

Minutes, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting
Hybrid format/ Zoom and in Town Hall, December 12, 2022, 6:00 -7:30 PM

Attendance:

Present: Jean-Ann McGrane, Kay Hoiby, Tara Hoey, Linda Geary, Laura Rose, Laura Wong-Pan

Excused: Kellie George **Guest:** David Church

Opening Business:

November meeting minutes approved. Motion by Kay, second Linda, no objections. No changes to tonight's agenda.

Next meeting:

January 9, 6 -7:30 PM, hybrid format, on Zoom and in person in Town Hall.

Conversation with Dave Church

He is a consultant for the Town and is working on a draft update of the Town's laws, including working to adjust them where needed to better match what is in the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan.

His draft is to be completed by spring. Before adoption, there will be a public hearing and SEQR review.

He has been meeting with the Town's commissions and boards.

He is updating Town laws related to GOSC and is here to get our input.

He gave us a brief talk about the zoning that exists in Gardiner, including around cluster developments, and he discussed the County's plan to push towards creating affordable housing. He said they did a study that found that Gardiner has less affordable housing stock than any other town in the county. The Gardiner Town Board is considering creating a committee to begin to address this issue.

He had several items he wanted to discuss with our group, including:

- Procedures in use to screen for zoning and environmental best practices in new building applications, and subdivisions, and changes we might like to see to those procedures.

-Our recommendation that a qualified biologist/ environmentalist be regularly added to the screening process.

- Best ways to use the NRI. Should it be part of the Code? What are its limits?

- The role(s) we see for this group in directing future preservation, including the use of community preservation funds, once they accumulate. He said we will need to add a farmer to the group, if we are going to administer CPF funds. But we are not sure yet whether or not this group will be administering those funds.

- Where the roles of the ECC and GOSC overlap on paper, and our vision for which responsibilities make sense for which group.

- David asked if we, as a group, want to review site plans for and with the Planning Board, when there is a subdivision application or a large plan that includes preserving open space. Several members of the group agreed to "probably not," and that this is currently a role of the ECC. We thought they could continue, or the Town could either add or substitute a paid environmentally trained biologist or other appropriate professional to the review process.

Jean suggested that David create a mock scenario, so we could all see how an application could be processed differently than it is now, exactly, to result in better environmental outcomes in the long run.

- He asked: What are the current roles of GOSC; what are we working on? (Education, research, monitoring the Town's conserved properties, voluntary conservation, and support for initiatives like the CPP and updates to the NRI maps.)

We have more to do, including fundraising and expanding both voluntary and other conservation.

Other Business:

- Brief discussion of the 2022 action goals; no major updates.