

Trails & Open Space Committee Minutes
February 3, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Joe Grasso; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Kevin Tollisen and Matt Veitch; Supervisor Bill Peck; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Stephanie Hodgson, Treasurer; Jason Kemper, Jeff Williams, Planning.

Chairman Grasso called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman Grasso appointed Matt Veitch as Vice-Chair of the committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to authorize amending the boundaries of Agricultural Districts # 1 & 2. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said they had three applications, two in Agricultural District #1 (106.17 acres in Wilton and approximately 38 acres in Stillwater) and one in Agricultural District #2 (12.5 acres in Clifton Park) and the Agricultural Farmland Protection Board has recommended the approval of all three properties. Mr. Grasso thanked Mr. Kemper and said it's great to see continued interest in the expansion of our Ag Districts.

County Forestland Update/Zim Smith Trail Update

Mr. Kemper said they replaced just under 400 feet of cedar fence at Oak Street with three rail pressure treated lumber, they've ordered the next batch of aluminum signs, The Champlain Canalway Empire State Trail has been completed, clearing and grubbing has been completed on the east mitigation site in Northumberland with signage and gates to be added in the spring, the Zim will need a new gate along the Fairways of Halfmoon due to snowmobile issues, they have eight pending Open Space Farmland Protection projects and are currently managing twenty four. Mr. Grasso said it's important for the County to consider stewardship and maintenance as they continue to support the construction of trail segments.

Review of 2022 Budget allocations relating to Trails, Open Space & Farmland Protection

Mr. Kemper said the Open Space Preservation account was increased significantly to \$400,000 which will allow for extremely large projects, the Municipal Trails Grant Program has \$100,000, the maintenance account has been separated into two accounts, one with \$10,000 set aside for County forestland properties and one with \$40,000 for maintenance on the Zim Smith, and \$1.5 million has been budgeted towards the Zim Smith extension from Oak Street to the City of Saratoga Springs. Mr. Grasso said he'd like Towns to look at trails from a countywide perspective and look for opportunities of interconnectivity. Mr. Veitch and Mr. Connolly talked about specific

trails and plans in their municipalities. Mr. Grasso said intercounty connectivity is also a possible option. Mr. Peck suggested that the committee look at the Green Infrastructure Plan the County did in 2005 or 2006 and Mr. Kemper said he would forward it to the committee.

Planned advancement of the Zim Smith Northern Extension

Mr. Kemper said they completed a feasibility study and have two grants pending which will determine the steps forward but regardless of grant funding, with the existing funds from 2021 and additional funds budgeted for 2022, the initial design and right of way acquisition for the extension from Oak Street to Saratoga Springs can start this year. Mr. Kemper said he is working with Dan Rourke and his team at the Sewer District regarding the sewer relining project and will report back as plans finalize. Mr. Connolly asked about property permissions along Oak Street to the State Park and Mr. Kemper said no right of way has been acquired along the corridor and suggested they hire a right of way acquisition company when the design is most of the way completed.

County Trails Grant Review

Mr. Kemper said the Supervisors have a copy of the 2021 Trails Grant Application and he asked for feedback on things they would like to see changed.

Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Grant Review

Mr. Kemper said they've always had a \$100,000 limit which is up for discussion and traditionally they have not spent County money on stewardship costs. Mr. Grasso said he thinks the funding allocated should be flexible enough that it serves the needs. Mr. Connolly asked for examples of types of trails projects and Mr. Kemper said anywhere from park equipment, to engineering studies, to actual construction, to the purchase of materials for construction and that the County provides a 50% match up to \$10,000. Mr. Peck provided a historical background on the Farmland Protection program.

Other Supervisor Initiatives for 2022

Mr. Grasso asked the members of the committee and all County Supervisors to get their ideas on initiatives regarding trails, open space, and farmland protection projects that they've been working on in their communities to Mr. Kemper and the committee to consider and said they want to continue forward with projects they've been working on and long term initiatives.

On a motion made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Bridget Rider
Deputy Clerk of the Board