



# SARATOGA SPRINGS OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

## DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

5:00 P.M.

RECREATION CENTER, 15 VANDERBILT AVENUE, SARATOGA SPRINGS

### **PRESENT:**

Chair Tom Denny, Suzanne Kwasniewski, Beth Wurtmann, Tim Holmes.

### **ABSENT:**

Maureen Roberts, Erica Gifford. David Miller

### **CITY STAFF:**

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

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Wendy Mahaney, Sustainable Saratoga

### **RECORDING OF PROCEEDING:**

The minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Tom Denny called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

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

No opening public comment.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The committee voted to approve the 7/25/2018 meeting minutes, with the date amended (Holmes, Denny). Unanimous vote.

### **NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY (NRI) DISCUSSION**

Tom Denny, the Chair of the OSAC, led a discussion on the meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup> with LaBella Associates and the Master of Regional Planning Program at the University at Albany seminar class. The OSAC is excited to work with the students and appreciate the assistance on the project. Beth Wurtmann stressed the need for a user-friendly document with an executive



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summary. All of the products should be posted to the city website for public viewing. Tom suggested that we should begin to lay the groundwork with City Council to approve budget for the interactive add-ons from LaBella.

The committee then worked through the updated list of the NRI data categories and topics that Barbara Johnston of LaBella had provided by email on the afternoon of our meeting. Our goal was to identify some of the data types where local knowledge (and especially OSAC input) would be critical. In other words, we tried to identify those data categories where publicly available data sets and maps would not be sufficient. We agreed that Scenic Viewsheds were one area where OSAC input (and public input) would be invaluable. We worked with the 2002 Open Space Plan Map to focus the discussion. The committee then discussed the need to set criteria for identifying scenic resources, including vistas and rural road corridors. Tom Denny directed committee members to individually travel to all areas of the city, photograph and document the scenic resources that they think are important to maintaining the community's guiding "City in the Country" vision, and to protecting the "rural character" of our "greenbelt" and our "country overlay district."

Tim Holmes commented that the committee should also consider the Viewshed of the inner district and developing sections of the city. Suzanne Kwasniewski echoed Tim Holmes' concerns about new development and the impact that it has on blocking views and eroding the character of Saratoga Springs.

They then discussed wildlife habitats and the fragmentation of natural areas by roads and development and how these factors can impede wildlife movement, and reduce overall habitat value. Tom Denny discussed a phone conference with Ingrid Haeckel, the Conservation and Land Use Specialist, Hudson River Estuary Program/Cornell University, which he and Tina Carton had to gather information for the NRI. From Ms. Haeckel, Tom Denny and Tina Carton learned that endangered species habitat is generalized on NRI mapping. If exact locations of the species are mapped, this can lead to extraction and/or destruction of the wildlife and wildlife habitat.

### **OPEN SPACE BOND ACT**

Tony Izzo informed the committee that the renovation of city hall after the lighting strike will be the major financial concern for the city in the near future. This may impact the City Council's willingness to move forward with an Open Space bond referendum, which could affect the committee's budget request money to educate the public about a new open space bond.



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### OTHER BUSINESS

The draft Capital District Trails Plan has been published. Tina Carton directed the committee to review the material – it outlines trail priorities in the Capital Region including a section on Saratoga County. If proposed new trails are not on the map, this may affect requests for future funding. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is collecting comments on the plan that it will take into consideration before releasing the final plan.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

No closing public comment.

### ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. was unanimously approved (Wurtmann, Holmes).

**NEXT MEETING: THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OSAC WILL BE ON OCTOBER 23, 2018 5PM, LOCATION AT THE RECREATION CENTER ON 15 VANDERBILT AVENUE.**