

## **MINUTES, Gardiner Open Space Commission, Monday November 11, 2019, 5:00 -6:30 PM.**

Present: Jean McGrane, Rebecca Benner, Laura Wong Pan, Linda Geary, Kay Hoiby, Laura Rose.

Absent: Kellie George.

**Quote:** (Laura R.)

"I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art anybody could ever want to own."

- Andy Warhol

### **Opening Business.**

Motion made by Becca to approve October minutes. Kay seconded, all approved Oct. 2019 minutes.

### **Discussion of News and Activities Since Last Meeting:**

- The Open Space Institute plans to transfer the conservation easement agreement for Hess Farm from itself to the Wallkill Valley Land Trust. The Town of Gardiner would remain a Grantee.

Jean asked if we have any comment to make, or input to give, on this choice.

Questions raised include: Should the Town remain a Grantee?

What is in the Town's best interest?

Will it cost the Town anything, and if so, how much?

Generally, it seems like a good idea to us but, as Linda suggested, without a review of the agreement, and a conversation with Wallkill Valley Land Trust, we, as a group, aren't prepared to make any recommendation.

- Jean briefed the group on Heartwood updates.

-Laura Wong Pan and Jean were part of a call that included Town and Heartwood reps, around finalizing the Conservation and Agricultural Easements.

Laura said there was a discussion included about limiting the maximum number of visitors to the site each day to 225. This # excluded staff. Our group questioned how this would be enforced.

Laura Rose again brought up that an agricultural easement may not be appropriate for Heartwood.

- Jean said that Nate Nardi-Cyrus has been in contact about us being included in a DEC proposal to get a Geography Intern funded. An intern could help us prepare a current Natural Resources Inventory, including making use of the existing DEC Environmental Resource Mapping program. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/gis/erm/>

Gardiner's Environmental Conservation Commission has asked to be the lead on this with Nate. Becca agreed to be on point for follow-up with Nate and Roberta if this moves forward.

### **Moving Forward.**

- There is an upcoming **training opportunity**; Scenic Hudson is offering a workshop: *Creating Funding to Advance Local Conservation and Historic Preservation Projects* on November 14 at Orange County Community College. Jean will attend.

- Jean offered to prepare a **spreadsheet** to keep track of the Town's responses to any recommendations we make.

- Laura Wong Pan offered to create a **filing system** or series of binders to coordinate with the *Preserved in Gardiner Database* and assist the Town in monitoring its conservation easements and unused properties. Laura R will assist by giving her e- files of deeds and agreements, and maps, accumulated for each property to date.

- Members of the **Parks and Recreation Commission** attended Laura Rose's presentation of the *Database* to the Town Board on November 7th. They said they'd be interested in having one or more of us attend their next meeting, on November 21st. Laura Rose to follow up with them.

Kay mentioned their Facebook page and that people are donating to their work through the New Paltz Community Foundation, making donations tax deductible. She suggested we consider doing something similar, when we are ready.

**Monitoring Checklist:** Becca has identified a good one to use. Part of its advantage is that it includes more than just a list. It was created by Lynn Bowdery, who used to monitor WVLT lands. We will have experienced help from Lynn in getting us up and running. Becca had emailed the group all of the pieces; at the meeting she explained what she liked about this particular checklist and the attached methodology. Becca will follow up with Lynn to invite her to the GOSC December meeting.

**Monitoring:** We discussed getting organized to take a preliminary walk on at least one of the Town's conservation easements. Logistics were discussed, including getting permission from property owners. Andy Lewis, the Town's Code Enforcement Officer, will be invited to our next meeting, along with Lynn Bowdery. Some of our members will plan to take the first walk or walks with him. There is curiosity about finding boundaries without re-surveying, along with just seeing the properties. Laura Walls expressed interest, and will also be invited on a walk, once one is scheduled.

Linda said that the Fire Department is getting a drone and we discussed that either borrowing theirs or using a different one might help in monitoring areas that aren't easy to access.

#### ***Our Next Steps:***

- We again discussed how we are going to choose a particular parcel or parcels to protect. We discussed approaches again, comparing the proactive (choosing a parcel and approaching the owner) to the reactive (offering up the idea to the general public and see what kinds of responses we get.) We talked about agreeing upon and establishing the most important conservation values, information about this that is in the existing Open Space Plan, a build-out analysis and funding. Becca has been looking at methods, including those used by New Paltz and has volunteered to dive further into this.

Laura WP recalled that applicants were solicited and evaluated by the prior GOSC members, but doesn't remember the exact method. Hess and Kiernan Farms were chosen; she remembers that Whitecliff was also on the list as a possibility at one point. Warren Wiegand may have some information or memory as to how; Jean to ask.

Kay to look through the older GOSC files to see if there's info there that explains how properties were selected.

- We spoke about education and outreach again without achieving consensus around our readiness to take this on at this point in time. At our last meeting, we had agreed that we aren't ready yet, even though it's an important goal for us. At this meeting, we discussed what we would share. We agreed that education would be helpful in getting the community interested in, and supportive of our mission. Laura WP suggested we can consider creating a timeline for getting started. Linda said we may be taking on too much at once.

#### ***Process Discussion:***

- We discussed what we've each learned from the editing process of the ***Preserved in Gardiner Database***.

#### ***Upcoming Meetings:***

December 3, 2019, 7 PM: Town Multi-Board meeting.

Our next meeting: December 2, 2019, 7:00 - 8:30PM **Note New Time.**

**Quotes:** Becca **Snacks:** Kay