

## MINUTES – OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

DECEMBER 13, 2021 6:00 PM

Attending: Jean-Ann McGrane, Kay Hoiby, Kellie George, Laura Rose, Linda Geary, Tara Hoey, Laura Wong-Pan.

Quotes: “Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience” by Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Live in each season as it passes; breath the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth.” by Henry David Thoreau.

1. Motion to approve the November minutes. Motion by Kay, seconded by Laura Rose. All in favor. Motion passes.
2. Next meeting: January 10, 2022. Kay to handle the quote for the meeting.
3. Jean: The NRI interactive maps are up and running. Give any comments to Jean and she will get them to Neil and Claire. It was a joint effort between Jean, Roberta Clemmens, and the Vassar Team.
4. Jean: The Town of Gardiner was awarded the Hudson Valley Greenway Grant for \$10,000 to hire a planner to work with us to write a Community Preservation Plan. The Town Board will identify a planner who has experience with this type of plan. Have to talk to Greenway to figure out whether a planner will be ‘sole sourced’ and hired for this role. Trust for Public Land works with communities to develop Community Preservation Plans and we will see if they are willing to help us with the campaign
5. Jean has asked Marybeth Majestic for the list of foreclosed properties and we should be provided with that list.
6. Hiring a consultant to conduct annual baseline monitoring was approved in the budget. The outstanding question is whether there needs to be a third quote for the work. Jean will look at the Procurement Policy to determine what is required. We have proposals from Kelly Morris and WVLT. Laura Wong Pan and Laura Rose agreed to compare them and report back.
7. Agricultural Land Protection: Kay asked for dates for potential programs for Scenic Hudson to present. The fact that there is no formal agricultural group to advise the Town of Gardiner was discussed. Laura Rose suggested reaching out to those involved in Gardiner agriculture to see if they regularly meet. Tara Hoey said that if there is an agricultural land protection program, it has to involve interested stakeholders to find out if that is something they wanted to do, though this group can help facilitate an agricultural subcommittee. Tara said the first goal was to identify if they were interested in an agricultural comprehensive plan. There is a grant with Ag & Markets that is available. If this is something that the Town is interested in, Tara can assist in writing the grant. Jean’s concern is that engaging farmers in planning is extremely important but the Town Board has not asked us to be the lead on that. Jean stated that one of our goals could be the

importance of sustaining agricultural land in our Town. It could be setting up an agricultural committee, or other steps.

8. Jean proposed that there be sessions in the spring about agricultural sustainability. Jean said that she will talk to Scenic Hudson about that. Jean proposed that we invite them to come to our January meeting. Per Tara, she and Kay can access grant opportunities through Ag & Markets, and they have been in touch with Jeffrey Kehoe about that. Ag & Markets grant can help us with transaction costs. We can explore grants for farmers' development rights, but the Town might need an agriculture comprehensive plan in order to qualify for the grants.
9. Laura W proposed that we identify the 10 largest landowners and see if they meet the criteria for a farmland protection grant and consider reaching out to them. S. Eckhardt is one of the largest landowners and has some of her land on the market, including the house and fields. Jean noted that we have to familiarize ourselves with the Ag and Markets criteria. Laura W: we should have a presentation about applying for a farmland protection grant. Kay and Tara will look into the steps involved in applying for farmland protection grant. Laura W suggested also getting a copy of the grant application submitted by New Paltz for Talafierro Farm to get a sample of what such an application looks like.
10. Work Plan for 2022: Group would like to focus on agricultural land protection. Tara: I suggest we establish process for the working group to access funding for conservation purposes. Laura Rose proposed goals of (1) making sure the Town monitors its existing conservation easement; (2) continue to support and encourage the Town in moving towards best practices; (3) educational sessions; (4) update of Preserved in Gardiner database; (5) use the NRI to consider reaching out for voluntary preservation; (6) expand voluntary preservation plans. Jean said a goal could be to come up with the strategy to change our laws to articulate the kind of professionals who would complete the conservation analysis for the Planning Board. Jean: I would like to have the Town finish the Community Preservation Plan, which is a prioritization of conservation values.
11. Goal #1 as proposed by Jean: To support in any way we can the Town's creation of a Community Preservation Plan and identify funding sources to support that Plan's priorities. Goal #2: Agricultural land preservations, starting with identifying priority agricultural parcels that have the greatest opportunity for funding. Goal #3: Identify parcel that is capable of being voluntarily preserved without funding. Goal #4: Advocate for appropriate support professionals when new developments are considered. Goal #5: Present an educational seminar on the value on conservation and open space, including agricultural preservation. Goal #6: Continue to ensure adequate monitoring of Gardiner's preserved lands.
12. Jean would like us to identify a Vice Chair to share in the responsibility.
13. Laura W noted that, in response to a concern raised by resident Ann Hartner, there is no restriction in the Heartwood Easement against planting trees that block the views.

Adjourned at 7:37 PM.