

MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom.

Monday November 8, 2021, 6-7:30PM.

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

Minutes taken by: Laura Rose.

Quotes: (Laura R)

"All through autumn we hear a double voice: one says everything is ripe; the other says everything is dying."

— Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*

"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter." —Rachel Carson

"Cynicism is the recourse of cowards." - Barack Obama, *2021 Glasgow Climate Summit*

Opening Business.

Approval of September minutes: Motion made by Kellie, 2nd by Kay, all approved.

Approval of October minutes: Motion made by Kay, 2nd by Kellie, all approved.

No changes to agenda.

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

Jean to send out Zoom invite (via the Town's Zoom acct,) Kay to provide us with quotes.

Presentation of Interactive Mapping Project: (Jean.)

The Vassar student who is layering the Gardiner NRI maps in an interactive format will present this work at the next ECC meeting on November 17, 2021 at 7 PM.

Jean asked that we all attend, if possible.

The maps project will be presented to the Town Board at their December 7, 2021 meeting, The Planning Board should receive the same presentation soon thereafter.

Agricultural Land Protection Update: (Kay.)

Kay has added the information around planning given to us by Jeff Kehoe to the group's Google drive. She also made sure it's on the Town's website, on the GOSC page.

Kay is working on our educational outreach plan for the spring. She has been reaching out to Scenic Hudson without success and will try again. She is proposing having Dennis Doyle from the Ulster County Planning Department speak about Ulster County Agricultural

Districts. She suggested having a Gardiner farmer like Greg Abels of Seven Meadows Farm, also speak at this educational session. Greg recently went through getting his property in the Agricultural District.

His farm is preserved by an easement held by WVLT.

Laura R said it would be good to have him speak about this as well.

Reviewing the Town's Updated Comprehensive Plan Draft:

Jean believes the Town needs to work on engaging with Gardiner's agricultural community. Her concern is echoed in the draft Comprehensive Plan. Jean would like us to add a member to our group from that community.

She is also in favor of the Town creating an Agricultural Committee.

The Comprehensive Plan draft calls for the creation of such a committee.

We talked about what our group can do to support this, and agreed a proposal to create the group would have to come from the Town Board.

Tara asked if anyone checked to see if Jeff Kehoe's recommended language around Agricultural Planning is matched by the language on this topic in the draft Comprehensive Plan. She feels it's important because it can help the Town get funding.

No one had looked to see if there's an exact language line up.

Laura Rose said the Ag section is at the bottom of Chapter 3.

Tara will look at this more closely to see if any tweaks should be made.

Jean said suggested changes to the draft, at this point, should come from the whole group. Tara will send an email out to the group, if there are changes she sees that should be made to the draft.

We discussed the deadline for Comprehensive Plan comments; there's a Town Board meeting about the draft on November 16th and comments are expected back by that time. Tara's comments about this topic, and anything else any member thinks could be strengthened in the draft, should be reported back to this group by the 13th, so we all have time to review the ideas.

Linda said that sending a number of emails around about proposed changes might be confusing and hard to follow.

We discussed an alternate format for making comments.

Kay to add a document to the group's Google Drive so we can each add to it, and she will send a link out.

Anyone without a gmail account can access the drive through our group's email address: gardineropenspace@gmail.com. Kay gave the password to the group.

Declaring Riverbend A Park.

Tara asked that the group write a letter of support to have this property declared parkland. (Having this done has been discussed by both Climate Smart Gardiner, and the Trails and Rec Committee.)

She said this will mean it can't be used for anything else in the future, and that this kind of permanent preservation is in keeping with the mission of the Open Space Commission. She feels the Town has historically intended this use for that property, and that it's important to take this extra, protective step.

Linda said it will take an order of State Government to convert a park back to any other use. She made a motion to write the letter of support. Kay seconded.

Jean said that we should discuss it first.

Tara told the group that Climate Smart Gardiner is discussing having a 20-acre solar panel installation placed on this site. This would be operated by a private company.

We discussed whether the two goals could be harmonious. Commercial uses aren't permitted on parkland.

Jean said the Town has voted in favor of the trails project for the site and also supports the solar use. She suggested we learn more before writing a letter of support.

Linda withdrew the motion.

2022 GOSC Work Plan.

Jean would like to use our December meeting as a planning session and asked if others in the group would be in favor. All agreed.

Laura Wong Pan suggested we each write a goal idea to bring to the next meeting.

Jean asked that these be shared in advance of the meeting.

Each to write a goal (or goals) and circulate to the group by December 10th.

Requests to our group for assistance, and carrying issues.

1. Can Heartwood plant trees that block the view?

Laura Wong Pan's review of the easement says there are no prohibitions and yes, they can.

2. Katz/ Hollander Easement:

Joe's request for our assistance in developing Town support and finding money for converting this to a public park.

Joe Katz to talk to Wallkill Valley Land Trust about this idea and see if it is in keeping with the conservation easement that's already in place for the property.

We don't have funds available at this time.

3. **William Albright's** question: on hold till January meeting.

4. ECC request for support from our group in explaining to the Planning Board that it's a conflict of interest to allow an applicant to do his own conservation analysis.

We have already suggested to the Town that certified environmental professionals should be doing environmental analyses for the Town's proposed projects.

We have already objected to the use of engineers for this purpose.

We agree with the ECC that allowing an applicant to write up his own analysis is a conflict of interest and not a good choice. We believe the Planning Board needs better clarification around this point and that having more guidance may make their job easier.

While it's too late for us to have an impact on the project in question, moving forward there should be clear standards in place for all development, and enforcement should be consistent.

This is also recommended in the draft of the new Comprehensive Plan.

(Laura's note: we should look at this specific language when reviewing the Plan to be sure it's strong and helpful.)

5. Community Preservation Plan:

Jean has submitted the Greenway Grant with 6 letters of support, including one from our group. If successful, this will give the Town 10K to hire a planner to write the plan. The Town will have to match that 10K. Jean is looking ahead to developing a Community Preservation Fund and is already working with David Dukler on this. The Plan is a first step.

Jean hopes that others in our group will volunteer to help her in this effort. A Community Preservation Fund will require a committee separate from the Open Space Commission, but she wants us to be well represented in that group.

Kay and Linda volunteered.

6. 2022 Budget:

Our budget has preliminary approval and funds for monitoring are in it! We are excited to move forward with getting this work done. Laura Wong Pan, Laura Rose and Kelly to review the proposals we have received for this work.

(Laura's note -Question: Do we need a third proposal or are 2 enough?)

7. Finding Grant Money: No new sources to report.

8. Preserved in Gardiner Database Update: In process.

9. Ad Hoc Drinking Water Protection Subcommittee:

Meeting is on November 15, 7PM via Zoom. GOSC members are invited to attend.

10. Acquisition of Tax Foreclosure Properties, by the Town.

Tara to write a note to Jean to reach out to Marybeth Majestic about the list of properties that she receives. Tara would like us to begin to develop a procedure around the Town potentially acquiring foreclosure properties. New Paltz is also working on this.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.