

**MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom.  
Monday March 14, 2022, 6-7:30PM.**

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

Minutes taken by: Laura Rose

**Opening Business.**

Approval of February minutes: Motion made by Laura R, 2nd by Linda G., all approved.

All agreed agenda OK and needs no addition or revision.

Next regular meeting planned for Monday April 11, 2022 at 6 PM.

Kellie to provide us with quotes.

**Status Updates on 2022 GOSC Goals**

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

Legal workgroup update - Linda G.

If a CPF is to be on the ballot for November, 3 laws need to be adopted by the Town by August 8th, including the percentage a transfer tax would be. New Paltz's tax came in at 1.5%; 2% on each dollar above the Town's median sales price is the maximum transfer tax.

Linda noted that the attorney from Rodenhauer, who has helped other towns, seems well versed, and also capable of keeping the group on track to meet necessary deadlines.

The draft plan needs to be completed by the end of May so the Town Board can then begin their review.

Jean asked about the ballot language, said that New Paltz and Phillipstown had done a poll to get the community's input (and hopefully buy-in) and to see what amount they might agree to or recommend. That our town is smaller was mentioned, and additional input options are being discussed.

A community survey is being finalized; deadline is to get notification of it into Hudson Valley One by March 25th and give the survey at the end of March. Jean to send out a draft of the survey to all GOSC members for comment. Jean reports that the CPP education group is also mobilized and participating.

Prioritization scoring group - Laura R.

The Open Space Commission's prioritization scoring is being used by the CPP group as a foundation for its structure. However, this is a data-driven score, and quite a few of our questions were based on the concept of interview. Additional data will need to be found

to create a useful score (for agriculture, especially.) Jon Benner has taken the lead in coming up with data sources for this category. Jean asked if Kay, Tara and maybe Laura Wong Pan too might help him with this piece, as it corresponds with the work they're doing in Goal #4/ Supporting the Preservation of Agricultural Lands.

The CPP group needs to agree on the major categories to be included in the prioritization, and the weight of each category. Care is being taken to reflect the 2006 Open Space Plan as well as NYS's priorities.

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

The Town approved our request to hire WVLT to provide this service for 2022!!! Funds to come from the line already in our budget for this purpose.

Laura R to take the lead in getting this project off the ground. Tara has agreed to assist. Laura WP has also agreed to support as needed.

Our group to supervise WVLT for the first year. Whether this is a right role for our group over time was discussed; it might be better for the ECC or Code Enforcement Officer to supervise this in the future.

Jean said there will need to be proper systems in place to get this off the ground and make it run smoothly. Since our last meeting, she asked Laura R to check in with New Paltz to get a feel for how their monitoring program's run. Laura called Stacey Delerede, the Building Inspector in New Paltz, who also serves as the liaison with WVLT, and then reported on this conversation to the group at this meeting.

Stacey said they've been working with WVLT for at least 7 years and that the monitoring project runs well. WVLT notifies landowners prior to walking properties. Stacey is invited to join them to walk whichever properties she wants to join on; she's always notified and she does join on the complicated ones. When there have been violations they've been minor and she's been able to work with landowners on clearing them where appropriate. She said clearing can sometimes do more harm than letting something stand. She also said baselines are very helpful and said that New Paltz had done one or two a year as their budgets allowed, because they're expensive.

### **GOAL #3: Educate, and Encourage Voluntary Conservation.**

Gardiner Day Planning: Gardiner Day will be on June 4th this year. Jean asked where the planning for this event is. There's a basic goal to work with NRI maps and have participants answer some questions using the maps, but no more at this point in time. Jean wanted to know what the goal of our participation is, and said we should start

working on getting this better organized. She suggested we also have fliers prepared. Tara said there's a deadline for requesting a booth or location, and that an application needs to be submitted to the Gardiner Day planning committee.

Kay said she is working to combine the education goal with supporting agricultural land preservation, and has been working to set up a webinar.

**GOAL #4: Support the Preservation of Agricultural Lands.**

Laura WP said the group received a list of active farms from the Town and is considering the best time and manner to notify farms of Ag & Markets grants which can assist the Town in acquiring agriculture conservation easements.

About the Ag and Markets grant we've been discussing, it is too late to get any applications in before April 1st which puts us at a disadvantage for the funding that is currently available.

David Behm of Ag and Markets (who Tara has been talking to about doing a webinar,) informed Tara by email that there will be a *Possible* 7 million in funding left over after the April 1st deadline, and the request for applications remaining open, but that it *Could* be re-appropriated or be opened to being distributed to other regions. Not having this information yet, he didn't want to commit to doing a webinar with local farmers. He said it may get their hopes up for no good reason.

Jean asked: when did the cycle open? When will the next one open and close? Tara said that the previous deadline may have been extended due to Covid and we don't know when the next round will open. Jean suggested going back to David for more guidance, and clear information on dates and deadlines.

Linda G said: it's always an "if" with grants, so why can't he teach about it anyway?

Laura WP said a webinar could still be of use, even if not for the current grant, that may close soon, because considering a conservation easement takes time. It could start the thought process, whether or not it's sealing a deal at this particular moment.

Jean suggested we call Jeff Kehoe instead. Tara noted that Jeff Kehoe had been cc'd on the email from David Behm.

Jean asked to see more info on the Ag and Markets grant criteria; Tara to send this out to the group.

Trying to contact Scenic Hudson yet again to set up a webinar was discussed; they've been surprisingly unresponsive to our outreach. Kay will attempt this again; Jean offered to back her up and call Seth McKee.

### **Status updates on other Gardiner activities GOSC members are involved in.**

**-Drinking water Protection Committee:** Linda said the committee hasn't met since our last meeting and her last update, but water reports are being compiled. One farmer expressed concern: if there's pesticide residue found in any water, would local farms then be held liable? Wanted to know what this study will get us other than lawsuits.

Linda said the objective is simply to know and have a baseline on the quality of the local water. If you don't know, you can't treat for issues. Ex. if nitrates are found in the water, these can sometimes be traced to failed septs, and so this knowledge would spark the initiation of a repair.

At the same time, Linda said, it's only 25 wells being tested so it won't give specific knowledge for a whole town, just give us a baseline about quality.

### **- Multi-Agency Transfer Station/Fall Park Development Conversation:**

Tara's report: The Hostetler properties, on Steve's Lane, (SBL# 93.4-2-1.110/ 86.66 acres and SBL # 93.4-2-1.200/ 19.6 acres) are being sold to Fall Park, a developer, who wants to put 100 units of housing on the property.

She said the plans have trails, and she wants to be sure they link the Rail Trail to the adjoining Riverbend Trails, (on the Transfer Station's property,) and ensure public access. She is wondering if a conservation easement is planned for the development, and if the trail should be part of that.

There is an opportunity for a multiple stake-holder planning process. The Ulster County Planning Board has invited Marybeth Majestic in for a review of the site plan. They will give advice on traffic flow, signage and other issues. Jean said our group should participate in the meeting, if possible. She will reach out to Marybeth to see if we can.

Concern about the already-to-capacity sewage system in Gardiner was expressed, and there's a question about whether the developer can help the Town increase its capacity.

- About the Transfer Station: Tara said that there will be a stakeholder meeting to discuss the solar array proposal for the Transfer Station on March 31st.

**-North Mountain Cell Tower Proposal:**

Kay gave an update. The proposal was before the Town Board on March 1st. The Town has decided to hire its own engineer to check on coverage in the area to help determine necessity. Town acknowledged that residents are up in arms about the potential damage to the viewshed, and other negative impacts of putting a cell tower on the Highway Department's property, adjacent to the SP 1 zone.

A second balloon test is scheduled for March 26th, 8 AM - noon, weather permitting. All neighbors nearby plan to take pictures. Pix from the 1st balloon test were limited, and taken only by the applicant.

The applicant said at the Town Board meeting that it was "too dangerous" to take pix from the (very easy!) overlooking Millbrook trail, and had excluded all pix from the vantage point of the Ridge. Marybeth Majestic offered to take pix from there herself.

Laura WP asked: wasn't Wright Farms' cell tower supposed to cover this whole area and asked who the SEQRA lead is, if there's a SEQRA review in process.

**-Gardiner Gazette Article due in early April.** Laura R to write a brief update on GOSC activity.

**Meeting ended at 7:24 PM.**