



## DIVISION OF PLANNING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### ACTIVITY REPORT

February 2023

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#### I. PLANNING ACTIVITY

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

- GML-239 Referrals
  - 10 referrals received, with actions in 5 municipalities; 50% of the activity in the Town of Liberty

GML-239 Referrals, January 2023					
Date Received	Date Requested	Project Name	Action Type	Referral ID #	Legislator
1/27/2023	2/6/2023	Camp Yeshiva	Special Use Permit	LIB23-02	Luis Alvarez
1/27/2023	2/6/2023	Mizrahi Subdivision	Subdivision Review	LIB23-01	Luis Alvarez
2/2/2023	2/21/2023	Rason Gholian	Area Variance	LIB23-03	Luis Alvarez
2/16/2023	3/13/2023	Wagschal Site Plan	Special Use Permit	LIB23-06	Luis Alvarez
2/16/2023	3/13/2023	Bais Yaakov Council	Special Use Permit	LIB23-05	Luis Alvarez
2/16/2023	3/13/2023	Camp Bnos	Special Use Permit	LIB23-04	George Conklin III
2/9/2023	3/21/2023	Site Plan Review		THO23-02	Alan Sorensen
2/15/2023	3/8/2023	13 Sheri Lane Storage Facility	Special Use Permit	CAL23-01	George Conklin III
1/30/2023	2/14/2023	Norden Subdivision	Subdivision Review	DEL23-01	George Conklin III
2/15/2023	3/8/2023	KJ Estates Duplex Development	Site Plan Review	FAL23-01	Ira Steingart

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

- *Housing Plan:*
  - Received three responses to RFP for services to support implementation of the Housing Plan and related housing projects on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Resolution submitted to authorize contract with RUPCO, which proposed for a portion of the services needed. Primary implementation of the Housing Plan may be awarded to a second entity; proposal under review and discussion.
- *Neversink Watershed Management Plan:*
  - Second in the series of public engagement event held virtually on 1/30; next event March 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:00-7:00; click here to participate <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85903890947#success>
  - Met with DPW to explore funding opportunity for improvement of culverts assessed as part of the project
- *Countywide Resiliency Plan:*
  - Existing Conditions Inventory phase -- stakeholder interviews continue, website content under review and revision
- *Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan:*
  - Project commencement pending execution of award agreement with the NYS DEC via the Climate Smart Communities Grant Program.
  - Conducting project related training and outreach activities; see below.

- **Technical Assistance & Training**

- February 15th: First of series of Agricultural Trainings held in partnership with CCE and the County Ag Board; covering ag districts and ag assessments, right-to farm law, ag data statements, GML-239 reviews, etc. Planning Commissioner and Real Property Director presented, along with CCE and NYS Ag and Markets staff.
- February 16<sup>th</sup>: Planning staff participated in Funding for Safe Routes virtual conference organized through CCE's Healthy Schools and Communities Initiative.
- February 28th: Annual training for Planning and Zoning Board members presented by the NYS Department of State; will cover planning and zoning to support walking and biking, and the Comprehensive Plan. 40+ registrants to date; total attendance to be reported in March.

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

- **Sullivan O&W Rail Trail**

- Focus in February on preparation of federal RAISE grant application, and on response to NYS DOT comments on Neversink Crossing design report.

- 2023 snO&W event to take place on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> @ 10am. Event will showcase Mamakating trail.
- **New County Park Project (Callicoon)**
  - Kick-off meeting and subsequent site visit held with partners on National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to support site clean up, invasive species remediation and public outreach
  - Commencement of design work for parking, access and trails pending completion of contract execution with LVA Associates
- **Highland Access Improvements**
  - Project on hold for the season; will resume in Spring

### **Community Development & Revitalization**

- **Round 7 Restore New York grant**
  - Application completed and submitted
- **Sullivan County Land Bank Corporation (SCLBC)**
  - Work progressing on lease to the Black Library Project for the ground floor of the Key Bank building on Broadway
  - Applicants for purchase and redevelopment of 91 Chestnut Street, Liberty (aka Spanish Castle, Yeager Mansion) completed presentations to the Board at its February meeting. Board will make a determination on disposition in early March.
  - Miscellaneous property maintenance work:
    - Removal of downed tree across 91 Chestnut after winter storm
    - Relocating squatter who parked an RV mobile home on a Land Bank-owned vacant lot
  - New grant focus on NYS's Land Bank Initiative Phase 2
  - Working with EPA on hazardous materials assessment of the Broadway Theater. In addition to providing needed information for redevelopment, the activity, funded through the EPA Brownfield Assessment grant to the County, will be used as a match to close out the grant for the ESD-funded feasibility study
  - Developer purchasing 8 vacant lots for new single family home construction has requested 2 more to meet requirements of NYS funding program; in discussion
- **CDBG Housing**
  - Manufactured Home Replacement
    - 5 applications received
      - 4 applications reviewing and/or site inspecting- All good projects waiting for THPO 30 day hold then we will formally commit funding &152K each
      - 1 apps denied/withdrawn

- Home Repair
  - 6 applications received
  - 4 applications reviewing and/or site inspecting
  - 1 application withdrawn
  - \$25,000 committed funds
- Homebuyer Assistance
  - 3 applications reviewed and deemed eligible; applicants having difficulty finding a home to purchase

## **Economic Development**

- **CDGB grants**
  - Bids received for air purification equipment for The Center for Discovery CDBG Cares grant; responses being reviewed by TCFD.
- **Revolving Loan Fund**
  - Payments on all loans are current
  - Committee reviewing new restaurant application to be located in Town of Liberty

## **Administration**

- Focusing on transition as Deputy Commissioner Jill Weyer departs on February 24 after 22 years with County Planning
- New Planner, Justin Rocque, started on February 14
- Recruitment continues for remaining open positions:
  - Housing and Community Development Coordinator
  - Grant Writer (Department of Grants Administration)
  - Deputy Commissioner

## **II. OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY (OSE)**

### **Projects**

- The County is finally reaping the benefits of a hydroelectric initiative that began in 2015. On May 31, 2022, the hydroelectric facility (operated on behalf of the County by Gravity Renewables, Inc.) located on Goodyear Lake received approval for interconnection. In 2022 the facility generated 1,275,690 kWh of electricity, for which the County received monetary credits on our NYSEG bills. The County cost of generated electricity was approximately \$110,000, and the monetary value of credits received was approximately \$127,500 (savings of \$17,500). In addition, the County retains ownership of the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), which bolsters our portfolio of clean energy resources and reduces overall emissions for County operations.
- The energy capital improvement project at SUNY Sullivan is nearly complete; window installation will be done after the spring semester ends and commissioning of installed equipment is ongoing. County staff are exploring federal guidance to determine of the

County can take advantage of tax credits recently made accessible to local governments as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

### **Public, Agency, and NYS Engagement**

- OSE has been fielding an increased volume of calls pertaining to interest in installing solar arrays on homes and businesses. Information on incentives available via NYSEERDA and tax incentives at both the state and federal level is being provided. However, it has become very clear that there is a shortage of capacity for certified solar installers to keep up with current demand. OSE introduced staff of the Mid-Hudson Clean Energy Hub to key staff for SC Center for Workforce Development, and events are being planned to connect potential employees with employers in the clean energy industry.
- OSE staff have been conducting research into the State's Septic Replacement Program and collecting data that could establish a case for Sullivan County to be included for future rounds of funding. This funding would offset costs of septic replacement to private homeowners.
- Attended the NYSAC 2023 Legislative Conference, serving on the Standing Committee on Climate Action and moderating a workshop.

## **III. PARKS, RECREATION & BEAUTIFICATION**

### **Park Planning and Management**

- RFP for Design, Engineering and Permitting Services
  - Ongoing work to completed contracts with selected firms.
- Staffing
  - Filled Parks Manager position for summer 2023
  - Continuing to recruit for seasonal summer positions for Lake Superior State Park and the Sullivan County Clean Team.
- Lake Superior
  - Ongoing work with NYS Parks and PIPC staff on receiving approval for the building of the trails on the Westside of Lake Superior. The trails will be developed in a three-phase approach, over the next few years, for a total of six-miles of primitive hiking trails.
- Callicoon new park
  - Working with Planning, OSE, and Grants staff on development, as noted above.
- **Parks & Rec Events**
  - Concert held at the Sullivan County Histoprical Societ museum on Saturday, February 11th

## **IV. GRANTS**

### **Administration**

- Amplifund
  - Substantial efforts made to accelerate the implementation of Amplifund Grants Management Software. Information pertaining to County policy and processes related to grants management has been forwarded to the implementation team and several meetings have been held. County staff continue to gather information and data on current grants to input into the new software.
- Ongoing recruitment for the open grantwriter position

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

- CCE January Ag and Food systems report below