3385eb0f8a872>
- GIS Web Map: 2021 Septic Repair Program Waterbodies with 250' Buffer: <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d8a8b0c7e637400a9c269323b7670a19>

Emergency Management Services. Staff continue to provide GIS assistance to this department as their GIS workflows evolve. In partnership with SLC Real Property, Staff is assisting with the publication of an address dataset and other County GIS data that is useful for emergency response for dispatch and officers in the field.

Mapping

- Staff prepared a locator map for a grant application.
- Staff worked with the County Chamber of Commerce to update and share recreation GIS data.

GRANTS

U.S. Department of Justice FY 2022 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP). Staff worked with Community Services to develop and submit a \$1.3 million proposal that, if funded, will 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 the methadone clinic.

FY2022 USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process & Technology Improvement Grant. Staff worked with the Department of Social Services to prepare and submit an application for \$390,000 to conduct a thorough review and update of its procedures and processes for SNAP Program applicants and participants and install digital kiosks in three communities.

Grant Awards. Staff was notified of two recent funding awards: Community Services received \$250,000 through the Comprehensive Integrated Outpatient Treatment Programs (NYS OASAS) and St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES received \$99,099 through the 2022 Farm to School Grant Program (NYS Ag and Markets).

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 met with the consulting team to address comments on the draft HMP from 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). To

date, nine projects have been completed.

PLANNING MATTERS

Large Scale Solar. Staff are monitoring two projects in the County: [Rich Road Solar and Storage](#) and [North Side Energy Center](#). On the 21st, Matilda conducted a site visit along Old Route 11, O'Horo Road, and Old Canton Dekalb road to observe existing uses that surround the perimeter of the Rich Road Solar project. On the 22nd, Matilda attended an informational meeting between the Town of Canton and Rich Road Solar developer EDF. On the 23rd, an invitation to attend EDF's July 14th open house about the project was forwarded to members of the County Planning Board and the Ag and Farmland Protection Board.

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 May 18th; next meetings are scheduled for October.

Town of Canton.

Staff assisted the ZBA chair with clarity on utility easements on private property and in the right-of-way (ROW). Also, with help from the County Real Property Dept., shared information on parcel boundaries and how they may or may not extend to the center of a ROW.

Town of Hammond.

Staff assisted the Town's Planning Board chair, Town Clerk, and code enforcement officer with interpreting their land use regulations for a St. Lawrence River waterfront subdivision proposal and future land use trainings.

Town of Norfolk.

Staff assisted the code enforcement officer with identifying wetland using the DANC IMA for a project in the Town.

Town of Pierrepont.

Staff assisted the Town's Planning Board chair with researching the State's cannabis laws and how they work with land use regulation.

Town of Potsdam

Staff assisted a County resident with preparing their land use applications for a new vet clinic project. Also, Staff helped the CEO with preparing a small wind energy project for review.

Town of Rossie.

Staff is contracted with the Town in revising the Town's existing site plan and subdivision regulations to reach full state land use regulation compliance. Staff drafted the first update to their land use regulations and participated in a public information session at the Town Barn on 6/29/22.

Town of Winthrop.

Staff assisted a property owner and their real estate rep on flood map assessment and resources.

Website. Lisa and Dakota, with staff input, continue to work on updating/editing the Planning Office

page on the County's new website.

- Updates continue to be made for events, meetings and content on some pages.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 6th, Matilda submitted the monthly COVID19 recovery report to the DOT. Throughout the month, Matilda participated in virtual meetings with the County's mobility managers, SUNY Potsdam representatives, and with representatives from The Arc to discuss route service, schedule and projected operating expenses for Route 67 in 2023. On the 8th, Matilda participated in virtual meetings with the County's mobility managers and Modeshift to discuss a pilot project for a fare counting system. On the 10th, Matilda virtually met with DOT representatives to review current year to date expenses and revenue, and to cover current the operating deficit for the public transit system. Also on the 10th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting to discuss a timetable for the County's mobility managers and The Arc to recruit qualified candidates for employment to receive CDL classroom instruction by Jefferson Community College. On the 21st Matilda conducted a monthly review of STOA records at The Arc's Public Transit dispatch office. On the 23rd, Matilda submitted a new two-year contract for signature that authorizes the County's transit operator to provide public transit services to Clarkson University. At the beginning of the month, the County's Public Health Department signed 12-month bus advertising agreements to promote vaccinations on buses 617 and 249:

