

***St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
October 2019***



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The Board met on the 3rd where Matilda presented countywide statistics from the 2017 Ag Census. On Friday, October 11th, 18 high school students participated in a day-long “Cultivating Careers in Agriculture” field trip that included visits to Farm Credit East in Potsdam; Stauffer Farm in Lawrence; Kaneb Orchards in Massena; Kent Family Growers in Lisbon; and Canton Animal Clinic in Canton. This was the third annual event to promote entry into agriculture for high school graduates, and was sponsored by Farm Credit East. Photos of the field trip are available for viewing online at:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1oRdAIaRSOxLFgHaTfj_Zaluzt_2vWleS

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 10th in Canton and heard two full review projects: The Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan, and a special use permit and site plan review for two, 5-MW solar arrays at 34 County Route 2 in Brier Hill, Morristown. The comprehensive plan was returned for local action with comments, and the site plan review and SUP for the solar array was approved with conditions.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). At the EMC meeting in October, the speaker was Dr. Greg Boyer, Professor of Chemistry at SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry (ESF). Dr. Boyer spoke about cyanobacteria. For simple, one-celled creatures, cyanobacteria are capable of producing complex chemicals; some are harvested for anti-cancer or anti-inflammatory properties, while others are neuro-toxic.

Cyanobacteria bloom when the combination of sunlight, warm water, calm winds, and nutrients is optimal. There is little that we can do about sun, wind or water temperature, but we can work to reduce the nutrient levels in waters that are prone to cyanotoxic blooms, e.g., Black Lake. To reduce nutrient levels, we need to reduce runoff from agricultural operations, and improve septic systems/wastewater treatment processes, in areas susceptible to cyanotoxic blooms.

Climate change is predicted to provide more/longer conditions each year that promote development of cyanobacteria; therefore, we can expect that cyano-toxic blooms will become more frequent in the future.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) met in October. They heard from John Pinkerton of the SLC IDA about the lack of economic opportunity that might be realized when hazard trees are taken down. This was in response to Aaron Barrigar’s report from the previous month that the County will likely be obligated to remove over 14,000 trees in the next 7 – 8 years.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF did not meet in October.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. John Tenbusch is working with local officials to organize the County's Complete Count Committee, or to set up 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 October 29th, 2019. The DEC's remediation feasibility study is anticipated to be made available by the end of 2019.
- Total funds committed for Phase 2 stands at \$1,715,000.
- Phase 2 work is complete.

Shoreline Resiliency. In October, Gov. Cuomo announced over \$60 million in awards for resiliency projects in Jefferson and Lewis Counties under the Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program.

Space Study. This initiative has been on hold recently, but future work is anticipated.

Employee Assistance Program. Planning Staff sit on the County's EAP Committee. The EAP sponsors the annual County Health Fair, which was held this year on October 25th. The Health Fair was held at a new venue this year, the HSC building. Attendance was good and many positive comments were heard about the new location.

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.

Late in the month, the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) announced another round of CDBG funding. Applications will be due on December 18, 2019. The Planning Office intends to write an application for the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3).

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 October, the County received the Release of Funds from HUD and Planning Staff continued project start-up activities.

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 contributed 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.

Route Maps for Public Transit. Matilda has begun drafting route maps for the County's Transit system as time allows. She is starting with the most heavily traveled routes first and they will be posted on the transit website as they are finalized.

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.

Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance (FEMA). Received noticed of FY2018 funding for a required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (up to \$225,000). Submitted a Letter of Intent to the FY 2019 round for Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) project funds for an EAB mitigation project removing ash trees from County rights-of-way. NYSDHSES deemed this project ineligible for PDM funds and did not invite the County to submit a full application.

Miscellaneous. Participated in a strategy discussion with the foreclosure team and the County's environmental counsel regarding potentially contaminated tax delinquent parcels (10/25/19) and attended a Developer's Meeting at the SLCIDA (10/24/19).

PLANNING MATTERS

Potsdam Local Government Conference. The annual conference was held on October 15th and Planning Staff were involved in both the Planning and Zoning and the Community Development Track. The Conference returned to Kellas Hall this year, where additional space and updated facilities made for an excellent venue.

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 provided final edits, mapping modifications and an invoice to the Village of Gouverneur.

Town of Brasher Zoning Revisions. Jamie Alexander from the County's Highway Department is assisting the Planning Office with entering new text and formatting Brasher's revised zoning regulations when she is in the office. Many thanks to Jamie and the Highway Department for their assistance with this project.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda, County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo and The Arc Transit Manager Rena Ryan responded to a fifth set of auditor questions about the County's 2018 State Transit Operating Aid (STOA) program. On the 8th, Matilda and Jason participated in a meeting with The Arc and VTC staff to discuss the transit program's 2020 budget. Matilda also visited The Arc's Transit Office that day to conduct a monthly check of select daily trip sheets for random bus routes. During the week of the 14th, Matilda prepared and submitted the County's 3rd quarter passenger and bus mileage report to the DOT. On the 17th, Matilda attended the Public Transit Task Force meeting where Enterprise Holdings representative Rowan Watson delivered a presentation about the company's vanpooling service that is available to interested employees. On the 18th, Matilda met with Frank Doldo and planning consultant Jill Cahoon to identify local/regional data sources and indicators about prescription medication and opiate drug abuse. On the 21st, Matilda met with Frank Doldo to project passenger and mileage counts for the 4th quarter of this year, and scheduled November meetings with College Connector partners. On the 22nd, Matilda, The Arc Transit Manager Rena Ryan and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo participated in a 90-minute teleconference with DOT staff to discuss the County's 2018 5311 Annual Report. On the 25th, Matilda submitted a revised 5311 2018 Annual report to DOT, and finalized a draft route map for Bus Route 63 for The Arc staff and Frank Doldo to review. On the 29th, Matilda participated in a meeting with VTC staff and planning consultant Jill Cahoon and colleague to hear suggested grant sources to fund transportation services for persons in recovery.