



NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION | DULLES STATE OFFICE BUILDING | 317 WASHINGTON STREET | WATERTOWN NY 13601 (315) 785-2380 | www.tughill.org

April 23, 2021

Commission Holds First In-Person Meeting Since Pandemic; Next Meeting May 17 Port Leyden

In a welcome return to a "new normal," the Tug Hill Commission board met in-person at the Central Square Village Hall on April 19 following COVID-19 safety protocols, while also offering board members, staff and interested public an option to join remotely via Zoom. Although still working through the best set up to make hybrid meetings meaningful for both types of participants, the commission intends to make hybrid meetings standard fare indefinitely. Thank you to the village of Central Square for allowing use of



their facility, and it was a pleasure to see Mayor House and other attendees.

The commission's next meeting will be held at the Port Leyden Community Room at the Port Leyen Fire Hall, 3387 Douglas Street, Port Leyden. Zoom access information is <u>us02web.zoom.us/</u> j/81398521958, or dial 929-205-6099, meeting ID 81398521958.

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Community Recognition Award Nominations Due June 1

The commission looks forward to receiving nominations for its new recognition program to honor a Tug Hill community, council of government, or community group at the commission's 2021 annual dinner, scheduled for October 14, 2021 at the Tailwater Lodge in Altmar. A full program description and detailed list of criteria are available on the commission website at tug-hill-community-recognition-award/. Overall, the award is looking for local governments or groups that have gone above and beyond to implement a project that has made a real impact in their area.

Nominations will be accepted in two categories: *community group* efforts and *governmental* efforts. Projects must have been completed within the last five years. Competitive projects will incorporate many of the following elements:

- Built local capacity
- Promoted actions or projects in partnership with others
- Were well supported by the community
- Can serve as a model to be replicated in other areas

A selection committee made up of the chairs of the region's five councils of government, the commission board chair, and commission executive director will review applications and decide on award winners. Nominations are due by June 1, and should be emailed to Katie Malinowski, katie@tughill.org. Please contact the office at (315) 785-2380 with any questions.

COVID-19 FAQ Updated

Tug Hill Commission recently updated its COVID-19 FAQ, to reflect changing NYS guidance. It can be accessed at tughill.org/covid-19/.

CTHC Executive Committee Meets; Spring Meeting Cancelled

The <u>Cooperative Tug Hill Council</u> (CTHC) executive committee met on Thursday April 15 via Zoom. Following reading and approval of the minutes and financial reports, the committee heard an update on the latest news from the CTHC municipalities and regional projects. Matt Johnson, the commission's planning director spoke about the new Community Recognition Award that they hope to award for the first time this fall, and he encouraged committee members to nominate deserving municipalities or community groups. The committee also discussed the 2021 spring meeting, and due to continuing safety concerns and difficulty in finding a large location to allow adequate social distancing, they decided to cancel the event. Municipal representatives will be contacted in the next few weeks to conduct the business normally completed at the spring meeting, including election of officers for the year and approval of 2021 goals. Several other administrative matters were also discussed as well as several questions about solar energy projects before the meeting was adjourned.



NOCCOG Executive Board Meets April 22 on Zoom

The Northern Oneida County Council Of Governments (NOCCOG) executive board met on Thursday April 22 on Zoom with all five board members: Chair John Doiron (Ava), Vice Chair Bob Sauer (Camden), Fiscal Officer Betsy Mack (Trenton), Director Mark Trnchik (Annsville) and Director Ed Davis (Lee). Also present were THC Executive Director Katie Malinowski, Director of Regional Projects Jean Waterbury, and Associate Contractors Lisa Bellinger and Joe Rowlands. The board discussed the hiring of full-time circuit rider John Healt, updating the NOCCOG website, the status of NOCCOG IMA renewal by member communities, vote by NOCCOG members for new board member Ed Davis, reviewed bylaws and IMA proposed changes, tabled discussion of holding an annual meeting/dinner this fall in person, and discussed GPS work to be done in NOCCOG communities this summer. Katie gave an update on the Oneida County broadband project that NOCCOG contributed \$1,000 to in February and talked about the Community Recognition Program the commission is looking for nominations for by June 1. Jean talked about her retirement date of July 22, explained to the board that commission staff is now work-



ing 50% back in the office and 50% working from home, and reviewed the list of training webinars commission staff is working on for May and June. The next meeting of NOCCOG executive board will be June 17 at 2:00 on 700m.

RACOG Board Clean Energy Community Presentation

At the April 20 River Area Council of Governments board meeting, Jennifer Perry from ANCA presented information on the Clean Energy Community grants program. Based on feedback from RACOG members after the presentation, ANCA, working with Lewis County and the Tug Hill Commission, will organize a series of workshops to help interested communities go through the process. The first workshop will review where communities currently stand with eligible projects they may have already completed.



The RACOG board was also updated on a potential Black River community action group. **RIVER AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**More information to come for interested participants.

EO 202.101 Extends Remote Public Meetings Until May 19, 2021

According to the <u>Committee on Open Government</u>, Executive Order 202.102 extends suspension of in-person meeting requirement of open meetings law until May 19. The entire executive order is available at <u>www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-202102-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency.</u>

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COMMISSION HOSTING FREE WEBINARS

Five Steps to Jump Start Your Cybersecurity Program

Tuesday April 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time



The risks are real, so why is it so challenging for small to medium-sized organizations to get a cybersecurity program off the ground? In this session, Steven Gravel, Cybersecurity Support Liaison at the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, will explore a few of the cyber risks faced by the local government, healthcare and education sectors. He'll also tackle some of the roadblocks organizations can encounter when trying to make headway in mitigating these risks, and how to get around them. While cybersecurity can be complex and technical, this webinar will stay (mostly) out of the weeds, instead focusing on strategy and guiding principles.

To register: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN 1A2PXJB4R3O57DBHzgTUTA

Open Government Issues in Planning and Zoning Decisions

Thursday April 29, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time

"Open Government" is widely accepted as a desirable goal, but there are complexities and intricacies in implementing its principles. This session, by attorney Mark Schachner, focuses on planning and zoning decision-making at public meetings, communications outside of public meetings, site inspections and "FOIL-ability" of various planning and zoning documents. Other topics to be discussed include quorum considerations and recusal; informal gatherings with quorum present; executive sessions; and attorney/client privileged communications and discussions. There will be time for questions and answers.



To register: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Wu1Ba5j0RYqHTYV8dEHdUA

Lewis County Historical Society Looking for Volunteer Treasurer

The Lewis County Historical Society is looking for a new volunteer board member to act as treasurer. The historical society is an almost 100-year-old volunteer organization and can be described many ways: an educational resource; a preservation society; a group of historians with collections; a visitors' center; a museum; a recorder of history; a resource of the county; a teller of stories; or even just a dedicated group of people trying to use their knowledge and interest in local history to improve our North County communities. Overall, the historical society seeks to instill a broader appreciation of the present through a deeper understanding of Lewis County's past.

The historical society is a membership-based organization that is overseen by a board of directors and officers. The board recognizes that it takes all kinds of people, with a variety of skills and interests, to make a volunteer-based non-profit organization run successfully, and they pride themselves on being a welcoming, open-minded, and non-discriminatory organization that seeks committed volunteers to help them achieve their mission.

On average, beyond attending monthly board meetings, the treasurer position takes approximately 10 hours per month, and involves overseeing banking and financial relationships, using Quickbooks to pay bills, track accounts and grants, interacting with the tax accountant, and providing monthly and annual reports to the board. If interested, please contact the organization's office manager, Cole Mullin, at 315-376-8957 or email lewiscountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



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Black River Watershed Wednesday Webinars



Black River Trail Extension, Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Connectivity and The OUTSTEPS.org Research Network: A Community Platform for Stakeholders and Universities in the Lower Great Lakes

The Watertown-Jefferson County Area Transportation Council (WJCTC) is exploring various alternatives for extending the Black River Trail to Fort Drum as well as identifying gaps in the regional network for active transportation modes. This is an interactive presentation as the WJCTC is actively seeking public input as part of the planning process. Come see how this project and OUTSTEPS.org, a regional research network of eight founding universities, a diverse group of urban and rural stakeholder and indigenous rights-holder groups, can work together to support transformative and collaborative science to address regional sustainability and community resilience challenges in the Lower Great Lakes basins, including Lake Erie and Ontario.

May 12 at 3:00 pm

Register: https://usO2web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qc4c3WSyTkaq2GyPdHnkZg

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in a Changing Climate: Changing Forests and Identification and Management of HWA

Dr. Lindsey Rustad, USDA Forest Service Center for Research on Ecosystem Change, will provide an overview of her 30 plus years of research in the White Mountains of New Hampshire about how climate is altering the composition of our northeastern forests from a global perspective to local impacts. Ms. Caroline Marschner, Cornell University, will discuss eastern hemlock, its role in New York ecosystems, hemlock woolly adegid identification and management, and implications of climate change on this aggressive forest pest.

May 19 at 3:00 pm

Ice and Snow Best Practices: Communication and Consensus

Ice and snow removal must balance cost, public safety and environmental considerations. Having a clear consensus on the expected level of service allows everyone a basis to communicate. Join Tim Hunt, Highway Superintendent at the Lewis County Highway Department, for this diverse and balanced approach to a shared north-country highway management and environmental issue.

May 26 at 3:00 pm

Register: https://usO2web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_G3lcL-rXQy6TzALf8GcN2A

All Webinars Are Free to Attend on Zoom

Organized by the NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Lewis, Jefferson, Hamilton and Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Weather Resilience: Tips for Improving Your Community's Ability to Respond to Severe Weather



Extreme weather events such as floods, heat waves, changing precipitation patterns and storms are increasing in frequency and severity. The ability of local communities to cope with the immediate impact and recover from the aftermath is critical to the continued well-being of the affected community. In this session, Mary Austerman, New York Sea Grant and Khristopher Dodson, Environmental Finance Center, will look at tools communities can use to be better adapted to these conditions, funding programs to support related planning processes and project implementation, and hear about other community experiences that can be replicated in the Black River Watershed and beyond.

June 2 at 3:00 pm

Register: https://usO2web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2GmeMDqmQ4mA1-Ox9LQFeQ

Soil and Water Conservation District Municipal Assistance Programming – Presentation and Panel Discussion

Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will discuss County SWCD municipal assistance programs including stormwater pollution prevention, green infrastructure, North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAAC), stream corridor and floodplain management, forestry management and more. Brian will also discuss how SWCDs and municipalities can cooperate and coordinate programs through Intermunicipal Agreements (IMAs).

June 9 at 3:00 pm

Register: https://usO2web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N1FwehH-REq-meTS21U2uw

Hamilton and Herkimer County Conservation Initiatives in the Black River Watershed

June 16 at 3:00 pm

Register: Coming Soon!

Coming Soon!

June 30 at 3:00 pm

Register: Coming Soon!



Tug Hill Commission Broadband Workshop Series

Preparing for Broadband Infrastructure Investment in Rural Communities

A webinar series on the process of getting broadband internet service providers in unserved or underserved rural NYS communities.

BROADBAND: STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Scott Rasmussen, Innovation & Broadband Empire State Development, presenting a high-level view of broadband across the state.

Wednesday, May 12 1:00 PM*

HOW BROADBAND CAN BE DELIVERED: THE SOUTHERN TIER NETWORK Andy Lukasiewicz and Joe Starks, ECC Technologies, sharing case studies on the Southern Tier Network and the nine-county collaborative.

......Wednesday, May 19 1:00 PM

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS AND THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION

David Wolf, Development Authority of the North Country, discussing technological options and solutions in broadband expansion efforts.

Wednesday, June 16 1:00 PM

*Time is tentative and subject to change.

Join the Tug Hill Commission and partners for a three-part webinar series to talk about broadband in our rural communities.

MAY 12 • 1:00 PM TO 2:30 PM*

MAY 19 • 1:00 PM TO 2:30 PM

JUNE 16 • 1:00 PM TO 2:30 PM

REGISTER BY CLICKING ON WORKSHOP TITLES
ABOVE OR HERE

19TH CE. ABOLITION & UNDERGROUND RAILROAD WEBINAR SERIES





Underground Railroad in Oneida Tounty

The panel will present a brief overview of the underground railroad, including common misconceptions about the route and the experience of formerly enslaved people who searched for freedom. Each panelist will highlight a "station" of the underground railroad in Oneida County. There will be an opportunity at the end of the presentation for audience questions.

PRESENTED BY: Judith Wellman Jan DeAmicis Mary Hayes Gordon Deirdre Sinnott

Historical New York Research Associates Oneida County Research Team

DATE & TIME: **TBD**

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: TBD



The Rise & Fall of the Florence Settlement

The panel will begin with an introductory presentation on the Florence Settlement, a settlement for free formerly enslaved people in the town of Florence. Research from archeological digs, archival searches, and more will be presented along with video clips of the site as it is today.

PRESENTED BY: Jessica Harney

Camden Central School District

Matthew Kirk

Principal Investigator/VP Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc.

Charles E. Vandrei

Agency Historic Preservation Officer, Archaeologist, Division of Lands and Forests, NYS DEC

DATE & TIME: Thursday, May 20, 2021 7:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5olb1_c2RbuG7Zvql2cwkQ

CAUTION!

COLORED PEOPLE

OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
advised, to avoid conversing with the

Watchmen and Police Officers of Boston,

For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR &

KIDNAPPERS

And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAYES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Shu them in every possible manner, as so many MOUNDS.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open. APRIL 24, 1851. The Underground Railroad: Routes Through North Tountry

The North Country Underground Historical Association has a wealth of knowledge about routes taken through the North Country to freedom in the 19th and 20th centuries. Jackie will discuss these, the reality and laws that consequently created them, and the people who both made it and used it to find freedom.



PRESENTED BY: Jacqueline Madison

President

North Country Underground Historical Association

DATE & TIME: Thursday, June 10, 2021 7:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4G3FP-cySPKFV2ebQpvUpg

Town and Village of Lowville Comprehensive Planning Committee Continues Issue Discussions

The town and village of Lowville Comprehensive Planning Committee has completed three of its five issue discussions. The committee members, Lewis County, the commission and other leaders in the community have participated in these issue discussions via Zoom. The following issue discussions have been completed and recordings are available on the commission's YouTube channel.

Economic development, housing and historic resources, and natural resources and recreation have been discussed. The next two issue discussions will be held the first Wednesday of May and June at 6:30 p.m. as outlined below. All meetings can be accessed by joining with this link or calling 929-205-6099 and using meeting ID 814 1964 9286.

- May 5, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., agriculture, transportation, and mobility
- June 2, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., infrastructure, public utilities, and community facilities

If you work, live, or recreate in Lowville and would like to participate but are not available for these meetings, please send comments to Alaina at alaina@tughill.org or 315-785-2387. There will also be opportunities to hear the full review of all goals and strategies identified in these five issue discussions as well as land use and development policies that will be included in the final 2021 comprehensive plan.

- July 7, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., review of all goals and strategies, discussion on land use and development policies;
- August 4, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., review land use and development policies; and
- September 1, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., review proposed 2021 comprehensive plan.

You can review documents related to this comprehensive plan update process on the comprehensive plan website: <u>Comprehensive Plan</u> <u>2021 – Town of Lowville (racog.org)</u>. We look forward to hearing how you would like to see Lowville grow into the future.

Black River Trail Extension Stakeholder Meeting May 18

The Watertown-Jefferson County Transportation Council (WJCTC) will hold a public, online meeting to give residents and stakeholders a chance to discuss options for extending the Black River Trail east toward the village of Black River, Fort Drum and Carthage, as well as other bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the area.

The WJCTC, the area's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, initiated the planning study this winter with the aim of identifying a preferred alternative for extending the trail that would be eligible to receive federal funding. The official paved portion of the trail currently runs along the river's southside from the city of Watertown to a trailhead at the outskirts of the village of Black River near Route 3. To date, the project team has reached out to key stakeholders in the region as well as property owners along possible trail extension routes through the village connecting to Fort Drum. The study is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2021 and will include recommendations for other bicycle and pedestrian projects to pursue in Watertown and Jefferson County.

The consulting team for the project includes Barton & Loguidice who will provide engineering and technical expertise as well as Highland Planning, who will direct the public engagement process. Due to NYS on PAUSE requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held online. The project team aims to hold a second meeting in-person and outdoors with social distancing at some point in the summer or early fall.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 18 at 6:00 p.m. Attendees can register for the meeting by visiting TinyURL.com/vteCu6F4. Those who would like to attend but require assistance are encouraged to contact Christopher Dunne by emailing christopher@highland-planning.com or calling (585) 752-5806. Additional information on the study is available on the WJCTC website at www.wjctc.org.

Cannabis and Zoning

New York's new Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) provides cities, towns, and villages with an option to opt out from having adult-use dispensaries and/or adult-use social consumption sites locate in their communities and will require the appropriate governing body to pass a local law in order to do so. Communities that do not opt out can still regulate the location and physical characteristics of dispensaries and consumption sites through zoning. Regulations, however, must not be so restrictive as to effectively prohibit the location of these facilities anywhere in the community. Contact the commission if you have questions on this or any other zoning matter.

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DEC Proposes Updates to Wildlife Management Areas Regulations

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released a draft proposal for public comment to update regulations governing public use of state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). DEC is proposing these amendments to protect natural resources, promote public safety, and help ensure the multiple uses of WMAs remain compatible with natural resource protection and visitor interest. The proposed changes would help bring consistency with existing rules for state forests, campgrounds, and other DEC lands, and codify rules and guidance already in place at many WMAs to make these rules enforceable. DEC is accepting public comments until May 24.

NYS has more than 120 WMAs containing ~250,000 acres, including 124,000 acres of forests and grasslands and 53,000 acres of wetlands. DEC's Bureau of Wildlife manages an additional 38,000 acres, including Unique Areas and Multiple Use Areas. On Tug Hill, there are four WMAs: Happy Valley, Little John, Three Mile Bay, and Tug Hill. There is also one Unique Area – Salmon River Falls.

DEC is proposing to update and clarify existing regulations defining allowable activities and uses of WMAs, to prioritize activities that include hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing. Among other proposed updates, the draft regulations would:

- Prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species by prohibiting their transport to WMA waters while boating;
- Only allow non-motorized boats or boats with electric motors, except when posted open or permitted by DEC. Boats would also be prohibited from being moored, stored, or anchored overnight;
- Prohibit the discharge of firearms other than for hunting or trapping, except when using paper targets at areas clearly posted as open to target shooting and with suitable backstops. Proposed regulations also prohibit breakable targets, such as clay pigeons, and paintballs and paintball guns;

Contact Us

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Visit us at:

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TugHillCommission

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.

- Clarify and make enforceable restrictions on motor vehicles and motorized equipment prohibited in WMAs. Snowmobiles would be allowed on designated routes covered by a minimum of three inches of snow or ice and only between the close of the regular big game hunting season until March 31. The regulations also prohibit motorized vehicles or bicycles on posted roads and motorized vehicles of any kind off-road, unless with DEC authorization;
- Prohibit the construction, use, or abandonment of any structure on a WMA except with a DEC permit. This excludes legally placed traps, tree stands, and hunting blinds during big game, migratory gamebird, or turkey seasons with specified hunter identification, and wildlife viewing blinds placed for 10 days maximum in one location per calendar year with specified hunter identification. Construction of stands or blinds cannot be nailed to, screwed in, or otherwise injure trees;
- Prohibit gatherings of more than 20 people without a permit;
- Require owners or trainers to keep dogs on leash and under immedi-ate control except: when dogs are being legally used for hunting or train-ing for hunting on lands designated as dog-training areas during designat-ed training seasons set by regulation; when participating in a licensed field trial and authorized by a DEC permit; or as otherwise permitted in writing by DEC.

The regulatory proposal is available on the <u>DEC website</u> for review and public comment until May 24, 2021.