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Tug Hill Times

Tug Hill Times is published semimonthly by the Tug Hill Commission for its board members, staff and associates, and the local representatives of the region's communities.

Commissioners Visit Landfill in Ava

Prior to the Tug Hill Commission monthly meeting held in the Town of Ava on April 18, the commissioners and staff members received a guided tour of the Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Authority regional landfill off Route 294, acquiring an overview of the sites history, construction, and operations.



Bill Rabbia , Executive Director of the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority giving a presentation prior to landfill tour .

Among the operations witnessed was the network of pipes and wells located in landfill cells that collect gas. In 2012, a landfill gas-to-energy plant came online which filters and pressurizes the collected gas for conversion to electricity. OHSWA has partnered with Waste Management Renewable Energy to manage the facility, which currently produces about 12,650 megawatt hours per year. Over the next 20 years, the facility can be expanded to generate enough renewable energy to power over 8,500 homes.

The landfill has been in operation since 2006 and has an anticipated life expectancy of 76 years. Only trash from Oneida and Herkimer counties can be accepted at the landfill by law, and the host towns of Boonville and Ava as well as the village of Boonville receive annual payments and additional compensation from the Authority.



Two New Video Clips on Commission Facebook Page

Last week, the commission posted a video clip of Liv Lansing of Boonville, who was an original appointment to the Tug Hill Commission and served as a commissioner from 1973 to 1991. Liv was the owner of the Boonville Herald, had a love of North Country weather, and was fascinated with railroads. He talks about how the Tug Hill region was originally defined.

This week, the posted video features Courtney Winn, a native of Bernhard's Bay on the north shore of Oneida Lake, and a Tug Hill Sage. He worked in the lumber industry and was well-versed in the history of Tug Hill. He talks about water power and the history of glass-making in the area.

CTHC Spring Meeting Well Attended

The Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their annual spring meeting at the Tug Hill Hideaway in West Leyden on Thursday, April 21. Fifteen of the sixteen CTHC towns were present, along with several members of the Tug Hill Commission and commission staff and several other guests.



Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes and the current financial report, the election of officers for the year was conducted. The election results have current officers Roger Tibbetts returning as Chairman; Doug Dietrich as Vice Chairman; Carla Bauer as Secretary and Ian Klingbail, Steve Bernat, Rosalie White and Paulette Skinner returning as Directors.

Two more of the council's towns have completed their revised special areas maps and the maps for the towns of Harrisburg and Leyden were approved by the council and will be added to the council's regional map. The audience was given some information on the recent minimum maintenance road law court decision from West Turin and an update from the Tug Hill Commission on the steps they are taking to continue the fight for approval of the low volume roads legislation at the state level. The council passed a resolution of support of the legislation and hopefully many of the towns will follow suit. Phil Street from the commission also discussed some new zoning uses, which the town of Pinckney has pioneered the passage of, that strengthen the protection of the minimum maintenance road laws.

The council also received a preliminary report of the results of the information study they had undertaken, discussed the up-coming outreach to the non-member villages in the council's area and approved the 2016 work goals.

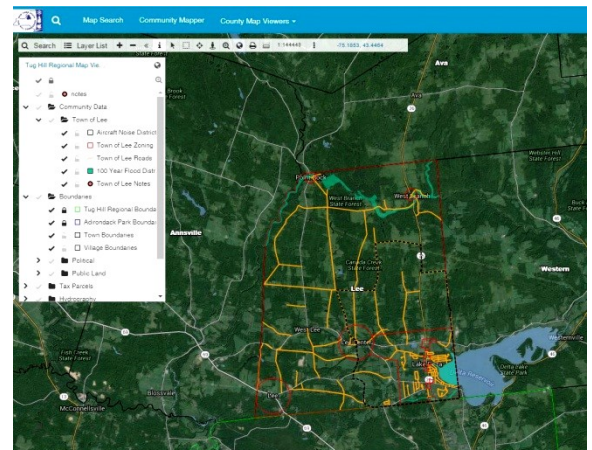
Speakers for the evening were Bob Quinn and Linda Garrett from the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust who spoke about the land trust and what they do, as well as outlined some of their projects in the area. The meeting closed with supervisor topics, which included some additional information from West Turin about their legal situation, as well as an update on the Real Property Tax Law 480-a proposed changes which have been discussed at the last couple meetings. Thanks to everyone who took the time to attend the meeting and provide their input.

Tug Hill Commission GIS and GPS Demonstration

On May 17, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the town of Lee Town Hall, the Tug Hill Commission will be putting on a demonstration of the free GIS services that they have available for local governments within the region. The commission will discuss their GIS Cloud online mapping application, their mobile data collecting app (including an update on their GPS program), and information on QGIS (free desktop GIS).

This will be a good session for any local government official or employee to attend, since there will be valuable information for everyone. This will be held in the NOCCOG area, but is open to any other local government within the region. If you plan on attending, please RSVP to Jennifer Armstrong (jarmstrong@tughill.org) or Mickey Dietrich (mickey@tughill.org). You may also call the Tug Hill Commission's main office at (315) 785-2380.

If you cannot attend this demonstration or would like to have one in your area, please contact us.



Environmental Protection Fund Establishes New Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Category to Support Community Resilience

\$11 million in Climate Smart Community Implementation grants are available for municipalities to become more resilient to the effects of climate change (i.e. extreme weather). These grants will support mitigation and adaptation projects and range from \$100,000 to \$2 million. Eligible mitigation projects include efforts to mitigate or lessen the effects of climate change by reducing community greenhouse gas emissions through waste management and transportation improvements. Eligible adaptation projects include actions that enable a community to adapt or become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including the relocation or retrofit of climate-vulnerable facilities, restoration of riparian buffers and tidal wetlands, construction of natural resiliency measures and other projects that reduce flood risk.

Competitive grants will also provide support for local governments to become certified Climate Smart Communities by funding activities such as right-sizing of fleets and climate change adaptation planning. Climate Smart Community Certification grants will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. Municipalities can apply for both grants beginning in early May through the Consolidated Funding Application (<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa>).

Funding through the EPF's new \$22 million Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation category to support New York's comprehensive climate strategies also includes:

- **Municipal Clean Vehicle Rebate Program (\$3 million)** Later this year, funding will be available to municipalities for clean vehicle projects, including rebates for purchases of clean vehicles of up to \$5000 per vehicle and for public charging or fueling infrastructure, up to \$250,000 per facility. Eligible clean vehicles will include plug-in hybrids, battery and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.
- **Climate Resilient Farms Program (\$2.5 million)** This competitive grant program, administered by the Soil and Water Conservation Committee in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Markets, helps New York's agricultural community reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon in soils, and build resiliency by preventing the damage caused by severe precipitation and drought events.
- **Smart Growth State Assistance Payments (\$2 million)** Funding will continue for this Department of State program that provides support, on a competitive basis, for counties, cities, towns or villages to establish, update or implement comprehensive plans. Smart growth saves money and makes our communities healthier and more attractive places to live, work and conduct business.

For more information on climate change and steps New York is taking to tackle climate change, visit DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/44992.html>

Consolidated Funding Application to be Announced Soon

The 2016 round of grant programs encompassed within the Consolidated Funding Application is expected to be announced within the next few weeks. Last year's grant submission deadline was July 31; a similar deadline is expected again this year.

Start thinking now about potential projects that would fit in one or more of the grant programs. For information about what funding was included last year, as well as other information about the Regional Economic Development Councils, go to <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>.

The North Country REDC (which includes Jefferson and Lewis Counties) will hold a meeting on Thursday, May 12 in Lake Placid.

The Mohawk Valley REDC (which includes Oneida County) will hold a meeting on Wednesday, May 18 at the SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Utica.

The Central NY REDC (which includes Oswego County) has not announced a meeting date, but it will likely be mid to late May.

If your community or organization has a project idea and would like to discuss with commission staff, please contact your circuit rider or the Watertown office.

Contact us at:

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NYPF Conference Attended by Commission Staff

Commission staff members Philip Street, Angie Kimball, and Jean Waterbury attended the NY Planning Federation conference held in Saratoga April 17-19. The conference was sold out with over 350 planning officials from around New York State in attendance. Both sessions and speakers were informative and interesting. Sessions covered included: Visual Impacts and Zoning for Solar Energy; Basics of ZBA Decision Making; Site Plan Review; Municipal Zoning Audits; Advanced SEQRA: Involved Agency Activists; Local Law Enforcement and Prosecution; Ethics for Professional Planners and PB/ZBAs; Zoning for Micro-Alcohol Production; Case Law Update; Oh, Give me a Home: Issues with Short-Term Rentals; Mock Planning Board and ZBA Hearing; Sign Language: Exploring the Regulation of Signs in NY; Planning for Multigenerational Communities; Rare Use Variances; and Dealing with Troubled Properties.

Some of these sessions will be held at the commissions 2017 Local Government Conference next spring. Yes, we are already planning for next year's event! Power points for these session will be available on NYPF's website at www.nypf.org.

“Comprehensive Plans and Your Bottom Line” Workshop Held

About 50 local officials attended the Land Use Planning Workshop held on Tuesday, April 19 at JCC and co-sponsored by the commission and Jefferson County Planning. Diana Smith, Director Municipal Services Division, MRB Group, and Connie Sowards, Project Manager MRB Group, presented information about the comprehensive plan. Handouts for the session can be downloaded from our website at www.tughill.org/services/training/. Scroll to the bottom of the page.

Village of Deferiet Informational Meeting Held

The Village of Deferiet Mayor, Janet Zando, held an informational meeting at the village office located at 68 Riverside Drive on March 31 at 11:00 a.m. on efforts to address contaminate and unstable building conditions threatening hydroelectric power equipment owned by the Brookfield Renewable Power LLC at the former St. Regis Paper Mill. Spearheaded by the by the Emergency & Remedial Response Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mr. Dilshad Perera, EPA on-scene coordinator, provided a brief overview of the history of the property and alerted village/county officials and Emergency Management Personnel to the dangers associated with the deteriorating building condition.

According to Mr. Perera, EPA will contract with a structural engineer to complete a buildings condition report to identify if the building is safe for work crews to enter the buildings to abate asbestos from the site. If it is determined the buildings are not safe to enter, EPA will explore alternative options to address safety issues/concerns – i.e. develop a “Building Demolition Plan.”

Based upon the request of the village officials, the Tug Hill Commission is providing technical assistance and support to advance next steps.