

November 8, 2019

Survey Results Presented at Annual Meeting



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A lively, interactive presentation by Center for Community Studies researchers Joel LaLone, Larry Danforth and Andy Draper, on the attitudes and perceptions of Tug Hill residents and landowners, was the highlight of the commission's annual meeting on November 7. Approximately 60 people attended the gathering at Tug Hill Vineyards.

The "Family Feud" style delivery of survey results highlighted several major takeaways:

- Quality of Life in the Tug Hill Region – Continued satisfaction with the outdoor/environment/rural setting
- Local Economy – Improving employment opportunities
- Internet Access – Increased dissatisfaction
- Energy Development – Decreased support
- Recreational Development – Motorized supported less than non-motorized
- Economic Development – Desired tourism and recreation development
- Government – Desire for less regulation

The full survey results are available on the commission's website at: <https://www.tughill.org/about/survey-2019/>.

Commission executive director Katie Malinowski highlighted regional accomplishments of the past year, including:

- Record combined attendance at workshops and training, which will top 1,500 by year's end
- Growth in the number of communities belonging to a council of government, with the villages of Castorland and Copenhagen joining the River Area Council of Governments in 2019
- Numerous completed and in-progress comprehensive plans and zoning laws
- Progress on minimum maintenance roads legislation

The Tug Hill Commission 2020-24 Strategic Plan was also released at the meeting, and is available at <https://www.tughill.org/strategic-plan/>.

Commonly Confused Planning and Zoning Topics

Thursday, November 21

The Jefferson County Department of Planning and the NYS Tug Hill Commission are co-sponsoring a land use training session on at Jefferson Community College, 1220 Coffeen Street, Watertown, NY, Room 6-002 Jules Conference Center.

This session will include discussion of the following planning and zoning issues: governmental immunity process; area variances for subdivisions and site plans; how to measure road setbacks; town law 280-a; regulating business operations through zoning; permits attached to the land vs a person; exempting subdivisions from public hearings; mobile home definitions; understanding nonconformities; what is a change in use; underutilization of interpretations; and spot zoning. These issues will be discussed as time allows.

You are strongly encouraged to RSVP by Wednesday, November 20th. Please register online. You may also call Jefferson County Planning Department at (315)785-3144 or email: planning@co.jefferson.ny.us.

AGENDA

5:30-6:30 pm Farewell Reception for Phil Street. After a long career assisting local municipalities Phil will be retiring in January. Please come early to congratulate Phil and join us for some coffee, apple cider and donuts from Burrville Cider Mill.

6:30-6:35 pm Welcome and Opening Remarks

6:35-8:30 pm Presentation by Phil Street, followed by Q&A

Phil Street is Planning Director for NYS Tug Hill Commission. He has been with the commission for over 35 years and Planning Director for over 20. Phil has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from SUNY Cortland and a Masters of Regional Planning from Pennsylvania State University. He works with many of the Tug Hill region's towns and villages on land use laws and comprehensive plans.

If approved by your municipality, this workshop can provide two (2) hours of training to meet the NYS Municipality Training Requirement.

Note to Planning Board and ZBA Chairpersons and Clerks – Please share this event with other Board members and officials in your community.

For a map of the college, driving directions, or parking requirements: <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/about-jcc/campus-map>



Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Workshop Well Attended

Over 70 people filled the room at the Tailwater Lodge on October 29th to learn about water and wastewater infrastructure and related topics on funding, source water protection, apprenticeship, working with consultants and setting water and sewer rates. All of the presentations are available on our website at <https://www.tughill.org/2019/08/28/fundamentals-of-water-and-wastewater-facilities/>. The commission wishes to thank Eric Johnson of USDA Rural Development, Terry Deuel of Environmental Facilities Corporation, Carrie Tuttle from the Development Authority of the North Country, Ashley Inserillo from the NYS Department of Health, Kristin Martinez from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Kevin Maine from NY Rural Water for traveling to be with us and for their outstanding presentation of materials in their areas of expertise.



Office of the State Comptroller Fall Conference

Staff member Felicia Passino recently attend the 2019 Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) Fall Conference. The two day conference included many sessions relevant to keeping the administrative side of the Tug Hill Commission operating smoothly, with presentations available for viewing at <https://osc.state.ny.us/agencies/outreach/fallconfer2019/courses.htm>. Interestingly, the keynote address was given by Jay Rifenburg titled ***No Excuse! An Ethical Approach Toward Public Service***, who has previously presented at the Tug Hill Local Government Conference.

The commission looks for opportunities for all staff to receive training on a yearly basis. This helps staff keep skills and knowledge up to date, and helps identify quality topics and speakers to bring to Tug Hill.

Greens Corners Solar Open Houses November 19 and 20

Boralex, the developer of the Greens Corners Solar project, a 120 MW solar farm in the towns of Watertown and Hounsfield, is holding two open houses later this month. The project will include solar arrays and other project features such as the site roads and the electrical interconnection to and the electrical interconnection to National Grid 115kV circuit.

Currently in early-stage development, the facility is expected to be commissioned in Q4 2023. Boralex is progressing through the appropriate study processes as required with NYISO and National Grid. Boralex also has submitted an Article 10 Public Involvement Program Plan to the Public Service Commission and will continue to progress with the permitting process as outlined in the Article 10 law and its related regulations. More information at <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterCaseNo=19-F-0512&submit=Search>.

Tuesday, November 19, Watertown Fire Department
22825 County Route 67, Watertown, NY 13601
11 am–1 pm | 5 pm–7 pm

Wednesday, November 20, American Legion
209 Ambrose Street, Sackets Harbor, NY 13685
11 am–1 pm | 5 pm–7 pm

Town of Constantia Holds Visioning Workshop

The town of Constantia with a population of about 4,900 people have been using their original comprehensive plan of 2003 to make decisions for their community. On October 17, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in Constantia Town Hall, the town’s comprehensive planning committee met to hold a visioning workshop to discuss their current community assets and what opportunities and threats they see to their community’s development. Eight people attended the workshop.

A few of the assets that they recognized were:

Their proximity to Oneida Lake for activities such as ice fishing and access to parks like David C. Webb Memorial Park at Taft Bay Park;

- The wealth of recreational opportunities that they have in their community from walking trails to the NYS fish hatchery;
- The low population density and attractiveness of the town makes it a great place to live and visit;
- Local businesses provide opportunities for the community to eat, listen to music, and socialize; and
- The open space and natural resources of the area, among other things.

The participants acknowledged their concern over truck traffic on Route 49, the need for better access to and awareness of recreational opportunities, and poor internet and cell phone coverage. Despite these and other needs that the community identified, they saw opportunities on the horizon to improve access to sewer services, inventory all the recreation available for outreach campaigns and a recreation calendar, and revise and/or amend existing laws to protect their natural resources. With these opportunities and more in mind, the group raised concerns over the future impacts of campers outside campgrounds, climate change, and renewable energy development.

In five years, the group hopes that the newspaper headlines read:

- “Constantia Community Center Celebrates Three Years,”
- “Constantia Town Board Congratulated for Adopting Zoning,”
- “Volunteer Fire Department Moves into Bigger and Better Fire Hall,” or
- “Constantia Pier and Public Boat Launch Opens for Public Use.”

These visioning exercises are a great opportunity for a community to step back from the nitty-gritty of day-to-day life to see the whole picture of their town, today and in the future.

Steuben Adopts Comprehensive Plan

The town of Steuben recently adopted a long in-the-works comprehensive plan. The planning board met monthly over the past several years analyzing community indicators and brainstorming on opportunities to improve the town. After review by the Oneida County Planning Department, the town board made final edits and, after a public hearing on October 9th, adopted the plan.

NYS Historic Marker Grants Available

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation has announced another funding round for NYS historic markers in several counties, including all four Tug Hill counties (Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego). Letters of intent are due December 16, with an application deadline of January 20, 2020. For more information and to apply online, see www.wgpfoundation.org.

The grant includes the cost of the marker, the pole and shipping. The 40-pound markers are manufactured by the foundry Sewah Studios, Marietta, Ohio, cost about \$1,100 and are shipped by UPS with 7-foot poles. Information eligible for the iconic blue and yellow markers are historic events, people, places or things from 1740 to 1920.

2019 Black River Trash Bash Cleans Up Nearly 1,000 Pounds of Trash

In the tenth year of the Black River Trash Bash, 82 event participants (many participants attended more than one event) representing six groups collected almost 1,000 pounds of trash from 11 locations along the waterways and shorelines of the Black River Watershed. The participating groups included Lyons Falls Alive, Adirondack Communities Advisory League, the Lewis County and Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committees, Jefferson Community College and the Haderondah 4H Club. Many participants included school-aged kids and college students.

Since the event started in 2009, participants have collected over 5,700 pounds of garbage (over 350 bags) in the Black River Watershed. The data collected over the last month has been compiled and sent to the American Littoral Society (ALS), who collects data from all over New York State to be included in the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup (<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>). Results from the international event will be published later in the year.

Every year, we are grateful to have our hands protected by the gloves donated by White's Lumber and the trash grabbers donated through the Black River Advisory Committee. One can imagine the materials that are handled, which this year included around 750 food wrappers and containers, over 1,000 cigarette butts, over 450 beverage containers and numerous diapers and syringes. We couldn't do this without our partners, whom we thank again!

This event was sponsored in part by the ALS and organized locally by the Lewis and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Tug Hill Commission. Thank you to the Development Authority of the North Country, City of Watertown and Lewis County Solid Waste for handling and hauling the trash. Last, but certainly not least, thanks to the beach captains of the cleanup sites for their time and dedication and for organizing their groups, coordinating the data collection and for making this event so successful.

The Black River, winding from Forestport to Dexter, is one of the North Country's most important natural resources. The Black River Trash Bash is an annual watershed-wide event to clean up along the river and document what litters its shores. The event seeks to increase public participation in solving the problem of litter and pollution and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the river. If you or your community group are interested in participating in next year's event, please contact Jennifer Harvill at jennifer@tughill.org or toll-free at (888)785-2380.

Contact Us

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To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org or call 1-888-785-2380.

For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).