

MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom.

Monday January 11, 2021, 5:00 PM.

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

Guests: Marybeth Majestic, Town Supervisor, David Dukler, Town Board, Cara Lee, Chair, Town of New Paltz's Preservation Fund Advisory Board, John Orfitelli, member, Preservation Fund Advisory Board and Chair, Town of NP Historic Preservation Commission, and Carter Strickland, NY/NJ State Director, Trust for Public Land.
Minutes taken by: Laura Rose.

Quote (Jean)

"In every walk in nature, one can receive more than he seeks." - John Muir.

Opening Business.

Approval of December minutes: Motion made by Becca, Kay seconded, all approved.

No changes to agenda.

Next regular meeting planned for February 8, 2021, 5 - 6:30 PM.

Real Estate Transfer Tax for Open Space/ New Paltz initiative:

Our guests (see above) were here for a presentation on New Paltz's process for achieving success in getting this initiative on the ballot, and approved by their voters.

Cara Lee led the discussion. She was on the Town of New Paltz Preservation Fund Advisory Board, along with John Orfitelli. Carter Strickland was also active in getting the initiative passed. Cara shared a Powerpoint that gave detail on their process.

The presentation showed how the Town's citizens were approached with the idea, how polling was used, discussed community feedback and the method used for calculating the expected income from the tax. We also discussed the Ulster County law that supported the work and the costs associated with getting it all done.

Cara talked about using mapping and data to survey the whole of the town for preservation values, and identifying areas and parcels they would be interested in working to preserve.

Per the Ulster County law, 90% of any money raised goes to new projects; 10% to related costs. We discussed that briefly.

After the presentation and discussion, Carter, John and Cara left the meeting.

Brief discussion of the presentation followed, which included Marybeth and Dave. They then left.

Our group discussed that we would wait to find out if the Town Board is interesting in pursuing a Community Preservation Fund before taking further action. In the event they are interested, we discussed the formation of a committee that could potentially include members from Climate Smart Gardiner, the ECC, volunteers from our group and other community members.

Planned Town Updates to the responsibilities of the ECC; proposed addition of a CAC.

Jean completed documentation of our full group's suggestions and comments for the Town since our last meeting, and she submitted them.

We have received a response from Laura Walls to our group's comments on these changes.

We discussed whether we should pursue this further, and agreed that we had said what we thought, and that now this is in the Town Board's court.

We are open to any further requests for assistance.

Kay plans to listen to tomorrow's meeting of the Town Board. Her understanding is that this was supposed to be on their agenda, but there's no item on it currently that refers specifically to changes to the ECC. She thinks that maybe it will be covered under the Comprehensive Plan discussion that is on the agenda.

Kay to report back to group on whatever the Town Board says on this topic.

Moving ahead with an Open Space/ Conservation Easement and Land Acquisition Program:

Laura WP circulated an update of the draft proposal for the group to review via email a few days before this meeting. Changes had been made based on our comments at the last meeting.

There were a few additional comments made on the update but overall there has been good progress on this proposal.

Laura Rose worked on further update to the scoring criteria.

The group will need time to review these changes.

A special meeting was discussed, and scheduled for Monday January 18 at 5 PM.

Parcels we have been asked to review.

Referred by Andy Lewis: SBL 93.1-4-46 Pioneer Lane .39 acres

Referred by Supervisor Majestic: SBL 93.8 - 2-3 Forest Glen 1 acre

Laura WP has not been able to contact the owner of the Forest Glen parcel, despite leaving messages.

Our analysis found the parcel, on its own, did not have significant conservation values.

Jean suggested Laura WP draft a letter to Marybeth Majestic, letting her know that we do not recommend that the Town acquire this parcel for open space at this time, and also letting her know what the conservation values are, as reflected in the NRI maps.

If it were part of a larger gift, it would be different as it is near, but not adjacent to, other conserved properties.

Laura Rose hasn't spoken further yet with Dianna Negrotti, the owner of the Pioneer Lane parcel.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Next Meetings: January 18, 2021 at 5 and February 8, 2021 at 5 PM.