



Adirondack Park Agency
JULY MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 11, 2024

Agency Members, Designees, and Executive Staff Present:

John Ernst, Chairperson

Brad Austin, Empire State Development

Mark Hall, Member

Benita Law-Diao, Member

James Leary, Department of State

Art Lussi, Member

Ken Lynch, Member

Dan Wilt, Member

Randy Young, Department of Environmental Conservation

Barbara Rice, Executive Director

Damion Stodola, Counsel

Absent and Excused

Zoë Smith, Member

Local Government Review Board Present

Gerald Delaney, Sr., Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum of board members being present in person, the meeting was called to order at 9:36 AM and Chairperson Ernst welcomed the public and staff.

2. WELCOMING REMARKS

Chairperson Ernst introduced James Leary who will be filling in for Matt Tebo this month. Ernst also thanked Randy Young for filling in for Joe Zalewski.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair recognized Bob Glennon, who requested an update on the status of any potential new building, and whether alumni would be given a tour. Executive Director Rice noted that there was no update at this time. Chairperson Ernst indicated that alumni would have a tour if and when a move took place.

The Chair recognized Jim McCulley, who expressed concerns regarding the paving done during phase one of the Rail Trail and what he felt is the Agency's obligation to address the issue.

4. APPROVAL OF JUNE 20, 2024 AGENCY MEETING MINUTES

On motion of John Ernst, seconded by Mark Hall, the June minutes were unanimously approved without modification with Benita Law-Diao and Ken Lynch not voting having been absent at the June meeting.

5. RECUSALS

None

6. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Barbara Rice presented the Executive Director Report, highlights of which included:

- Executive Director Rice acknowledged the damage that has occurred across the Park, particularly in Lewis, Essex and Clinton Counties where some roadways were impassable due to storm damage. This is something we are seeing more of every year and highlights the risks that climate change brings. Rice voiced the support of the Agency, and its willingness to help with expedited emergency permits for recovery efforts.
- David “Sam” Boese was congratulated on his appointment as Professional Engineer 1. Boese has worked as an Assistant Engineer in the RAAS division for the last 5 years. We are very excited for him and we look forward to his continued contribution to the Agency in this new position.
- Staff met yesterday with Assemblymember John Rivera from Assembly District 149, in the Buffalo area. Staff was able to speak with the assemblymember about the State Land Master Plan, the Adirondack Park Agency Act, and hamlet infrastructure concerns amongst other topics.
- Over the weekend there was a celebration of life for Ranger Robbi Mecus in Keene, Damion Stodola, General Council and Megan Phillips, Deputy Director of Planning attended on behalf of the Agency.
- In honor of Pride Month, the Agency participated in a coffee hour with members of the DEC which provided a great opportunity to build relationships between our agencies. Deputy Director of Communications, Keith McKeever and Assistant Public Information Officer, Ben Brosseau were thanked for their efforts in coordinating. Executive Director Rice also expressed gratitude to PEF for their support for the activity.
- New York advanced its climate and EV adoption goals in the region with the installation of the largest fast charge station north of Albany at the Frontier Town Gateway, Exit 29 on the Northway.
- DEC and OPRHP released a proposed strategy document for implementing New York’s commitment to support the national goal of 30 by 30, conserving 30 percent of US lands and waters by 2030. The public comment period is currently open and will be closing August 30th.
- Congratulations to Executive Director Mike Carr and the team at Adirondack Land Trust for their grant award of \$3 million which will fund accessible wildlife trails and preserves. This is the single largest grant in Land Trust history and support efforts toward increasing the critically needed accessible wildland trails for both residents and visitors.
- Governor Hochul announced \$97.7 million in funding across New York State for projects that encourage alternative means of travel. Clinton County received nearly \$2 million to refurbish the Swing Bridge in Keeseville which Supervisor Tim Bresett highlighted in his Community Spotlight last month where he

discussed plans to refurbish a number of historic bridges that span the Ausable River and connect the downtowns of Keeseville and Chesterfield with a pedestrian walkway that promotes both the history of both communities as it increases the access people have to the natural wonders in both towns.

- Congratulations also go out to the Town of Long Lake in Hamilton County for \$2 million grant for the construction and replacement of sidewalks on their Main Street.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO COMMITTEES

By unanimous agreement, the Agency Board voted to adjourn to committees at 9:53 AM.

Park Policy and Planning Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 9:54 AM.

Park Policy and Planning Committee Members Present: Benita Law-Diao (Chair), Brad Austin (ESD), and Mark Hall

Other Members and Designees Present

John Ernst, James Leary (DOS), Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Dan Wilt, Randy Young (DEC)

Local Government Review Board Present

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present

Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Megan Phillips

(1) Planning Division (Megan Phillips)

Megan Phillips, Deputy Director of State Lands and Planning provided an update on recent Planning Division activities, highlights included:

- Phase 3 of the Rail Trail project has been bid out, and the contract is currently pending with construction expected to start in the Fall.
- Phase 2 of the Rail Trail project is now closed to the public for construction and is expected to open in the fall.
- Community Design Intern, Mistaya Smith has joined the Planning team and has joined the town of Keene to develop a map linking the town owned recreational assets. She is also working with Hague to develop conceptual designs for a new visitor center.
- Emily Pulcini, GIS Intern is making great progress in inventorying and updating our geospatial data sets and external data sources. She is also working on a project to help developers achieve a 4x density bonus to meet community housing criteria. Gratitude and kudos to Molly Jordan for supporting Emily in this role.
- State Land Staff have been active in various workflows including consultations with the DEC and ORDA, unit management planning for the Debar Mountain Wild Forest and John Brown Farm, and on-going efforts to help with the visitor use management project.
- Pepperbox Wilderness draft land management plan has been received and the review is starting.
- The State Land team is in active discussions with the DEC for amendments to the State Land Use Management Plan (SLMP)
- Congratulations to the DEC for closing on the 4 peaks tract in Jay which adjoins the Wilmington Wild Forest in Essex County. The area is biologically rich and you will hear more as the Agency conducts field studies to classify this land in the State Land Classification System.
- Our contract with the National Heritage Trust to bring in a staff member for a three year commitment has been approved by Office of the State Comptroller, thanks to Elaine Caldwell, Deputy Director of Administration for all her work in making this possible. This role will augment the capacity of the State Land team and help to handle existing workload while enabling us to be more forward thinking including making updates to guidance and policy.
- Local Government Services has processed 53 variance referrals for ALLUPS to date in 2024. The team has also met with supervisors, code enforcement officers, and zoning administrators in Chester, Willsboro, Hague, Day and Horicon where there has been a lot of turnover in key town roles. Staff has taken the opportunity to offer support and technical training to these communities.

(2) Northern Forest Center Community Focused Initiatives (Leslie Karasin, Adirondack Program Director)

Leslie Karasin, Adirondack Program Director for the Northern Forest Center provided a presentation regarding their plan for recruiting and retaining young people to Adirondack communities, including the approach they are using to develop housing in several Adirondack hamlets.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee Adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Regulatory Programs Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 11:15 AM.

Regulatory Programs Committee Members Present:

Dan Wilt (Chair), Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, James Leary (DOS)

Other Members and Designees Present:

John Ernst , Brad Austin (ESD), Mark Hall, Randy Young

Local Government Review Board

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, David Plante, Ariel Lynch

(1) Regulatory Programs Division Report (David Plante)

David Plante, Deputy Director of Regulatory Programs and Enforcement provided an update on recent Regulatory Programs activities, highlights of which included:

- The total number of applications through the end of June is 225 which is up from 170 last year this time; 129 permits have been issued which slightly lower than the 144 issued at this point last year; 65 preapplications have been received which is up from 55 at the end of May last year; 35 major projects have been

completed as compared to 37 at this point last year and the number of emergency authorizations is holding steady at 3.

- Plante reviewed Agency involvement in large scale public utility projects, specifically working with ORES, a newer state agency tasked with review and approval of solar and wind projects. While the Agency will not be granting permits, they will be taking part in the review process. Currently the Agency has party status with PSC on three large scale ORES/PSC projects including the Boralax Foothills 40MWT solar project in the Town of Mayfield in Fulton County. The draft for that project will go out for public comment in less than 60 days. The Agency is also participating in the review of two National Grid Projects. One, for a 100KV structure placement project between North Creek and Warrensburg in Warren County, and the second, a rebuild of the 115KV Colton to Nickelville power line in St. Lawrence County. These two projects are newly filed, and the review process is just starting. To date there is no Board action, as staff level reviews are taking place.
- As a follow up to the June meeting, ProcellaCOR EC was applied to the two bays in Lake George on June 29 and the first residual concentration monitoring results have been received. As expected, ProcellaCOR was not detected after 3 hours in 18 of 22 monitoring locations, 20 of 22 monitoring locations after 10-12 hours, and non-detectable in all 22 monitoring locations after 24 hours. Plant monitoring of the sites will take place within 30-60 days of the treatment. Chateauguay Lake also experienced a similar breakdown, ProcellaCOR was not detected in any of the 7 monitoring locations within 24 hours of treatment. Preliminary information indicates die off and wilting plants under the water surface, but more information will be available after the plant surveys take place.

(2) P2024-0046 – Vineyard Solar 10 MW Solar Project – Town of Crown Point, Essex County

Ariel Lynch, Environmental Program Specialist 3, provided a detailed overview and presentation of the permit application submitted by Vineyard Solar to install a solar generation facility on a parcel of land in the Town of Crown Point, Essex County. The presentation included a review of jurisdiction, conclusions of law, a description and slides of the project locations, existing conditions, proposed project details, public comments (reviewed by staff and others), and staff's recommendations and permit conditions.

On motion of Ken Lynch, seconded by James Leary, the Regulatory Committee unanimously recommended the approval of the application as presented and with recommended conditions to the full Agency Board.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Regulatory Programs adjourned at 12:37 PM

Executive Session/Lunch

There was no executive session.

Park Ecology Committee convened at 1:35 PM

(2) Park Ecology (Dr. Lizz Schuyler)

Dr. Lizz Schuyler, Supervisor – Natural Resource Analysis, introduced today's speakers for the following presentations:

- **Adirondack Brook Trout Plan** (Steve Hurst, Chief of Fisheries - DEC)
DEC Chief of Fisheries, Steve Hurst provided a presentation of the new draft Adirondack Brook Trout Plan that will be released for public comment later this summer. Hurst's presentation highlighted key proposed changes and the vision for the future of Brook Trout in the Adirondacks.
- **Browning and Warming of Adirondack lakes limit habitat available to brook trout** (Dr. Tommy Detmer, Senior Research Associate, Adirondack Fishery Research Program, Cornell University)
Dr. Tommy Detmer provided an overview of the long-term monitoring of Adirondack lakes that shows they are warming, becoming more tea-stained and suffering oxygen depletion at the bottom which has resulted in limitations to habitats available for brook trout.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee Adjourned at 3:26 PM.

The Board returned to Full Agency at 3:26 PM

9. Committee Reports

Park Policy and Planning (Benita Law-Diao)

The committee heard a presentation from Leslie Karasin, Adirondack Program Director of the Northern Forest Center regarding their initiatives to recruit and retain young people to the Adirondacks using housing opportunities partially funded and planned by the center.

Regulatory Programs (Dan Wilt)

The committee reviewed permit application P2024-0046 from Vineyard Solar for a 10 MW solar project in the Town of Crown Point in Essex County.

On the motion of Dan Wilt, and seconded by John Ernst, the Board unanimously approved the application as presented and with the recommended conditions.

Park Ecology (John Ernst)

The Park Ecology Committee heard two interesting reports regarding brook trout and their future from Steve Hearst, Chief of Fisheries at the DEC and Dr. Tommy Detmer, Senior Research Associate, Adirondack Fishery Research Program, Cornell University).

10. Interim Reports

The Administration, Economic Affairs, Enforcement, Legal Affairs, Local Government Services, Public Awareness and Communications, and State Land Committees did not meet this month.

11. Member Comment

None

12. Old Business

None

13. New Business

None

14. Public Comment

None

[Link to video and audio recordings of the full Agency presentation to be added.]

Chairperson Ernst noted that the next meeting will be August 15, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at approximately 3:52 pm.

John Ernst

John Ernst, Chairperson