

# TOWN OF GARDINER OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

## MINUTES

May 9, 2022

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

1. Motion to Approval of April Minutes, Laura Rose motion, Second by Kay Hoiby. Passed unanimously.
2. Next Meeting - Scheduled for **Monday June 13, 2022 at 6 PM**. Kay will bring a quote.
3. Kay Hoiby was reappointed by the Town Board to the GOSC.
4. Upcoming GOSC connected Events: There will be a **CPP Community Information Session** on May 19, 2022 at 7:00 – 9:00 PM both in Town Hall and via Zoom. There were over 500 responses to the survey, and 250 people added their email, which was optional, so the survey was a success.
  5. On May 21, 2022 at 9:00 am, there will be a planting of 270 trees, supported by a grant. Trees for Tribes planting will be at River Bend Park. There will also be an Arbor Day celebration at Town Hall at 1:00 pm. An ad hoc “tree committee” is working on Arbor Day planting of about 4 trees, with a guitar player, and children’s poetry and artwork will be displayed. Mary Beth Majestic has been working with Kim Mayer to identify a location to plant the trees.
6. GOSC Goals for 2022:
  - A. Goal #1: Support efforts to create a Community Preservation Plan.

David Dukler and Jean McGrane spoke to the Town Board at the last meeting with specific information about projected revenue, to support the three Local Laws to be adopted in June to move forward the CPP and Community Preservation Fund. The Town Board will have to set the tax rate for the community preservation transfer tax, and they may do this tomorrow night. The Town Board will need to create a Community Preservation Board and appoint 5 or 7 people; set a tax rate; and determine if there is an exemption from the transfer tax for properties already protected by conservation easement. Per Linda Geary: if the conservation easement is on a separate tax parcel of a subdivision, then the homeowners would not reap the benefit of the exemption. Per Laura Rose: on Shaft Road subdivision, each parcel is covered partially by a conservation easement.
  - B. Ranking criteria/prioritization and mapping work group. Laura Rose commented that the group is making progress. This builds on the work we have done to rank conservation values.

C. Community Survey and Outreach: To be presented at tomorrow night's Town Board meeting.

D. Goal #2: Making sure the Town monitors its Conservation Easements:

WVLT gave a proposed contract to Laura Rose, who did an initial edit, and Tara, Jean, Linda and Laura W gave comments, evaluating the contract. Paul Kellar Esq. provided his redlined changes. Laura Rose will put the comments together.

E. Goal #3: Educate and Encourage Voluntary Conservation.

Kay met with several Scenic Hudson employees to schedule a presentation for us at the next month's meeting. We decided on things to include in our outreach with the farming community. They have a food shed conservation plan, to protect farms. Kay felt we could pique their interest if we present a project. Scenic Hudson is currently focused on the Rondout area. Rod Dressel and Becky Fullam, who are on the CPP will participate. Discussion held about others who may be interested in attending the presentation.

F. Goal #4: Support the Preservation of Agricultural Lands.

Laura WP: Maybe we should identify priority properties, approach those owners, gauge interest in having their land protected, and then try to identify funding partners.

Jean: Maybe it's better to not reach out individually because process matters and we want to make sure there is a level playing field. The meeting next month will be the CPP farmers and us, and in the Fall there will be an outreach through the farming community and we will see what kind of interest there is. Tara noted that the Commission of Ag & Markets has not authorized more funding for our region this round (Round 18), for conservation easement grants. They do not have a date for Round 19.

Laura Rose: Suggested a letter to farmers soon, to gauge interest. Jean: We asked Ingrid to give us a map to show us which farms meet the criteria for the Ag & Markets grant. Laura R suggested that sending out letters now can help us see who will be interested more generally, not just in an Ag and Markets grant, but in any conservation easement funding, thus fulfilling the requirement for "equal treatment" and equal access for all who may qualify. This can make it possible, once we have the completed scoring priorities in place for the CPP, for us to choose a property to work on protecting, as Laura WP suggested we move ahead with.

7. Jean McGrane will send around a document about valuing easements from the Town of Rochester for our comments.

8. Drinking water sampling: first well test was completed and they are supposed to begin the second round of well testing. We don't have any results yet, according to Linda Geary. They decided to sample 30 wells. Jean stated that the water data will be incorporated into NRI maps and will be a tab in the NRI interactive maps so that all data is housed in one place.

9. Discussion about availability of funds for conservation easements. Jean noted that OSI was not specifically interested in farmland preservation when we initially spoke to them but

that may have changed through the last few years. We are building a “culture” of conservation in the Town and put into place the processes necessary to preserve land.

10. Tara would like to inform the Parks and Rec committee about the properties that have been preserved for recreational purposes. Laura R offered to discuss more details about these properties with her. Jean said that one of the things that was lacking in developing the CPP was more information about future planning from Parks and Rec, and that these parcels may offer some opportunity for that.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM

Next meeting: June 13, 2022 with a presentation by Scenic Hudson.