

**MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom.
Monday January 10, 2022, 6-7:30PM.**

Present: Jean McGrane (Chair,) Kay Hoiby, Linda Geary, Laura Wong-Pan, Laura Rose, Tara Hoey. **Excused:** Kellie George.

Minutes taken by: Laura Rose

Quote (Linda:) The New Year

"I am the little New Year, ho, ho! Here I come tripping it over the snow.
Shaking my bells with a merry din - So open your doors and let me in!
Presents I bring for each and all - Big folks, little folks, short and tall;
Each one from me a treasure may win - So open your doors and let me in!
Some shall have silver and some shall have gold,
Some shall have new clothes and some shall have old;
Some shall have brass and some shall have tin - So open your doors and let me in!
Some shall have water and some shall have milk,
Some shall have satin and some shall have silk!
But each from me a present may win - So open your doors and let me in!"

- Anonymous.

Opening Business.

Approval of December 2021 minutes: Motion made by Laura R, 2nd by Kay, all approved.

Two additions to agenda; need to vote on group support for monitoring recommendation and the Gardiner Gazette needs a four-sentence update from our group by Wed for their next edition. *LR to draft and send to Jean.*

Next regular meeting planned for Monday December 13, 2021 at 6 PM.

Laura R to provide us with quotes.

Chair in Need of Assistance:

Jean will be away during our February meeting. Laura R volunteered to chair.

2022 GOSC Goals:

Goal #1: Support the Town's plan to develop a Community Preservation Plan.

The Town has received a \$10,000 Greenway grant to assist in planning, as discussed at our last meeting.

Jean discussed that there's a short timeline for getting this done (June 2022) and that she's co-chairing the committee, which is in the process of being formed.

The team is shaping up, and so far includes:

Jean and David Dukler, as co-chairs,

Kay Hoiby and Linda Geary, representing our group along with Jean;

Neil Rimlaub and Rebecca Clemments, representing the ECC,

Mark Moran for the Planning Board.

Warren Weigand is the Town Board liaison.

Reps from Parks and Rec and Climate Smart Gardiner will also be invited to join this committee.

SUNY New Paltz will be asked to provide student volunteers to aid in social media outreach.

Community representatives include: Jon Benner, a marine biologist; and Deyano Manco, a local businessman. Rob Dressel has been proposed as the representative for the local farming community.

Ted Fink will be hired as the consultant. He has helped nearby towns develop their Community Preservation Plans.

Ingrid Haeckel of the DEC will help with mapping and conservation prioritization.

Jean said that the work we've already done as a group in mapping, the NRI and conservation prioritization, will be incorporated in the Community Preservation Plan. She said a survey will be administered to the Town which will also figure into the conservation prioritization of the CPP.

Kay and Linda to report back to the group at our next meeting on the progress of the CPP.

Goal #2: Ensure monitoring of Gardiner's Preserved Land.

Laura Wong-Pan and Laura Rose evaluated the quotes for this service, requested and received from Wallkill Valley Land Trust and Kelly Morris.

The Lauras agreed to recommend that the Town work with WVLT for monitoring of the Town's conservation easements, and land owned for preservation, for 2022. They composed a draft memo to Marybeth Majestic, apprising her of their choice, which was shared with the group in advance of tonight's meeting.

Memo and the reasons for this recommendation were discussed.

All agree that Kelly Morris is also very qualified and very good at her job. The Town has worked with her and likes her too. We will recommend her for baseline documentation and other consulting work.

Motion made by Kay that the Gardiner Open Space Commission will recommend WVLT for monitoring for 2022. 2nd by Tara, all approved.

Jean broached the need for someone from the Town to work with WVLT on this. She said our recommendation should be included in the memo, or a cover letter.

She questioned whether it should be our group, the ECC, the Code Enforcement officer, or someone else from the Town acting as the liaison.

Laura R said: it's our initiative, the funding is coming from our budget, and we should be the contact for the first year. After that, this responsibility might shift.

Laura R volunteered to take the lead on this project.

Laura WP agreed to support, as needed.

Laura Rose to update the memo based on group's discussion, and report back on any progress made towards the fulfillment of this goal at our next meeting.

Jean to submit the memo to Marybeth Majestic for the group, as soon as it's finished.

GOAL #3: Encourage Voluntary Conservation.

Discussion centered on whether voluntary conservation is one goal too many for a small volunteer group, especially as three of our members are going to be very busy with the CCP over the next few months, and several members also want to work on Goal #4. We have done some outreach around voluntary conservation already, and it hasn't gotten very far.

That there was no goal included in today's agenda around education, even though that has been a past goal for our group, and we have plans to continue educational programs, was noted and discussed. It was decided we could update goal #3 to read:

Educate, and Encourage Voluntary Conservation.

This opens the goal to a more flexible interpretation, and perhaps more success.

Laura Rose and Tara are already planning to run an educational workshop for Gardiner Day, using the NRI maps and our existing scoring criteria, to engage the public in thinking about the conservation values that exist on their properties, and conservation in general.

A "dry run" workshop is planned for Jan 21, 2022, in Town Hall at 11 AM.

All members of this group are invited. We will look at our own properties, and also at areas of the Town that have high conservation values.

Jean said that someone in our group has to take the lead on creating an action plan for this goal, and for carrying it out; Laura R volunteered. Tara will support with hands on work at public education sessions. Kay has already been working on creating educational sessions, and these can now be included under this goal.

GOAL #4: Support Agricultural Land Protection.

This goal is also written more broadly than where we landed after discussing it at this meeting. Laura Wong Pan said an Ag and Markets grant which is relevant is coming up soon. She would be excited to start a project: seek grants, pick a farm and get it conserved. Kay echoed the sentiment, and mentioned that as Whitecliff was interested, and had applied in the past, they could be reached out to directly.

Laura Wong Pan said an Ag and Markets grant which is a great fit will be available very soon. Kay said she was looking at an additional grant, that even mentions grape vines in the criteria.

Jean said a subcommittee will need to be formed, and that the interested parties can and should develop a clear plan of action, in writing, for pursuing this goal, to be presented at our next meeting.

Goal #4 includes: Conserve a Gardiner farm.

The sub-committee will include: Laura Wong-Pan, Kay and Tara.

Jean said each sub-committee should present an action plan at our next meeting.

Updates:

- Jean: The Gardiner Interactive Map Project is complete.

It will be presented to the Planning Board soon, possibly at their January meeting.

She encouraged all of us to become familiar with the maps and give her any comments. Further update will be possible during the summer.

She hopes we will share the maps with others.

- And: The ECC is encouraging the Town to adopt the NRI as law, as other towns have, and has asked for a letter of support from our group. We discussed this and agreed that we would need much more information about what the value would be, what that would look like and how it would work before we could make any recommendation. Linda suggested that updating the maps as part of changing any law could be cumbersome.

- Laura Rose reported that the *Preserved in Gardiner Database* update is in process.

- Drinking Water Protection Subcommittee, organized by the ECC.

Linda is representing our group on this committee.

20 wells will be chosen for testing, based on survey responses and a look at locations, to determine which ones could give a good comprehensive overview of the Town's drinking water supply.

There are about 3,000 wells in the town.

The businesses have licenses for their wells, and are required to test bi-annually, so their data can also be used, in addition.

Meeting concluded at 7:20 PM.