



## DIVISION OF PLANNING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### ACTIVITY REPORT

January 2024

#### CONTENTS

- I. Planning
- II. Sustainable Energy
- III. Parks, Recreation & Beautification
- IV. Grants
- V. Agriculture & Farmland Protection

#### I. PLANNING ACTIVITY

##### Land Use Planning & Technical Assistance:

- GML-239 Referrals

GML-239 Referrals, December 2023 – January 2024					
Date Received	Date Requested	Project Name	Action Type	Referral ID #	Legislator
1/8/24	1/23/24	Silvercrest Townhomes	Site Plan Review	THO24-01	Ward / Blosser-Bernardo
1/10/24	2/5/24	3 Franks, Inc. – Double Up	Special Use Permit	LIB24-01	B. McPhillips
1/10/24	2/5/24	613 Harris Rd., LLC	Special Use Permit	LIB24-02	B. McPhillips
1/10/24	2/6/24	Lakeland Estates North & South subdivision	Subdivision Review	FAL24-01	Ward
1/12/24	2/7/24	Dror Properties, LLC	Site Plan Review	LIV24-01	Alvarez
1/12/24	2/7/24	Steps 4 Success Child Development Center, LLC	Site Plan Review	LIV24-02	Alvarez
1/12/24	2/7/24	Lema Gonzalez Investors, LLC	Site Plan Review	LIV24-03	Alvarez

## **Land Use, Strategic and Comprehensive Planning**

- **Neversink Watershed Management Plan**
  - Meetings of the steering committee as well as public outreach events continue as the plan is drafted.
- **Countywide Resiliency Plan:**
  - The County's consultant, Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop (MUDW) presented the draft plan at the January Executive Committee meeting. The plan is available for review and comment and must be adopted by the end of the first quarter of 2024.
- **Water Resources and Infrastructure**
  - A scope of work is being drafted and finalized for a Request for Proposal to identify a vendor to collect, organize, evaluate, and report currently available information on water/wastewater infrastructure countywide.
  - Staff are working with stakeholders to establish a potential scope of work to study Sullivan County's aquifers/groundwater resources. This scope will be used to estimate the cost of a county-wide study, which is needed prior to pursuing funding opportunities. We are also researching current data available via the US Geological Services for both groundwater and soil conditions.
- **Hazard Mitigation**
  - An application for funding through the federal BRIC program (Building Resilient Infrastructures Communities) has been submitted to support the update to the County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Planning efforts will begin in the fall of 2024.

## **Recreation, Quality of Life & Tourism-based Economic Development**

- **Sullivan O&W Rail Trail**
  - Staff have been in discussions with the County Manager's Office and the Town of Fallsburg to identify funding sources and cost saving measures to account for the increased cost of the Neversink Crossing project. Discussions have been productive.
  - Staff continue to participate in monthly meetings of the O&W Rail Trail Alliance as well as regular meetings with the engineering firm and partner municipalities.
  - Town of Rockland will be starting work on design/engineering for the segment between Rotary Park and Sonoma Falls. The County has \$300,000 in funding allocated for this work.
  - Appraisals for two properties along the trail are in process via the Open Space Institute.
  - Tentative dates have been set for 2024 events:
    - SNO&W (Sat 2/24/24)
    - National Trails Day (Sat 6/1/24)
    - BOW-WO&W (Thurs 8/1/24)
    - HO&WL (Fri 10/25/24)

## **Community Development & Revitalization**

- **CDBG Housing**
  - **Manufactured Home Replacement**
    - Fully subscribed, 4 applications with signed formal funding awards.
    - \$625,000 total committed funding, fully subscribed: Contracts are complete and signed.
    - Foundations have been poured and the units have been delivered.
    - Estimated time for final expenditure of funds in this program is estimated in January 2024.
  - **Home Repair**
    - 9 projects are currently under repair and/or finished, totaling \$250,000 of work.
    - RUPCO has conducted Contractor Outreach and implemented a new media campaign to push the information out to homeowners and local agencies. This has resulted in an additional 10 projects for the program.
    - We have requested an extension through May 31, 2024 to allow time to finish construction on the recently identified projects.
  - County staff have worked with staff from RUPCO to complete and file the Annual Performance Report for the program.
- **Housing**
  - In 2022 the County completed a “Housing Strategy” which provides a detailed assessment of housing needs across a wide range of demographics in Sullivan County.
  - In 2023 the County hired Pattern for Progress to develop a housing program to address the high cost/unaffordability of housing in the County, based on the 2022 report. The 2024 budget has funding allocated to support this initiative.
  - Pattern for Progress is also reviewing the County’s Fair Housing Plan, and will be developing municipal training modules about housing friendly communities and protection of community character.
  - A presentation will be provided to the Legislature in March to provide an overview of ongoing housing initiatives.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Master Plan**
  - We have received the draft contract from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The NYSDEC anticipates we will have contracts executed by March or April of 2024. Once this contract is

executed Planning can move forward with a solicitation to procure a consultant to assist with and write the plan.

- DEC contact person has approved the draft RFP, so we can issue it as soon as the contract is processed and activated by the DEC.
  - Planning staff have identified various stakeholders to serve on the Advisory Committee, as well as those which we believe are important to engage via interviews and focus groups, to assist with the development of the plan and provide feedback throughout the process.
  - The plan will focus on connecting residents and visitors in and around community centers (villages, hamlets) with safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- **Plans & Progress**
    - Open projects continue to be closed out, with only 4 projects left to request reimbursement.

### **Economic Development**

- **Emerald Corporate Center Economic Development Corporation (ECCEDC)**
  - In December the ECCEDC Board voted to transfer Emerald Springs Water Company (ESWC) and all assets to the Town of Thompson, based on discussions with counsel having experience with the process.
  - Met with the Town of Thompson to discuss next steps, timeline, and process of getting approval for the transfer via the NYS Public Service Commission.

### **Administration**

- A municipal training was held on January 30 for Town, Village, Planning and Zoning Board members to discuss the handling of issues related to potable water and wastewater when reviewing applications. This was held in a “Roundtable Discussion” format to allow various boards from across the County to discuss best practices. Representatives from the NYS Department of Health and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation were on hand for the discussion.
- We are actively recruiting potential candidates for vacant positions including a Planner and Director in the Department of Planning.
- Attended a meeting hosted by the NYSDOT about the NYS Route 17 Mobility and Access Improvement Project.

## II. OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY (OSE)

- OSE continues to act as lead for the Resiliency Plan project. Staff are completing administrative reporting, assisting with quarterly request for reimbursement for the Countywide Resiliency Plan, and collecting documentation required by NYS DOS to enable us to close out the grant this spring.
- Staff are researching and attending webinars provided by Hudson Valley Regional Council, to enable the County to move forward with Clean Energy Communities high impact actions and renew this designation and qualify for grants opportunities.
- OSE staff are setting up administrative and reporting tasks for the SC Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, completing paperwork needed to execute the contract with NYS DEC. Our The Planning team has begun to brainstorm potential members of the project Advisory Committee and develop a recruitment process.
- OSE staff have continued to review monthly utility statements, and to work with NYSEG and DPW staff to resolve ongoing issues with meter readings and monthly billings.

### III. PARKS, RECREATION & BEAUTIFICATION

- Contracts are being finalized for the completion of the Parks Master plan. The plan will review the current inventory of County parks and operations and make recommendations for future projects, programming and fee structures. The plan will also provide a County-wide community needs assessment to identify locations where expansion of publicly available parks and recreational opportunities are needed most.
- Continuing work with the County GIS Department on development of printable park/trail maps for all of the County Parks.
- We are actively recruiting potential candidates for vacant seasonal positions for Lake Superior State Park, D&H Canal Interpretive Center and the Sullivan County Clean Team.
- Over 75 people attended the Frederick Cook Society's Winter Bagel festival held at the Sullivan County Cultural Center in Hurleyville on January 14, 2024.
- Callicoon Park Property: Fisher Associates have developed the scope of work for the development of an entryway, parking area, and walking path to the Delaware River. The scope includes design, engineering, required environmental survey of wetlands/watercourse, delineation and boundary/topographic surveying and permitting. Partial funding for these services will be thru a grant that was received by the Division of Planning. The environmental survey will not be able to be completed until the growing season in the Spring of 2024.
- Lake Superior Trails: Fisher Associates are developing the design and waste water management plan for phase I (2.8 miles) of the Lake Superior Westside hiking trails. The trail is marked out from the lake dam picnic area on Dr. Duggen Road to Pucky Huddle Road. Survey work is being completed at certain points along the trail. We are hoping to begin work on the trail in the Spring/Summer of 2024.
- The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D&H Canal is coming up in 2025. The groundbreaking of the canal took place in Wurtsboro on July 13, 1825. We are currently working on bi-centennial celebrations, programming and events with the local municipalities, SCVA and local organizations who are involved with the canal.
- Park Maintenance:
  - Completing general maintenance of park equipment.
  - Completing annual inventory of park equipment and supplies.
  - Plowing the County parks.
  - Clearing brush along the D&H Canal and lock area at the D&H Canal Interpretive Center.
  - Replacing deteriorated split rail along the D&H Canal Interpretive Center canal area.
  - Replacing decking on the Lake Superior boat docks.

## IV. GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

- Activity/Technical Assistance
  - Since December 21, we have received four inquiries related to funding resource requests: two for non-profit initiatives and two related to small business expansion.
- In-County Grant Readiness
  - DGA is prepared to initiate strategies to address issues related to grants compliance and to enhance the County's capacity to acquire and manage grants. Pending collaboration with management and Compliance, the goals include assessing current compliance-related issues, revision of the grant's manual (Grants Best Practices), and training initiatives. The grant's manual has now been reviewed by OMB, Audit, Purchasing, Treasurer, and County Attorney. Approval by County Manager's Office is pending.
  - Assistance has been provided to departments requiring support with the grant process, including the District Attorney's Office, ITS, Community Resources, Public Health, Planning, Public Safety, and Public Works. Of note:
    - DGA has coordinated a meeting with Public Safety staff related to newly released Volunteer Fire Infrastructure and Response Equipment (V-FIRE) grant. Further updates to follow pending outcome of meeting. Application deadline 4/30/24.
    - DGA staff working with County Public Safety OEM / Fire Bureau staff in submitting the cost estimates and updated project information to DASNY Staff on the burn building inspection, improvements and addition on the training center. DASNY will issue an amendment to the award agreement for processing once they have our detail. Public Safety advises the inspection has been completed and cost estimates for upgrades / improvements have been requested by County staff.
    - DGA met with Planning staff related to the release of the 2024 RAISE Grant program and reviewed notes from debriefing. Application preparations are under way for the 2024 RAISE Grant. Application due 2/28/24.
- Administrative Activities
  - An additional tote was prepared for disposition. DGA is caught up on records review; records management process to be ongoing during 2024.

## **V. AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION**

- CCE December 2023 Ag report attached