



MARCH MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 13, 2025

Agency Members, Designees, and Executive Staff Present:

John Ernst	Chairperson
Mark Hall	Member
Steve Hunt	Empire State Development
Benita Law-Diao	Member
Art Lussi	Member
Ken Lynch	Member
Zoë Smith	Member
Matt Tebo	Department of State
Dan Wilt	Member
Joe Zalewski	Department of Environmental Conservation
Barbara Rice	Executive Director
Damion Stodola	Counsel

Absent and Excused

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 approximately 9:30 AM and John Ernst, Chair, welcomed the public, presenters, and staff.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

3. MEMBER COMMENT

The Chair, without objection, recognized G. Delaney, Local Government Review Board Chair, who spoke on behalf of the Essex County Board of Supervisors and Town of Indian Lake, noting that they and the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages had passed resolutions supporting Executive Director Barbara Rice and the Adirondack Park Agency Board.

4. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 13, 2025 AGENCY MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Zoë Smith, seconded by Dan Wilt, the February 13, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved without modification.

5. RECUSALS

None

6. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Barbara Rice presented her report, highlights of which included:

- Executive Director Rice addressed recent allegations noting that the Agency maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying, intimidation and any other form of toxic behavior. The Executive Director added that she is committed to moving the Agency forward with a strong team, staff who are doing great work and who are positive, collaborative and respectful while also hiring the best and most competent people we can find.
- Executive Director Rice thanked Jerry Delaney, Local Government Review Board, for sharing the resolutions of support for the Agency and its leadership from the Essex County Board of Supervisors, Town of Indian Lake, and the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages. The historic show of support is deeply appreciated.

- Executive Director Rice highlighted a recent presentation of the 2024 Annual Report to the Local Government Review Board and thanked the members for hosting and the robust discussion that followed.
- Executive Director Rice congratulated the Town of Long Lake on the news that the town has been named the sole beneficiary of any proceeds related to the sale of the 36,000-acre Whitney Estate. The generous gift will have profound positive impact on both Long Lake and Hamilton County.
- Executive Director Rice announced registration has been opened for the 2025 Adirondack Planning Forum which will take place May 7th and 8th at the Hotel Saranac, and encouraged local government officials, Adirondack Park citizens, consultants, partner agencies and other stakeholders to attend.
- Executive Director Rice announced Governor Hochul's "NY Wants You Initiative," a hiring initiative aimed at attracting federal workers to New York State positions.
- Executive Director Rice welcomed new staff to the Agency including a new Associate Attorney, Robert Vanderbles who comes from the Department of State, and Kayleen Snyder, a new Environmental Programs Specialist 1, who joined from WSP.
- Executive Director Rice recognized the recent passing of Mitchell Goroski who was an attorney at the Agency for nearly two decades (1998 to 2017), and highlighted several of his achievements while at the agency.
- Executive Director Rice welcomed DEC's new Acting Commissioner, Amanda Lefton who had started her role a couple of weeks prior. She stated that the Agency looks forward to building upon its strong partnership with DEC to promote the sustainability of the Adirondack Park's communities and protection of its unique natural assets.

8. **MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO COMMITTEES**

On motion of John Ernst, seconded by Mark Hall, the Agency Board voted unanimously to adjourn to committees at approximately 9:47 AM.

Public Awareness and Communications Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 9:47 AM.

Committee Members Present: Mark Hall (Committee Chair), Steve Hunt (ESD), Benita Law-Diao, Dan Wilt.

Other Members and Designees Present: John Ernst, Art Lussi, Zoë Smith, Ken Lynch, Matt Tebo (DOS), Joe Zalewski (DEC), Steve Hunt (ESD)

Local Government Review Board: Gerald Delaney

Agency Staff Present: Barbara Rice, Damion Stodola, Keith McKeever, Ben Brosseau

(1) Communications Report

Ben Brosseau, Assistant Public Information Officer, provided a communications report which included updates on social media goals and content. He also shared the progress being made on the revamp of the Agency website, as well as the new updated method for centralizing and distributing press releases.

(2) Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network (ACORN): Rural Climate Resilience Network

Mark Hall, Committee Chair, introduced Jen Kretser, Director of Climate Initiatives at The Wild Center, and Sunita Halasz, Project Coordinator for the Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network (ACORN) for a presentation regarding ACORN's work. With funding from NYSEDA and the Adirondack Foundation, ACORN has planted the seeds for regional climate conversation, connected neighboring communities and fostering leadership in the region from the ground up. They presented the findings of their work, and solicited input from Agency members and Designees regarding their vision for a climate resilient Park.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 10:45 AM.

Park Policy and Planning

The committee meeting convened at approximately 11:00 AM

Committee Members: Benita Law-Diao (Committee Chair), Mark Hall, Steve Hunt (ESD),

Other Members and Designees Present: John Ernst, Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Zoë Smith, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Local Government Review Board Present: Gerald Delaney

Agency Staff Present: Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Megan Phillips

(1) Planning Division Report (Megan Phillips, APA)

Megan Phillips, Deputy Director of the Planning Division, presented the Planning Division report, highlights of which included:

- Deputy Director Phillips announced the opening of registration for the 2025 Adirondack Planning Forum to be held at the Hotel Saranac on May 7th and 8th. Topics in two tracks include: Track A features public meetings and hearings; subdivision review; area variances. Track B features: clean water planning; housing success stories and solutions; livable communities; and climate resiliency for rural communities.
- Deputy Director Phillips reported that the Local Government Services team is reviewing comprehensive plans for Schroon Lake and Chesterfield as well as the Fulton County Agriculture Plan. They are also reviewing an amendment to the Colton agency approved local land use plan (ALLUP) which involves adding targeted land use controls equivalent or exceeding those imposed by the Agency.
- State Land staff provided a presentation on visitor use management to the New York State Outdoor Guides Association in Hamilton, NY. Deputy Director Phillips thanked staff members Kevin Prickett and Matt McNamara for presenting to this group.
- Deputy Director Phillip reported having attended the first Adirondack Climate Conference at The Wild Center along with staff from RASS where they participated in sessions focused on building resilience, preparing for disasters, climate science and ecological impacts, and what state and local partners are doing to implement solutions.
- The GIS team is in the final stages of hiring a Mapping Technologist 1, and recently posted for a paid summer internship opportunity to work across both GIS and RASS teams.

**(2) Office of Renewable Energy and Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES)
Overview (Sarah Crowell, ORES)**

- Sarah Crowell, Chief of Renewable Energy Siting at the Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES), provided an overview of the

ORES regulations and how their work intersects with the Adirondack Park Agency's jurisdiction.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 11:43 AM.

The Board returned to Full Agency at approximately 11:43 AM

9. Committee Reports

Public Awareness and Communication (Mark Hall)

The committee received communications report from Assistant Public Information Officer Ben Brosseau and a presentation from Sunita Halasz and Jen Kretser regarding the Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resiliency Network (ACORN) and its collaborative efforts to foster conversations and community level leadership on issues related to climate change.

Park Policy and Planning (Benita Law-Diao)

The committee received a Planning Division from Deputy Director Megan Phillips, a presentation from the Office of Renewable Energy and Siting (ORES) from Sarah Crowell that included an overview of the ORES regulations for renewable energy siting and transmission.

10. Interim Reports

The Administration, Economic Affairs, Enforcement, Legal Affairs, Local Government Services, Park Ecology, Regulatory Programs, and State Lands committees did not meet this month.

G. Delaney thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to share the Resolutions approved by Essex County Board of Supervisors, Town of Indian Lake, and the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages.

11. Member Comment

Z. Smith thanked G. Delaney for sharing the resolutions, and thanked Essex County Board of Supervisors, Town of Indian Lake, and the Adirondack Associations of Towns and Villages for their support.

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 April 10-11, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at approximately 11:46 AM.

John Ernst

John Ernst, Chairperson