

*St. Lawrence County Planning Office*  
**STAFF WORK REPORT**  
*November 2023*



**ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT**

***Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.*** On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Matilda and Sam met with NYS Department of Ag and Markets staff member Jeff Kehoe and gave him a tour of Agricultural Districts 1 and 2; discussed the upcoming process for the eight-year review of Ag District 1 and the intent to consolidate both Ag Districts 1 and 2 into a single district.

***County Planning Board (CPB).*** The CPB met on November 9<sup>th</sup> in the Conference room on the second floor of the Public Safety Building. One full review project was discussed: A brew pub in the Village of Canton (No Action). There was also a staff training session on public utility variances.

***Environmental Management Council (EMC).*** The EMC met on November 15<sup>th</sup> Miles Manchester spoke about proper seasoning of firewood to reduce chimney fires, reduce smoke, and conserve resources. Received an update on the Great Lake St Lawrence River Adaptive Management. The council strategized goals and objectives for concrete action.

***Fair Housing Task Force.*** On the 9<sup>th</sup>, Preston participated in a virtual training session by CNY Fair Housing on landlord compliance with State and Federal Fair Housing requirements.

**BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***Countywide Broadband Assessment.*** SLIC Network Solutions awaits response on pole permit applications for ARPA-funded buildouts.

***OCF Repurpose Committee.*** Staff have been assigned to the County's Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. The group met last on February 17<sup>th</sup> and took a tour of the facility. Multiple local, County and State representatives were in attendance.

***Raquette River Advisory Council / West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Council.*** The next meetings for these boards will be held in the Spring.

***SLC Water/Waste Water Infrastructure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Initiative.*** The BOL allocated \$3 million for municipal water and waste water projects. Twelve municipalities have been awarded a total of \$2,969,563. To date, disbursements have been made totaling \$1,031,031.60.

***County Snowmobile Grant.*** The Planning Office has been tasked with preparation and management of the County Snowmobile Trail grant. The NYSOPRHP awarded the county \$224,568. Sam has been processing monthly work reports in preparation for Phase 3 of the grant.

***County Budget Preparation.*** Staff is again assisting with the annual preparation of the County Budget.

**Probation Department.** On the 8<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Sam helped facilitate a discussion with the County's Probation Committee on the arming of Probation staff.

**Solar Eclipse Preparation.** The County Board of Legislators authorized the creation of an ad hoc committee to help prepare for potential mass gatherings in the County on April 8, 2024 for the solar eclipse. Part of the County will see eclipse totality. Planning Staff will be part of the committee.

## **COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).** The Planning Office currently operates one CDBG award that addresses housing rehabilitation needs: the fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4). All projects have been completed.

**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. The final unit is under construction; 22 units have been completed. It is anticipated that all program funds will be expended by the end of 2023.

## **GRANTS**

**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) and the Little River (Towns of Clifton and Fine). To date, 36 projects have been completed.

**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.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

**Potsdam Local Government Conference.** Staff meet with the Conference Planning Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> to recap the October conference and plan for next year's event.

**SLC Public Health Strategic Planning Committee.** Staff is participating in Public's Health strategic planning process.

**GIS.** Sam and Preston have been working on creating a web map identifying areas that are suitable for solar development while protecting agricultural lands, forests, and wetlands. The hope is that town planning boards and developers will utilize that map to conserve prime agricultural land.

**Fall Training Session.** Staff presented a land use training session to 18 individuals on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Topics included public utility variances, and overview of the County's Internet Mapping Application, and a rollout of the County's Solar Development Mapping Tool.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

*County Transit System.* On the 7<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Lisa reviewed year to date bus advertising revenue. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Matilda and Jason presented three draft resolutions to the Board of Legislators authorizing the County to: Order a bus shelter to be installed at the Human Services Center; to purchase electronic passenger counting software for the bus fleet; and to modify the 2023 budget to accept Federal public transit monies. During the week of the 13<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in a number of virtual training sessions by Passio Technologies on the use of their Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) software system. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting to discuss the County's reimbursement request for 2021 Mobility Management funds. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Matilda met with VTC Executive Director Sam Purington to discuss a potential funding opportunity for on demand micro-transit. During the middle of the month, Matilda and The Arc dispatch staff conducted an extensive review of October's daily trip and mileage report. During the second half of the month, Matilda completed the procurement records for purchasing mobile Wi-Fi, surveillance, and Automatic Vehicle Location system for the bus fleet.