

## **MINUTES,**

### **Gardiner Open Space Commission Meeting, via Zoom, August 17, 2020 at 4 PM.**

Present: Jean McGrane, Laura Wong Pan, Linda Geary, Kay Hoiby, Kellie George, Laura Rose. Minutes taken by: Laura Rose.

#### **Quotes: (Laura R)**

"I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority."

- E.B. White

"...we should go forward, groping our way through the darkness, stumbling perhaps at times, and try to do what good lay in our power."

- *The Plague*, by Albert Camus

#### **Opening Business.**

- Motion made by Becca, seconded by Kay, approved by all to accept July 31 minutes.
- Congrats Laura Wong Pan for being reappointed to our Commission for a 5-year term.
- Agenda for this meeting accepted, no items added.

#### **Town Board: Discussion of their recent Resolutions, and Conservation Easement support.**

- The Town Board passed the resolution on the table against the Danskammer Plant.
- Town Board also passed a resolution to use a Conservation Easement template with all new development projects moving forward.
- They are using a template prepared by Laura Wong Pan and advocated for by all of us.
- Laura WP suggested we request being emailed and involved when the template is used by the Planning Board, moving forward.

*Jean to send the resolution, and a copy of the template that passed, to the group.*

*Jean to reach out to the Planning Board and offer our assistance when using the template.*

- More good news, Kelly Morris is being hired to review the Baseline Assessment for Heartwood.

-We discussed the extent to which we should be involved in this review, and new reviews as the Town moves forward with more baselines and more conservation easements.

-We definitely want to be as involved as possible in this first assessment.

- Group would like to thank Marybeth Majestic and the Town Board for all of the above.

*Jean to reach out.*

### **NRI Update (Jean and Laura R.)**

- The maps are complete and we're working on the narrative portion of the project.
- Public outreach is complicated at this point, but the DEC is determined to figure it out and options are being discussed. Roberta Clemments and the ECC to take the lead here.

*Jean and Laura to work on how our group should be presented in the upcoming NRI meetings with the public. Maybe prep a 10-minute presentation.*

### **GOSC Community Outreach (Kay and Laura WP)**

- Kay and Laura WP prepared a draft for community outreach topics and planning.
- The group reviewed and discussed.
- Linda Geary suggested we create a series of seminars, and offer the whole series.
- Becca suggested we introduce our neighbors to who we are and what we've done so far.
- All agree that the NRI maps will be good as part of a topic, but they're also being introduced by the NRI group in a public seminar, so we will have to use them differently.
- One topic suggested by Laura WP and Kay involves encouraging our neighbors to consider preserving their parcels, (assuming the conservation values warrant the expense.)
- Laura WP would like us to start speaking to our neighbors about considering voluntary conservation, as there's no bond for us to acquire land, and no other Town funding for it.
- Laura R thinks we have learned quite a bit about easements but may not know enough to advise our neighbors in creating them. She believes we should educate ourselves further before advising. Some outstanding questions include:  
What will the landowner's expenses be? The tax benefits? Are there grants available?
- Jean and Laura WP think we can bring in expert speakers for these topics.
- Becca said we can begin to share who we are, what we've learned to date and begin to pique community interest in conservation.
- Laura R agreed that discussing what easements are and how they're structured is a great idea but if we're encouraging our neighbors to consider preserving their own parcels, there are additional outstanding questions: is the Town ready to take more easements on? Where is the funding for enforcement going to come from? Where is Andy with the fledgling monitoring program?

Will we be advising our neighbors to reach out to the Wallkill Valley Land Trust instead of/ or in addition to/ considering conserving with the Town?

*The Town must be approached with these questions. Jean to reach out to Marybeth.*

This all led to discussion of our mission. And our lack of an up-to-date mission statement.

- Jean would like to see the Town review and update not just our mandate but that of all of the Town's environmentally based commissions.

We all agree that new conservation right now is important. It's a very hot real estate market. Jean shared that Blue Chip Farm has been sold to a group of investors.

*Kay to reach out to the Town of Shawangunk and offer our back-up and assistance to their Open Space Commission.*

Linda Geary has an existing relationship with lawyers in Rhodenhausen, a firm that does conservation work, and said they may be interested in speaking on the topic of private conservation. *(Linda to call and ask George or Victoria.)*

- It was also suggested that Scenic Hudson could speak to private, voluntary conservation, as well as agricultural easements.

*Laura WP and Kay to revise their proposal based on today's discussion.*

### **Conservation Analysis of 747 North Mountain Road: (Linda Geary)**

An analysis was completed for the Planning Board, in connection with the owners' application for a variance. Their property is in the SP1 and SP 2 zones. Linda would like more information on the conservation analysis, and the variance. She is wondering if a professional reviewed the analysis for the Planning Board. She wants to learn more about their process in granting variances in the SP zone.

*Linda to write an email for Jean to send asking Paul Colucci to loop us in on the conservation analysis.*

**Next Meeting: September 14, 2020 at 4PM - 5:30 PM via Zoom**

**Quotes: Kellie**