



Trails & Open Space Committee

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 4PM

40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY

Minutes

Present: Chairman Joe Grasso; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Ed Kinowski, Matthew Veitch.

Absent: Tara Gaston

Supervisor Phil Barrett; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Audra Hedden, Stephanie Hodgson, Christine Rush, County Administrator; Michelle Granger, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Jeff Williams, Kim Lambert, Planning & Economic Development.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Connolly, seconded by Mr. Veitch, the minutes of the August 2, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to accept a United States Forestry Service Grant and authorizing a Budget transfer to facilitate the purchase of the Graphite Range Community Forest Project. Unanimous.

The grant amount is \$391,000 with a County Match of \$120K from unallocated Open Space Reserve funds.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to authorize the purchase of the Graphite Range Community Forest Property in the Towns of Wilton and Greenfield, Declare Saratoga County as Lead Agency pursuant to SEQR, and issue a negative declaration under SEQRA. Unanimous.

The full appraised value of the parcel is \$635K and the purchase cost is \$463,454. The parcel is 204 acres. Mr. Kemper gave a brief overview of the project and referred to the information provided with the agenda for detailed information. Total project cost is approximately \$1.146M. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Connolly, seconded by Mr. Kinowski, to authorize a Logging Revenue Agreement with Prentiss and Carlisle Management Company Inc. for a timber harvest on a County owned parcel in the Town of Wilton. Unanimous.

This parcel is on Edie Road. Two bids were received, Prentiss & Carlisle Mgt in the amount of \$63,213 and Lyme Adirondack Timber Sales, LLC in the amount of \$44,000. The resolution will authorize Prentiss & Carlisle as the primary contract. However, if for some reason that bidder withdraws their bid or otherwise cannot meet the contract requirements, the agreement will automatically be awarded to the second bidder. Discussion took place regarding tree disease and pest infestations, and its effect on timber harvest revenues.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Kinowski, to approve the 2023 Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Grant Requests. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper gave an overview of the 2023 Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Grant requests as provided with the agenda. In 2022 a subcommittee was set up to review applications. This year applications are under budget. The total budget allocated for 2023 is \$400K and applications received to date total \$283,357. Any unused funds will be rolled into the reserve fund. Discussion ensued regarding the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Grant process and potential changes to the program.

Mr. Kemper gave an overview of ongoing projects:

- The Planning Department is routinely corresponding with municipalities on all three grants, Economic Development, Trails, and Open Space.
- The annual Agricultural District Inclusion period is October 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023. Applications will be noticed shortly.
- Charlton Snowmobile Club was required to reroute two sections of their trail.

Discussion ensued.

Three trail grants in the Towns of Edinburg and Providence are being held up by State Conservation Easements. Mr. Kemper gave a brief synopsis of the delays and the need for a conservation easement being purchased by NYS before any work can proceed. Mr. Grasso suggested drafting a letter to the State from the Committee. Discussion took place regarding increased PR and outreach regarding the snowmobile trails system.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese M. Connolly
Clerk of the Board