

September 23, 2022

Remote Meetings Ended; FOIL and OML Webinars October 4

The authority to hold remote meetings due to COVID expired on September 12, 2022, when Executive Order 11 was not extended. However, Open Meetings Law (OML) Section 103-a authorizes public bodies to adopt laws allowing a board member to participate and vote in a meeting via videoconference in a non-public location under “extraordinary circumstances,” provided that a quorum of the public body is present in the public location(s), and that written procedures be available on the municipal website.

The [Committee on Open Government](https://www.opengovernment.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/05/chapter-56-of-the-laws-of-2022-guidance-document-05-20-22.pdf) has more details available including questions and answers, a model resolution, and model procedures: [opengovernment.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/05/chapter-56-of-the-laws-of-2022-guidance-document-05-20-22.pdf](https://www.opengovernment.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/05/chapter-56-of-the-laws-of-2022-guidance-document-05-20-22.pdf).

The Committee on Open Government is holding webinars on both the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) and OML on October 4. See their website for registration information.

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Commission Meeting Rescheduled to October 20

The Tug Hill Commission has rescheduled its cancelled September 19 board meeting to Thursday, October 20, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the village of Carthage Municipal Building, 120 Mechanic Street, Carthage, NY 13619.



Swancott Mills Event Well Attended

Around 70 people attended “A Century Gone By: Revisiting Swancott Mills” at the West Leyden Elementary School this past Saturday, September 17. Emceed by Tug Hill Sage Bob Sauer, the event featured Leigh Portner describing artifacts from Swancott Mills and Jim Burke recounting personal connections to the former settlement in the town of Lewis. The end of the event featured Jim and fellow band members Norm and Tillie Fey and Ronnie Burke singing several songs, including “To Hell with the Loggin’ at Swancott’s Saw Mill” and “Tug Hill Polka.”

The presentation and videos will be available soon on the commission’s website, tughill.org/services/training/.



From left to right: Henry Parry, Norm Fey, Jack Swancott



From left to right: Mark Clark, Katie Malinowski; Jim Burke, Bob Sauer, Leigh Portner, Doris Portner. Photo by Loretta Lepkowski.

A Farewell to Planner Alaina Mallette

The leaves are changing, and so is the Tug Hill Commission planning department. Alaina Mallette, a planner with the commission for the past three years, will be joining the town of Southern Pines in North Carolina as a senior planner. She is moving to be close to family and to see planning work done from the municipal perspective. September 28 will be her last day at the commission.

While at the commission Alaina has supported seven communities with comprehensive planning processes and eight communities with their zoning and other local laws. She has also played a role in several regional projects, including broadband mapping, social cohesion studies, and research projects with SUNY ESF. She has appreciated the opportunity to work with Tug Hill communities and hopes to find herself back in the region again someday.

Feel free to email Alaina directly on her personal email, amallette21@gmail.com.

CTHC Meeting Held

On Thursday September 22 the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their Annual Fall meeting at Kevin’s Tug Hill Hideaway in West Leyden. Twelve of the 22 CTHC towns and villages were present, along with several Tug Hill Commissioners and Commission staff and several other guests

Following approval of the previous meeting’s minutes and the most recent available financial report, the budget for the upcoming year was discussed. Chairman Roger Tibbetts presented the proposed budget for 2023 which showed an increase in the total budget in response to rising costs for mileage to provide meeting coverage and the costs for the bi-annual full council meetings. He also gave a budget projection which showed that dues should be able to remain at current levels for several years to come..

Following the budget approval, the speaker for the evening Dr. Scott Steiger, a professor at SUNY Oswego, spoke to the Council about a Lake Effect Lightning study that he and various partners will be conducting this winter. A presentation on the subject will be available soon at www.tughillcouncil.com for anyone interested. Commission executive director Katie Malinowski provided council members with an update on projects the commission is involved in and CTHC Chairman Roger Tibbetts spoke about the new state assessing method for renewable energy projects found at RPTL 575b.

Oneida County “Share the Road” Initiative

Oneida County recently initiated a “Share the Road” farm safety program that will post approximately 100 road signs to warn motorists of farm equipment travel in areas of high traffic and history of farm vehicle accidents.

“Share the Road” is a partnership between the county, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County (CCE), and the Oneida County Farm Bureau. The road signs were designed by the Oneida County Department of Planning, purchased by CCE and the Farm Bureau and will be installed by the Oneida County Department of Public Works. The cost to implement the initiative is approximately \$3,000.

Sign locations were chosen based on six specific criteria:

- Being on county-owned roads
- Recommendations by CCE, the Farm Bureau, the Farmland Protection Board and the Sheriff’s Office.
- Analysis of highly trafficked county roads.
- Targeted large concentrations of agriculture.
- Analysis of traffic accident data involving farm equipment over the past three years.
- Even geographic distribution between municipalities.



Approximately 70 signs will be installed beginning this month in targeted areas within Augusta, Ava, Bridgewater, Camden, Deerfield, Florence, Floyd, Kirkland, Lee, Marcy, Marshall, New Hartford, Paris, Remsen, Rome, Sangerfield, Stueben, Trenton, Verona, Vienna, Western, Westmoreland, and Whitestown. More are expected to be posted in near the future and requests for additional locations will be accepted from municipal governments. Local municipalities can fill out an online application to request signs for their roadways [here](#).

A map of the sign locations can be found [here](#).

Land Use and Renewable Energy Webinar September 28

Sustainable Tompkins is resuming their webinar series “Finger Lakes Forecast” on September 28 at noon via Zoom, register at bit.ly/SEPT28forecast. The series focuses on how climate change will affect the Finger Lakes region and what ways there are to prepare for the changes. This particular webinar will focus land use and renewable energy in the Finger Lakes region. Panelists from Cornell’s Department of Global Development, RIT’s Science and Technology Studies, and the Ag Program CCE (Cornell Cooperative Extension) - Tompkins will be giving talks and answering questions about the goals of sustainability. Solar farms and wind farms will be two of the examples of sustainable alternatives to generate electricity. New York State has set an aim to have 100% carbon-free electricity by the year 2040 which will be woven in as a theme of the talk.

Please register for this webinar at bit.ly/SEPT28forecast

For any questions or more information, please email gay@sustainablefingerlakes.org



NYS Pawpaw Conference, October 1, Pulaski

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County (CCE Oswego County) and Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest NY (CCE Harvest NY) is hosting a state-wide conference on a native fruit called pawpaw, at the Kallet Theater in Pulaski on Saturday, October 1, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Pawpaw is the largest edible fruit native to North America. It looks tropical and has a flavor most commonly associated with mango and banana. Its natural habitat extends from Michigan and New York to as far south as northern Florida, and as far west as Oklahoma and Kansas. While the fruit looks and tastes tropical, it can withstand cold temperatures down to USDA hardiness zone 5 and can be grown alongside other fruits in upstate New York. There are historical records dating back to the nineteenth century showing that pawpaw was discovered in southern Oswego County near the Three Rivers area. Today, however, most of the wild pawpaws are in the western portion of the state. While pawpaws were grown by Indigenous Peoples in the past, sadly they became North America's forgotten fruit.

Recently, new cultivars have allowed for a niche industry to form and there is a lot of interest in seeing this native fruit return. Beyond eating the fresh fruit, there are value-added products that can be made from pawpaw pulp, including pawpaw ice cream, jams, and even alcoholic beverages. However, one of the key challenges of creating a niche industry in New York is the lack of education and awareness. The goal of the conference is to help bring the North American pawpaw out of the shadows.

The cost to attend this all-day event is \$40 per person. Registration (link below) is required, and seating is limited. Attendees will be able to taste some value-added products including pawpaw jam and pawpaw ice cream. Registration fees do not include lunch, or the after-hour pawpaw alcoholic samplings led by Kallet Theater. Registrants will receive a follow up email with the conference agenda and a list of nearby restaurants.

For more information about the New York State Pawpaw Conference, please contact Joshua Vrooman, Agriculture Educator for CCE Oswego County at jwv33@cornell.edu or 315-963-7286 ext. 200 or Anya Osatuke, Small Fruits Specialist for CCE Harvest NY at aco56@cornell.edu or 607-752-2793.

[Click here for complete information](#) including an agenda for the day's events.

Community Resilience Stakeholders Hybrid Seminar October 4

The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District is sponsoring a Community Resilience Stakeholders Seminar, Tuesday, October 4, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. You can attend the event in person at the Ilion First Presbyterian Church, 90 Morgan St., Ilion, or virtually. Discussion topics include Mohawk Valley programs, climate issues, resiliency issues, available grants and funding programs, DEC Climate Smart Communities, NYSEDA Clean Energy Communities, MVEDD Programs and OCCA Programs.

This will be a great opportunity for community members, groups, local governments, and businesses to connect regarding opportunities in the Mohawk Valley Region!

Register for the in person event [here](#), or the virtual event via Zoom [here](#). For more information contact Amanda Kaier (315)866-4671 or akaier@mvedd.org with any questions.

Municipal Infrastructure Webinar October 26

The Syracuse University [Environmental Finance Center](#) is hosting a free webinar, **State and Federal Funding, Financing, and Resources for Municipal Infrastructure Roundtable Discussions**, on Wednesday, October 26 at 1:00 p.m. While the event is free, [registration is required](#).

If you are interested in learning more about funding and financing municipal infrastructure in your town or village, please attend to learn about funding opportunities for safe and clean water management, renewable energy, and other community investments from state and federal agency representatives.

Presenters will include representatives from NYS Homes and Community Renewal, NYS Departments of State, Health, & Environmental Conservation, NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation and the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. The intended audience for this webinar includes engineers, fiscal advisors, water utility managers, municipal board members, elected officials and others interested in clean and safe water for New York communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Jes Eckerlin atjeschn01@syr.edu.



Regulating Private Speech: Sign Regulations & the First Amendment

According to the First Amendment, speech may be subject to different degrees of protection based upon its content, the speaker, and the context in which the speech is made. How does the First Amendment impact sign regulations in local communities? Mark will cover the nuances of the First Amendment, sign regulations, and relevant court cases.

**Join us on Zoom October 18, 2022
from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Register at tinyurl.com/tughillspeech
or call the Tug Hill Commission at
315-785-2380**



Mark Cuthbertson concentrates his practice in commercial real estate, municipal litigation and the representation of municipalities and not-for-profit cemeteries. Mr. Cuthbertson is admitted to practice in New York and Connecticut.

Mr. Cuthbertson is also active in public service. He has been a Councilman for the Town of Huntington since 1998. Prior to that, he served as Assistant Town Attorney and Special Assistant District Attorney for the Town of Huntington. He also served on the Town of Huntington Planning Board. Mark Cuthbertson earned his Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Albany School of Law of Union University. While in law school, he was Executive Editor for Symposium for the Albany Law Review. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree, magna cum laude, from Villanova University.

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has released the FY22 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the new [Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation \(SMART\) Grants Program](#), authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This is a new program that the commission is following for the first time. If you are interested in this funding opportunity, we strongly encourage you to watch a pre-recorded webinar called **Getting Ready for SMART Grants that explains more about the program.** [Watch the Recording](#) (Passcode: gc0&T@Z4).

There will be a webinar on Thursday, September 29 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. EST to learn "How to Apply for a SMART Grant" ([register here](#)). State, local, and tribal governments and agencies are eligible to apply. Please note that this program has no cost sharing or matching requirement. **Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, November 18, 2022. Late applications will not be accepted.**

With up to 30% set aside for eligible projects that primarily benefit rural communities or regional partnerships, the SMART program will fund purpose-driven innovation and focus on building data and technology capacity and expertise. The program seeks proposals from public sector entities that will carry out demonstration projects in the following domains to address key transportation priorities:

- Vehicle technology, like automation and connectivity
- Systems innovation, like delivery and logistics, traffic signals, smart grid, and data integration
- New ways to monitor and manage infrastructure, like sensors and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)

For more information, [visit the SMART program's website](#) and the [SMART Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

Eight technology areas eligible for funding include: coordinated automation; connected vehicles; sensors; systems integration; delivery / logistics; innovative aviation; smart grid; and traffic signals.

SMART is divided into two stages: planning/prototyping and implementation. DOT anticipates that only recipients of Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping Grants will be eligible for Stage 2 Implementation Grants.

Albion Planning Board Training

The newly formed town of Albion Planning Board participated in a one-on-one training session with commission staff Tuesday, September 20 at the Albion Municipal Building. The board learned about the basic requirements and responsibilities of this important job. Topics such as site plan review, subdivision review, 239m review, and SEQR were introduced. If your municipality has a new planning board or zoning board of appeals and would like a similar training session, please contact commission planning director Matt Johnson – matt@tughill.org.

Contact Us

NYS Tug Hill Commission
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-2380
Toll Free within the region:
1-888-785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/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](#).