



# SARATOGA SPRINGS OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 28, 2018

5:00 P.M.

SARATOGA SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

### **PRESENT:**

Tim Holmes, Suzanne Kwasniewski, David Miller; Tom Denny, Erica Gifford, Maureen Roberts, and Beth Wurtmann.

### **ABSENT:**

None

### **CITY STAFF:**

Tina Carton, Parks, Open Lands, Historic Preservation/Sustainability Coordinator; Tony Izzo, City Attorney

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Amy Durland, Resident of Saratoga Springs

### **RECORDING OF PROCEEDING:**

The minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Tina Carton called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT-15 MINUTES**

Amy Durland addressed the committee and requested that public comment prior be added to the end of the monthly meeting. She stated that this could be accommodated by reducing the public comment prior to 10 minutes and then limiting the public comment at the end of the meeting to 10 minutes as well.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Since no meeting was held in January, there were no meeting minutes to approve.



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### **INTRODUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS: TOM DENNY, ERICA GIFFORD, MAUREEN ROBERTS, AND BETH WURTMANN**

Each of the current committee members introduced themselves and gave background on their experience with open space and the committee. The new members then introduced themselves and provided information on their interest in the OSAC and open space preservation.

### **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: SELECTION OF NEW CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND SECRETARY**

At the request of the committee, Tina Carton read the OSAC committee policy (by-laws), described the committee structure and officers. She then went on to describe the current OSAC officer vacancies – chair and secretary. At the end of 2017, the chair of the OSAC, Matt Veitch, resigned from the committee, and the secretary's (Bonnie Sellers) term expired. The Vice Chair, David Miller, still has one year of his two year term to serve. Mr. Miller expressed interest to continue as the Vice Chair.

With election of two new officers on the table, members of the committee nominated both Tim Holmes and Suzanne Kwasniewsk to serve as chair. Both expressed honor at this nomination at this time. With four new members present, David Miller made a motion to table the vote of new officers until the March meeting. The committee voted unanimously with no discussion to table the vote until March.

### **DISCUSSION ON 2018 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES**

Tina Carton led the discussion on priorities and expected focus in the 2018 calendar year. Tim Holmes and others discussed focusing on reviving the Open Space Bond Act. In 2002, Saratoga Springs voters approved Proposition No. 1 of 2002 to establish a bond program to protect, preserve, enhance, and improve environmentally sensitive, recreational and scenic land by a margin of 74%. As of February 2018, only roughly \$120,000 of the fund remains uncommitted. An additional \$50,000 should be added to the fund from the Saratoga County Open Space grant in 2018.

Tim Holmes discussed his experience with the recent Park Master Plan meetings and the possible need to highlight the possibility of purchasing active recreation lands with the bond due to the interest in the community for additional park and recreation fields. He stated that maintenance and upkeep of existing park and recreation lands were a major concern of Park Master Plan attendees as well. Tim asked what the definition of parklands was as well as if the City could develop or lease school lands.



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Beth Wurtmann asked questions about the referendum process that would be necessary to create a new Open Space Bond. She also asked if the bond could be used for acquisition only. Tony Izzo stated that it would need to be part of a general election and not a special election. A petition would need to be on a City Council agenda 62 days prior to the election.

The committee then discussed if the bond should be broadened in purpose. The current bond does not pay for planning activities such as updating the 2002 Open Space Plan or creating a Natural Resource Inventory. Tina Carton stated that Bond Council did clarify that funds could be used for property improvements – for example bathrooms, ball fields, and parking lots. Tom Denny then asked to clarify if the remaining money from the current bond could be used for improvements to the waterfront park. Tina Carton stated that since open space bond funds were utilized to purchase the waterfront park that the remaining funds could be used for improvements to this site.

Susanne Kwasniewski stated that she would research the 2002 Proposition and distribute it to members for their reference. Tony Izzo will research the process that can be used to get a referendum on the ballot in the fall.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY (NRI): UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS**

Tina Carton applied through the DEC's Climate Smart Land Use Planning grant for funding to pay for a Natural Resource Inventory. The City did receive the grant, and is working with the Mayor's office to secure matching funds. She currently is making inquiries with graduate programs who may be interested in partnering with the city and/or consultants to help reduce the cost of the NRI. She expects that the RFP will be released in late March.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The committee discussed Amy Durland's request to include public comment at the end of the monthly meetings and limit public comment discussion to 10 minutes. Suzanne Kwasniewski made a motion for public comment at the beginning of meetings to be limited to 10 minutes and to accept public comment at the end of meetings for no greater than 10 minutes. Maureen Roberts seconded. There was no discussion and the matter passed unanimously. The Committee then added a public comment session to the meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**



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Amy Durland stated that as the committee researches the bond act she urges the committee to also look at the 2015 Comprehensive Plan and look at the language around open space and future development of the City. She also states that the committee should look at recreation and how this differs from open space within the comprehensive plan. She also stressed that natural resources are the foundation of the bond act and not recreation.

### ADJOURN

There being no further business, David Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Tom Denny seconded. Unanimous approval.

**NEXT MEETING: THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OSAC WILL BE ON MARCH 28, 2017 5PM, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.**