

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
December 2019



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). On the 4th, Matilda met with SLU GIS Lab Director Carol Cady and Dr. Jessica Rogers from SUNY Potsdam's Environmental Studies Department to discuss their grant proposal to prepare a map to assist local governments with the siting of large solar arrays. The Farmland Protection Board met on the 5th and heard presentations by Dr. Phil Neisser and Hiren Bhavsar about SUNY Canton's new agribusiness curriculum. The Board also set the following 2020 meeting dates: February 6, April 2, October 1 and December 3 at 7:30 pm in the County Public Safety Complex in Canton.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met on the 12th in Canton and heard a presentation by former Planning Director Keith Zimmerman about the County's St. Lawrence River Shoreline Resiliency Report, and the State Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative for Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River communities. The County also heard two full review projects: A site plan review for a McDonald's restaurant in the Village of Canton, and the adoption of a Development District Map by the Town of Fowler. The restaurant was approved with conditions, and the map was returned for local action with comments. Near the end of the meeting, Planning Board Chair Ken Bellor read for the record a letter of appreciation thanking Dawn Mullaney for her 20 years of service on the Board.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). There was no EMC meeting in December.

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) There was no EAB TF meeting in December.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The FHTF met on Thursday December 12th. There was discussion regarding potential training sessions to be held in April regarding recent new legislation that significantly impacts both landlords and tenants.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census 2020. Staff are working with local officials to organize the County's Complete Count Committee. In December, the NYS Association of Counties hosted a conference call during which the Director of the NYS Complete Count Commission described how NYS might allocate funds to counties to help to promote a complete count for the Census. A letter of interest was submitted by the County to State for allocated funds.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.

- Staff provide project oversight and management for redevelopment activities at J&L. In December, staff provided information to DANC for ESD grant reporting and close-out activities.
- There was no DEC technical (clean-up) conference call for December. The DEC's remediation feasibility study is anticipated to be made available by the end of 2019. The site has been prepared

for winter; 10,000 gallons of oil have been recovered to date; the PCB IRM has been finalized.

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

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.

On December 18, the Planning Office submitted an application for the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3). If successful, this grant will provide \$440,000 to assist 10 households to improve their living conditions.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to up to 52 households throughout the county. During December, the Planning Office worked with partner agencies at SLC Public Health and the North Country Housing Council to get started with program implementation. We are happy to announce that the first unit was completed under this program.

NYS EFC Septic Repair and Replacement Program. Work on this program is almost complete; in all, over 40 households were assisted during the two-year span of the program. The Soil and Water Conservation District contributed \$40,000 to help cover administrative and program delivery costs. This program had been envisioned to be a five-year effort, but funding for subsequent rounds has not materialized.

Village of Potsdam Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The Planning Office is participating as a project partner on the Local Planning Committee (LPC) for the Potsdam DRI; the first meeting of the LPC was held on December 18th. The project website is: <https://potsdamdri.com/>.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Mapping Upgrades. County staff continue to discuss a re-tooling of GIS software for the County.

Route Maps for Public Transit. Matilda continues to draft route maps for the County's Transit system as time allows. She is starting with the most heavily traveled routes first. To date, she has drafted maps for Routes 63, 61 and 12 which will be reviewed and finalized for posting on the transit website.

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.

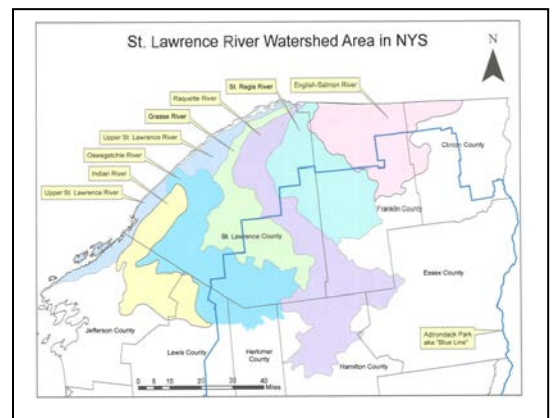
Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP). Staff received notice of award for \$400,000 for a salt storage building at the Russell Outpost. This WQIP application was submitted under the 2019 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) through a cooperative effort of the Planning Office, Highway Department, and the SLC SWCD.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, 5-Year Update. Up to \$225,000 in funding was awarded for a required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan; the County is in receipt of the State contract; the RFP for contractual services is under development.

PLANNING MATTERS

St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan. This planning project encompasses the entire St. Lawrence River watershed in New York, including some or all of eight counties. The Coordinating Committee is working with a selected consultant, and has compiled an extensive desk study regarding the watershed. A public meeting was held in December in Gouverneur.

The consultant team is now looking for ideas, proposals and comments from the general public. See <http://fcswwd.org/partnerships/st-lawrence-river-watershed-partnership-slrrwp/> for additional information, or to fill out an on-line survey.



Town of Brasher Zoning Revisions. Jamie Alexander from the County's Highway Department assisted the Planning Office with reformatting and updating the Town of Brasher's zoning regulations. Many thanks to Jamie and the Highway Department for her involvement with this project.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 2nd and 3rd, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo met with VTC and The Arc transit staff to finalize the County's proposed 2020 transit budget. On the 17th, the proposed budget was reviewed by phone with DOT points of contact and tentatively approved for submission upon the issuance of a Notice of Funding Availability. On the 5th, 10th and 12th, Matilda and/or Jason attended meetings with Treasurer's Office staff to learn about account inquiries, year-end close outs, and budget roll overs for the transit program. On the 10th Matilda conducted a monthly review of randomly selected daily trip bus sheets at The Arc's Transit Office. On the 3rd and 11th, Matilda met with VTC Executive Director Sam Purington and DOT staff in person and by phone to discuss reimbursement submissions for 2017, 2018 and 2019 Mobility Management expenses. On the 19th, Matilda submitted Mobility Management draw requests to the DOT for the first three quarters of 2019. An amended budget for First Mile Last Mile was also signed on the 19th that allowed the Office to process First Mile Last Mile payments for volunteer driver drug and alcohol testing, and program advertising.