

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
September 2019



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). Cooperative Extension and BOCES forwarded Cultivating Careers in Agriculture brochures and agendas to school district counselors and teachers to nominate 9th and 10th grade students to participate in a day-long field trip of farm and agribusiness operations on October 11th. The same brochure and agenda was also forwarded to County Legislators in digital and hard copy formats.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 12th in Canton and heard three full review projects: A joint comprehensive plan for the Town of Canton, the Village of Canton and the Village of Rensselaer Falls; a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review for two 5-MW solar arrays in the Town of Gouverneur; and a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review for the adaptive reuse of Old Snell Hall in the Village of Potsdam. Both the comprehensive plan and adaptive reuse projects were returned for local action, while the solar arrays were approved with conditions.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). At the EMC meeting in September, Aaron Barrigar, Chair of the EMC, and District Forester with the St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District, presented the initial results from the “Road-side Ash and Hazard Tree Assessment Project”. Barrigar reported that there are over 11,000 ash trees along Rights-of-Way on County roads. As the Emerald Ash Borer becomes more and more established in the County, all of these trees will become infested, will die, and will need to be taken down. Barrigar recommended the County prepare a plan to begin removing ash trees on a multi-year basis, beginning in areas along the St. Lawrence River that are already infested with EAB.

On Saturday, September 14th, EMC members and staff helped to direct traffic at the 26th Household Hazardous Waste collection event, held at the Human Services Center on SH 310 in Canton. They reported that 240 cars brought hazardous materials to be properly handled. A Sheriff’s deputy was also present to accept unwanted pharmaceuticals; he reported accepting approximately 200 pounds of same.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) met in September. They heard Aaron Barrigar give the presentation referred to above.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF met in September and began planning its schedule of programs for 2020.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. John Tenbusch sent invitations to local officials to join the County’s Complete Count Committee, or to form their own community Complete Count Committees.

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 September 24th, 2019. The DEC's remediation feasibility study is anticipated to be made available in late fall 2019.
- Total funds committed for Phase 2 stands at \$1,715,000.
- Phase 2 work is complete.

Shoreline Resiliency. In September Planning staff worked with the Jefferson-St. Lawrence Planning Committee for the Governor's Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program to review over 200 proposals that were submitted. Successful projects were announced later in the month.

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 on October 25th.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abbé Picquet Trail Project Management. Final close out of this project is anticipated in the next several months.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers three open grants: the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program, Round 2 (CHRP 2) for housing rehabilitation; the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); and the 23rd round of the 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 September, Planning staff submitted the Environmental Review for this grant.

NYS EFC Septic Repair and Replacement Program. Work on this program continues 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.

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.

Land Use and Zoning District Maps. Staff have prepared or updated zoning maps for The Town of Fowler, the Villages of Potsdam and Gouverneur, the Town of Stockholm and the Town of Norfolk.

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.

Miscellaneous. Attended a Town of Pierrepont Town Board meeting to present and discuss information on historic preservation grants with respect to the Town Hall. Provided assistance to SLC Community Services for an application to the 2020 State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant.

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 15th conference.

Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the month, staff finalized and delivered the Town's draft Comprehensive Plan for public comment.

Village of Gouverneur. Staff were present at the Village's public hearing for the zoning revision. The Village agreed to make all the changes suggested by the County Planning Board.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda, County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo and The Arc Transit Manager Rena Ryan responded to a fourth set of auditor questions about the County's 2018 State Transit Operating Aid (STOA) program. On the 10th, Matilda visited The Arc's transit office to review randomly selected dates of travel logs for each of the County's bus routes. During the week of the 15th, Matilda and Frank attended the National Rural Transit Technical Assistance Program Conference in Portland, Oregon. On the 24th, Matilda, Rena and Frank participated in a 90-minute teleconference with DOT staff who delivered an overview of the STOA program. On the 26th, Matilda and Jason participated in a FY2020 transit budget meeting with Arc and VTC staff, and on the 27th, Matilda met with Frank and St. Lawrence Health Initiative employee Karen Bage to discuss the purchase of bus shelters in select communities in the county. Throughout the month, Matilda also began preparing maps for the most heavily traveled bus routes in the county.