

**MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom.
Monday April 11, 2022, 5:45-7:00 PM.**

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

Opening Business.

Approval of March minutes: Motion made by Kay, 2nd by Jean, all approved.
All agreed agenda OK and needs no addition or revision.
Next regular meeting planned for Monday May 9, 2022 at 6 PM.
Jean to provide us with quotes.

100% Zoom meetings will be ending; group discussed using a hybrid model for those of us with greater risk of or from Covid exposure.

Kay will bring snacks for those coming to Town Hall, Jean will bring a quote.

Wireless Edge Cell Tower

Our group has been discussing, via email, weighing in on the special permit application which is before the Town Board. As our charge is protecting Open Space, per the Open Space Plan, and this project will interrupt the viewshed, we agreed, unanimously, to write a letter to share with Town Board.

Jean asked Laura R to draft; Linda provided extensive assistance in rewriting and adding information, Jean, Kay and Laura WP also provided input. Letter needs to be finished before Town Board meeting tomorrow night. Linda, Laura R and Jean to continue working on it. Jean to read it into the public record, if possible, during the comments section of the Town Board meeting.

Linda talked to the group about the language around the viewshed in the DEC long form, and the legal importance of a proper SEQR analysis. She also updated us on changes NYS is making to the wetlands law, and money being earmarked for climate resiliency.

Status Updates on 2022 GOSC Goals

Goal #1: Support the Town in developing a Community Preservation Plan.

Legal workgroup update - Linda.

There was a presentation to the Town Board at their last meeting by Christine Chale of Rodenhausen, Chale & Polidoro LLP about the legal requirements around CPF funding. One thing that Jean understood from the presentation was that all money must go to land that has public access, which leaves us with questions around whether any of this funding

can be used for environmentally sensitive parcels, without allowing significant human intrusion.

Prioritization scoring subcommittee - Laura R.

This group, which includes Neil Curri of Vassar, his assistant Ethan, Ingrid Haekel, Jean, Laura, Jon Benner and Roberta Clemments, has made substantial progress in creating a data-driven scoring method. Most of the data layers to be included have been agreed upon and the main scoring categories have been agreed upon.

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

Laura R has been in touch with WVLT. They've agreed to assist us. We're waiting for a draft agreement from Christie DeBoer.

Laura reported that since our last meeting, she updated the database to include current owner names, access info and physical addresses for each of the 17 parcels to be monitored.

She and Tara talked via telephone about accompanying WVLT, especially this first year and Tara said that scheduling to walk 17 parcels is a significant commitment, to which Laura agreed. Laura asked at this meeting if other members of GOSC would be willing to help with this supervision. Kay, Jean and Kellie all offered to help, and Jean volunteered Laura WP too, in absentia.

GOAL #3: Educate, and Encourage Voluntary Conservation.

Gardiner Day Planning: Gardiner Day has been postponed to October. Planning is on hold for now.

Kay said she has spoken with Seth McKee about an educational session, and is scheduled to speak with him further this week. She also found a webinar that she thinks we may want to use, topic: how-to lease land for farming. Kay also found a program from American Farmland Trust: How to identify and preserve land for young farmers. We discussed how very difficult it is for young farmers to get started.

Jean is scheduled to meet with Becky Fullam about educating farmers and Jean thinks we might be able to add Becky to our group's outreach efforts.

GOAL #4: Support the Preservation of Agricultural Lands.

Tara talked to David Behm of Ag and Markets. He has agreed to a general webinar about getting grant funding. Tara asked about when the next funding cycle opens. It is estimated to be in the Spring of 2023. Tara also spoke with Jon Benner about ag grants.

Target dates for webinars was discussed. Leasing discussions might be helpful in June, and grant discussions might be better suited to November, after harvest season.

Status updates on additional Gardiner activities GOSC members are involved in.

- **Community Preservation Fund and the NYS Environmental Bond Act:** That both will be on the ballot in November was discussed, along with whether or not the CPF vote should be postponed as it may be seen as overload. Jean said Kingston has decided to postpone this vote. Inflation, and perceived economic insecurity due to the war in Ukraine may also be factors, if the CPF doesn't pass. Tara asked if we can vote for it again, if it is defeated. Jean said yes but it would take some time to reboot and may not be politically popular. We currently have a strong, large committee working on getting a Community Preservation Fund onto this year's ballot.

-**Drinking water Protection Committee:** Linda said 30 wells are now scheduled for testing, and she shared a map with us about where they are. There's a concentration in the hamlet, and most of Gardiner's outlying areas are also represented.

- **Multi-Agency Transfer Station Conversation:**

On March 31st, a number of Town groups, including members of the ECC, Parks and Rec, the Trail Alliance, Jean for GOSC and Tara; plus Franco for the Town Board, met to discuss planning for the Transfer Station.

On the one hand, there's a proposal on the table to have the 86-acre property surrounding the Transfer Station reclassified as parkland. On the other, there's a proposal for a solar facility to be built on some of that acreage. Any non-conforming use of a parkland requires an act of the State Legislature, so there's a question of whether or not the Town wishes to pursue the reclassification, as it will overly complicate the solar panel proposal, in fact making it unlikely it will ever be built.

Tara said that there's special funding available for parkland, and she continues to advocate for this designation. She said the Town has already allowed and encouraged the building of trails on the property. She's also happy that so many groups are sitting down at the same table to talk it out, said that this kind of cooperation is rare, and the world would be a better place with more of it. She thanked Jean for spearheading the effort.

Meeting ended at 6:58 PM.