



**September MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 11, 2025**

Agency Members, Designees, and Executive Staff Present:

Matt Tebo	Department of State, Presiding Member
Mark Hall	Member
Benita Law-Diao	Member
Art Lussi	Member
José Almanzar	Member (remote)
Steve Hunt	Empire State Development
Ken Lynch	Member
Rush Holt	Member
Zoë Smith	Member
Dan Wilt	Member
Joe Zalewski	Department of Environmental Conservation
Barbara Rice	Executive Director
Damion Stodola	Counsel

Absent and Excused

None

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 9:32 A.M. by Matt Tebo, Presiding Member.

2. WELCOMING REMARKS

Presiding Member Tebo welcomed the public, presenters, staff, and new board members, made welcoming remarks, and thanked former Chair John Ernst for his service.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The presiding member recognized James Connolly, former APA Planning Director, who commented on the proposed APA headquarters project.

The presiding member recognized Mark Wilson, Saranac Lake, who commented on a subdivision project, the proposed APA headquarters project, and the Saranac Lake emergency services building project.

The presiding member recognized Ron Konowitz, Adirondack Powder Skier Association, who encouraged attendance at the upcoming annual meeting of the Adirondack Powder Skier Association.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Ken Lynch, seconded by Art Lussi, the August 14, 2025 meeting minutes were unanimously approved (with Steve Hunt abstaining) with one correction to add Joe Zalewski to the list of members present.

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:

- Acknowledging the 24th anniversary of 9/11, honoring and remembering those directly impacted by those events. New York State continues to offer assistance to those who were at the World Trade Center, in parts of Brooklyn or who took part in the rescue, recovery and cleanup efforts there, at the Pentagon or in Shanksville.
- Thanking Jerry Delaney and the Local Government Review Board (LGRB) for organizing a productive discussion at a recent LGRB meeting which included representatives from DANC and LGLCRPC regarding the challenges of providing cellular and emergency services in the Park.
- Welcoming new staff member and Excelsior Fellow Amara Mitchell, who will be assessing the Agency's existing statutes, regulations and policies to determine how they may be modernized to address the challenges and opportunities facing the Adirondack region today.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO COMMITTEES

On motion of Zoë Smith, seconded by Mark Hall, the Agency Board voted unanimously to adjourn to committees at approximately 9:55 A.M.

9. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

9.1 State Land Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 9:56 A.M.

Committee Members Present: Ken Lynch (Committee Chair), Benita Law-Diao, Zoë Smith, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present: José Almanzar, Mark Hall, Rush Holt, Art Lussi, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt, Steve Hunt

Local Government Review Board: Gerald Delaney

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

(1) Planning Division Report

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

- Welcoming Amara Mitchell, the APA's Excelsior Fellow who started this week.
- State Land staff have received 29 consultations to date for projects that the DEC or ORDA are looking to undertake on State Lands.
- State Land staff continue to work with DEC on trail stewardship guidelines and parameters.
- Staff will be participating in the Adirondack Park and Catskill Parks Forest Preserve Summit.
- The GIS team is in the process of rebuilding the Agency's internal spatial analysis and decision support tool in a new ESRI software for use on a new GIS server.
- Local Government Services have responded to 103 variance referrals so far this year. They are also preparing to conduct a training for Essex County planning and zoning members alongside Department of State staff.

- Round eight of the DEC's smart growth grant program is still open for another three weeks with a goal of supporting projects that build on comprehensive planning and economic development activities with a priority on affordable housing.
- Local Government Service and State Land teams will be participating on a steering committee lead by Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board to inform Hamilton County's efforts to connect outdoor recreational assets to main streets to foster economic development in rural communities in a program funded by the US EPA.

(2) Proposed Final Adirondack State Land Master Plan Amendments

Agency staff summarized changes from the draft to the proposed final 2024-2025 Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan amendments package and shared a staff recommendation and resolution for board action.

On motion of Joe Zalewski, seconded by Zoë Smith, the State Land Committee unanimously recommended the adoption of the resolution as presented to the full board.

(3) DEC Adirondack Rail Trail

Rob Daley (Department of Environmental Conservation) provided an informational presentation regarding the background of the Adirondack Rail Trail, and an update on Phase 3 of the project and plans for future improvements.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 11:32 A.M.

9.2 Park Policy and Planning

The committee meeting convened at approximately 11:32 A. M.

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

Other Members and Designees Present: José Almanzar, Rush Holt, Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Zoë Smith, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

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

- (1) Julia Goren, Executive Director, Adirondack Rail Trail Association provided an overview of the Association's mission and how they work collaboratively under a volunteer stewardship agreement with the DEC to maintain the rail trail as well as observations and data from the first year of the trail's use.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 12:03 PM.

9.3 Public Awareness and Communications

The committee convened at approximately 12:14 PM

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

Other Members and Designees Present: José Almanzar, Rush Holt, Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Zoë Smith, Matt Tebo (DOS), Joe Zalewski (DEC)

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

- (1) Keith McKeever and Ben Brosseau, APA, provided an informational presentation of conceptual proposals for relocating the Agency headquarters to the Village of Saranac Lake.

Committee adjourned at approximately 12:48 PM.

9.4 Regulatory Programs

The committee convened at approximately 12:49 PM.

Committee Members Present: Dan Wilt (Committee Chair), Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Matt Tebo (DOS)

Other Members and Designees Present: José Almanzar, Mark Hall, Rush Holt, Steve Hunt (ESD), Benita Law-Diao, Ken Lynch, Zoë Smith, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Agency Staff Present: Barbara Rice, Damion Stodola, John Burth, Devan Korn

(1) Regulatory Programs Report – John Burth, APA, presented the Regulatory Programs Report, highlighting:

- As of the end of August, 2025, the Regulatory Programs Division has received 252 permit applications, down from 310 received this time last year. They have also received 99 pre-applications which is slightly elevated from the 95 received by this time last year.
- They have issued 205 permits, up from 190 issued at this time in 2024. 51 major projects have been completed compared to 56 at this time last year, and 6 emergency authorizations have been granted down from 14 last year.
- The process for submitting and reviewing subdivision projects was presented and two projects currently in that process were highlighted.
- A lookback on the solar permits used by the agency between 2020 and 2024 ranging in size from 5MW to 20MW.

(2) P2025-0015 – Catalyze Solar, Town of Ausable – Clinton County

Devan Korn, APA, provided an overview of the proposed project for a 5.0 MW solar generation facility in the Town of Ausable.

On motion of Dan Wilt, seconded by Matt Tebo, the Regulatory Committee recommended the approval of the application as presented with recommended conditions to the full board in a vote of three to one.

Committee adjourned at approximately 1:52 PM.

The Board returned to Full Agency at approximately 1:52 PM.

10.COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.1. State Lands Committee (Ken Lynch)

The committee received a Planning Division Report from Megan Phillips and a summary of changes to the final draft of the 2024-2025 Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and proposed resolution. On motion of Ken Lynch and seconded by Art Lussi the board voted to approve the resolution by a vote of 9 in favor and one abstention.

The committee also heard an informational presentation from the Department of Environmental Conservation which provided the background on, and update to Phase 3 of and plans for future improvements to the Adirondack Rail Trail.

10.2. Park Policy and Planning (Benita Law-Diao)

The committee received an informational presentation from Julia Goren, Executive Director of the Adirondack Rail Trail Association.

10.3 Public Awareness and Communication (Mark Hall)

The committee received a communications report and informational presentation regarding the status of the Adirondack Park Agency headquarters project, including conceptual proposals for relocation to the Village of Saranac Lake.

10.4 Regulatory Programs (Dan Wilt)

The committee reviewed a proposed project (P2025-0015) from Catalyze Solar for a 5.0 MW solar generation facility in the Town of Ausable, Clinton County. On motion of Dan Wilt, and seconded by Ken Lynch, the board voted to approve the permit with conditions by a vote of nine in favor and one opposed.

11.INTERIM REPORTS

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

G. Delaney noted that while ADA compliance was not addressed in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan amendment package, we heard reports from the DEC and ARTA about the accessibility of the Adirondack Rail Trail. Delaney added that Local Government would like to see resources put in place to get Unit Management Plans completed.

12. MEMBER COMMENT

None

13. OLD BUSINESS

None

14. NEW BUSINESS

None

15. PUBLIC COMMENT

The presiding member recognized Ron Konowitz, Adirondack Powder Skier Association, who expressed appreciation for the presentation on the Adirondack Rail Trail.

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

Presiding Member Tebo noted that the next meeting will be October 9-10, 2025.

On motion of Matt Tebo, and seconded by Art Lussi, the meeting was adjourned without objection at approximately 2:05 PM.

Mark Hall

Mark Hall, Chairperson