

## **Municipal Options for Financing Open Space Protection**

November 14, 2023, 2:00-4:30 pm

Conservation and Land Use Webinar Series

NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program

8 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

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I'd like to welcome you all to this really special conservation and land use webinar today. I'm Laura Heady and the conservation and land use program coordinator from the Hudson River Estuary program through a partnership with Cornell University's Department of natural resources and the environment, and I'd like

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To thank my colleagues who organized and will be co-moderating today's webinar,

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we have, with our partners Scenic Hudson, Ingrid Haeckel at the Hudson River estuary program and Christine, and also with the program and Cornell.

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So, thanks to all of you and the speakers, and we hope today goes smoothly.

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So, Here's today's agenda. We've a packed program with really amazing local leaders.

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To share their experiences from their communities. So after a brief intro we'll hear from Supervisor Bettez from the Town of New Paltz, with a case study, followed by Supervisor McKeon, from the town of Red Hook. We're then, hopefully, around 3:15 going to give you a 5 minute break. You need to refill your coffee,

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water... and then Carli, and Ingrid will bring us back with a short presentation on funding and tools that will be followed by a case study from Rob Leslie from the Town of Bethlehem, and finally a case study from the City of Kingston with Julie Noble. And then we'll have some Q and A, and

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we should be wrapping up at 4:30 today.

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So, this webinar series is offered through the Hudson River Estuary Program, which is a unique program at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It was established to help people protect, enjoy, and revitalize the Hudson River estuary and its watershed. And the program is guided by a 5 year action agenda.

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And I just want to point out that one of the key benefits our program strives to deliver on is conserved natural areas in the Hudson Valley.

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We do this, not through land protection so much as through this kind of work: through providing training, technical assistance, and grants to land trusts to local municipalities and other organizations who are interested in pursuing conservation planning.

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And that's what today's webinar is about, and you can learn more about the program and the action agenda at the website, which

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we can maybe share with you in a follow up. But now I'd like to instead give an intro on our conservation planning approach. For many years, we focused on these 3 key steps and in this diagram, I use the word community to represent, it could be a watershed group, regional

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conservation alliance, or municipality, for example. And the 3 steps involve first, taking stock of what your community has. Next is setting priorities: what does your community care about or value? And finally what steps are appropriate for your community to take to conserve those priorities?

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And for municipalities this process might look like this. I'm using some terms today taken right out of municipal law. But first, a natural resources inventory can gather together maps,

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Data, and descriptions of everything from topography and soils to forest patches to farmland and drinking water aquifers.

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This NRI then becomes a foundation for setting priorities by using map analysis

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combined with public input, which is a critical part of this process.

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And once that open space inventory

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is accepted and approved by a local legislative body, like a town board, it then becomes the town's open space index. And as a side note, it's this step that can then enable a conservation advisory council to be elevated to a conservation board status with a more structured and formal role in review of

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any land use projects that are proposed in those priority lands that are listed in the index.

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But the more proactive next step, which we're kind of here, talking about today is to develop strategies to conserve priorities in the form of an open space plan. And sometimes some of these steps in this diagram are done in concert with one another. For example, the town of Poughkeepsie in Dutchess County just completed an NRI and an

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open space plan together in the same process funded by an Estuary grant.

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So, I wanna just provide 2 examples of how this approach has been used by Hudson Valley municipalities. First, in a town of Blooming Grove, the town finished natural resources inventory.

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And I'll add that the town, , worked with its neighboring municipality of Cornwall on this project, which added value to the process and, and the outcomes for both towns. But they then combined spatial data through with community input to develop an open space inventory. And then use those priorities

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to create a community preservation plan and that plan is the first step in establishing a community preservation fund to finance open space.

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A process we're going to hear more about, in today's case studies.

A 2nd example, I wanted to share of this process is

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from an urban community, and one we're going to learn more about in today's webinar. But the city of Kingston similarly went through this process of creating an NRI. They held a lot of public input sessions with the community. And then they finished

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an open space plan in 2019, and as Julie Noble will be sharing today, they're not finished with this process yet.

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So, this probably sounds like a lot of work. Why is this important? First, you know, we live in this incredible watershed, this amazing Hudson Valley. And part of the reason, it's a wonderful place to live and visit is the remarkable biodiversity we have from mountains and ridges too low river valleys and flood plains.

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The beauty of our landscape is the result of the living ecosystem that we share and municipalities

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making decisions at the local level across this living landscape, have tremendous authority and opportunity to protect clean water,

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increase climate resilience, and conserve wildlife, habitat, scenery and other local and regional priorities. And

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these are all connected and intertwined, right? No one entity can maintain this incredible biodiversity that provides for all of these ecosystem services that support our human communities. So, the state, counties, land trusts, local towns, cities, villages. We all have

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important roles on what I like to call team biodiversity, and many communities have been taking action and partnering with the Hudson River Estuary program since we published guidance on

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How to develop the natural resources inventory, and really started helping municipalities with NRIs in earnest.

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Since around 2015, 47 municipalities have completed NRI's and more importantly, they're using those NRIs to develop conservation plans and policies. And so we'll hear examples of this today.

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And, , so I'm very excited to introduce our first two speakers.

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Who will share how their municipalities have benefited

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from proactive conservation planning and financing.

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First, we're going to hear from Neil Bettez who is currently in his 3rd term as New Paltz's town supervisor. Neil has a BS in forestry from the University of New Hampshire.

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An MBA in biology from UNC Greensboro and a PhD in ecology from Cornell University. Neil is also visiting scientist at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in New York where, prior to being elected into his current position a supervisor, he did research on ecological processes and urban environments,

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how our actions affect them, and what we can do to make urban areas more sustainable.

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After Supervisor Bettez we will then hear from Robert McKeon, who was just elected for his 3rd term as town supervisor in Red Hook.

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Congratulations! After moving to Red Hook 25 years ago, and taking up farming Robert quickly got involved in the community as a volunteer on the town's agriculture and open space committee, which he served on for 10 years, and eventually pursued various

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initiatives like purchase of development rights and community preservation funds, both of which, and other initiatives, had huge impacts on land conservation in the town. So much so that Robert was recognized by Scenic Hudson as a Hudson Valley hero for his leadership in open space and farmland preservation. And I'll add that unofficially in my book

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Robert is also a habitat connectivity hero, because about 10 years ago, we worked with the town on a connectivity mapping initiative, and Robert supported the integration of those linkages and that mapping product into the town's community preservation plan. And to my knowledge that was the first, and only

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example of a town including connectivity in their conservation financing priorities.

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So, I'm delighted to hand the webinar over to the both of you to learn from your experiences and we'll start with Supervisor Bettez. Thank you.

77 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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All right, well, thank you Laura

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So today I'm going to be talking about a case study in the town of New Paltz. How we developed the implemented open space plans and financing policies. I'd like to thank Cara Lee, who helped put many of these.

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slides together and who is the chair of the community preservation upon advisory board.

80 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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Okay.

81 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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So, why is preservation of open space important? You know, scientists estimate that we

82 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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must protect about 30% of the lands, rivers, lakes, and wetlands by 2030 to prevent mass extinction and bolster resilience to climate change. And last year Governor Hochul signed legislation.

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enabling the State of New York to do this. So it's a good time to get on board. If you have not gotten on board already.

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And so, when we go to the next slide here. Most people probably already know the environmental benefits, you know, improve air, quality, water, quality, reduce flood risk, habitat protection, resilience to climate.

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But a lot of people don't realize that there are a lot of social and economic benefits to preserving open space. Increased social connectedness, cohesion, increase in mental, physical well being of residents. Adds tourism benefits, local businesses. Attracts new residents, increases the value of property, of nearby properties, also increases tax

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revenues and it decreases government spending.

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So, traditionally, the way, open space was preserved was to just create really big lots. And so if you look on a zoning map,

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you can build 1 house on a very large lot. What this has done over time, we've developed land much faster than we've increased population, at about 3 times the rate, including travel, at about 3 times the rate. But this

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affects our ability to preserve open space, protect water, air quality. It also has an impact on farms and forests, tourism, and it causes fragmentation.

90 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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So, eventually it's not really helping to preserve anything. So you really want to have a plan to preserve the land and a method to do it

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And so the first step is really to develop a plan and there's funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program for a lot of these. So, the town of New Paltz, you know, we have a master plan from a comprehensive plan from 1995, open space inventories,

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different historic preservation plans, open space plans, so look at what your town has and try to build on that.

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And so, as I said, in New Paltz, we have a

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1995 comprehensive master plan and in that plan, there were 5 recommendations.

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They include preserving open space, preserving the 100 year floodplain.

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Expanding community recreational spaces. And so, in the year 2000, the town board created the New Paltz open space committee to define and inventory, and then evaluate different priority areas and to work with the New Paltz community to recommend and promote the plan so it would be accepted

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by them.

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And so the open space plan had a couple different goals, creating trail connections, conserve working, landscapes, focused on priority parcels, balance conservation with the tax base, facilitate municipal and regional conservation initiatives.

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And so while it's good to have goals, but then how do you pay for them? And, so I'm going to go over a couple of different ways to do that. One is that you can appropriate funds. This is very simple. You just have money in your budget and you say, well, let's spend it on, you know, an easement or

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preserving some open space through purchasing the property that can be like, a one time, or you can do it annually over time. But, you know, you're kind of limited by what you have in your budget.

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And so it's often weighed against other costs. You need to pave the roads you need to buy trucks, things like that. So it has really limited results for open space conservation.

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The other way to do it is through municipal bonding.

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This allows you to raise capital funds for that are allocated for the investment of, not operating costs, but you can

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put the money towards preserving open space, and then you can repay it over 20 or 30 years. You can either place it on the ballot during a local election for voter approval, or it can be subject to permissive referendum. Under the permissive referendum, the municipal board, you may take an action without a vote, however

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voters always have the opportunity to overturn it with a ballot initiatives.

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And so there are 2 types of bonding.

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There's the project driven bond proposal, and so with this, you identify a specific project first, and then you follow that by the bonding authorization. The benefit of this approach is that the town board, and the voters know exactly what projects are proposed for funding. The downside is this approach has

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upfront costs to identify, refine the proposed project, ahead of authorization. And so you can't use those funds.

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ahead of time. The other type is a bond amount proposal. So, to do this, you identify a designated amount of funding

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authorized, but you don't really specify what the projects are .

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The funding under this authorization has to meet its purposes, but the work remains, once you get the approval, then you can identify the specific projects and bring projects to closure. An advantage of this is that the community has committed to funding

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the work on real estate transactions for conservation. It also POSTPONES the cost of preparing the projects.

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And so that the Town of New Paltz, our open space plan, so that the town had to achieve the level of protection that was recommended, they proposed that the town develop a municipal bond tailored to meet the community's fiscal capacity and then investigate opportunities to leverage it.

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against local investments with federal, state funds, or other organizations.

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And so what the town did in November, 2006.

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A bond amount proposal was put on the ballot for \$ 2 million dollars, and it passed with an approval rate of 63%. And then in 2007, the town passed a law for agricultural and open space preservation, created a clean water, open space commission. They went through the process of

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receiving applications, reviewing them, and then they would submit them to the town board under the law within 30 days. Then the town board had to hold a public hearing and either approve it or explain why it was against the recommendations of the Clean Water Open Space Commission.

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And so, in 2014, the town bought 63 acres, Millbrook Preserve for 550,000 dollars to create urban green space adjacent to the village. And then in 2018,

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purchased an easement for 129,000 dollars on a 30 acre farm in town. So over 12 years, there were 2 purchases.

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Using about 30 - 34% of the

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the bond to preserve 95 acres in total. We really were looking for a more efficient and sustainable method, such as the community preservation fund to pay for open preservation.

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And to get into the next

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type of funding. This was the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act. The ability to create a community preservation fund has been around for about 20 years. It was authorized by the New York state legislature, mainly on eastern Long Island in 2019.

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Ulster county was added to Putnam,

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Westchester, as well as towns of Chatham in

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Columbia county, Fishkill, Red Hook, in Dutchess county, Warwick in Orange County. And then so here's a map of that. This is a map of the different towns that are in the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Area. And so what does the preservation act allow you to do?

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Let's you create dedicated, non, transferable funds for protecting community character. Let's you use the funds to implement your community preservation plan, which involves acquiring interest or rights in real property in accordance with the plan and with cooperation of willing sellers. So, you can't just buy people's property unless they're

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willing to sell it to you. It also lets you receive

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revenues from, if people want to donate gifts of land or other funds. And the main thing is that allows you to create a local, real estate transfer tax.

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And so what's the process for this?

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First, the town board has to adopt a local law, establishing their community preservation fund and then you have to

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also create an advisory board as part of the local law.

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Then the town board has to adopt the local law, establishing the community preservation plan. The plan has to be approved, not less than 60 days before the mandatory referendum to be held regarding transfer tax. And then the plan has to be made available to the public to review it. So they know exactly what you're doing.

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And then after adopting the plan, the town has to adopt the local law, imposing a real estate property transfer tax, not to exceed 2%.

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The adoption of this localized subject to a mandatory referendum, held that a general November election, which basically means the voters get to decide if this happens or not. So there's a process of selling it to the voters.

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Let me just describe what the plan is about.

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The plan: it describes the purpose of why you want to have a preservation plan. In New Paltz, we decided to focus on 7 specific areas, but other towns you can take any approach you want. Doesn't have to be these 7 areas, but I'm just going to go through those to explain how we did it. Each focus.

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We identified the parcels by identification numbers, acreage, and then we prioritize them. But the important thing is that if the parcel is not in the plan, you cannot use the funds that are generated through.

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this transfer tax to actually preserve that parcel. So it's important that you have a wide

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enough plan that meets all of your needs.

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And so, for New Paltz, the 7 areas that we decided to focus on were water resources, agricultural lands, habitat, natural resource areas, historic resources, scenic resources,

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recreation lands and trails, and then open space areas.

143 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

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And one of the reasons we decided to focus on these areas is because we had a lot of data from previous plans that we had put together, including the comprehensive plan, an open space inventory, open space plan, formula and preservation plan.

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Historic preservation plans, things like that. And so, , the other real benefit of using plans that you already have is, you already have buy-in from the public on a lot of these plans and you're not really.

145 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:26:40.169 --> 00:26:48.449

trying to do anything new, all you're doing is really trying to figure out a way to pay for things that people have already agreed on.

146 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:26:48.449 --> 00:26:51.599

And that kind of helps to build consensus as well.

147 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:26:51.599 --> 00:27:11.599

And so, like I said, we score each one of those different areas. And this is just an example of how we did the water resources priority. So, you know, we looked at the different parcels in the town where the reservoirs, aquifers, floodplains, wetlands and then a couple different other criteria. And then.

148 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:27:11.599 --> 00:27:30.269

Add them up and that would get the water score and then you would do the same thing for all of the different other areas. So for us it was water agriculture, habitat, historic recreation, scenic open space. You add up all of those different scores and that gives each parcel a total score.

149 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:27:30.269 --> 00:27:35.909  
, and so, in the end we ended up with about, .

150 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:27:35.909 --> 00:27:41.279  
1572 parcels, .

151 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:27:41.279 --> 00:27:49.529  
Containing the different priority resources, and the scores ranged from 1 to 23 different attributes.

152 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:27:49.529 --> 00:28:10.849  
Since then it's actually been really useful, and I highly recommend putting a plan like this together and with the scores because it's a big part of the decision making process for the board that you then put together. I think every time a different parcel has come up the first thing, anyone asks us well, what's the score? And it really helps you.

153 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:28:10.849 --> 00:28:30.849  
Start the conversation, and it gets everyone on to the same page using the same language instead of like, " I really love that one" and "oh, I used to go there when I was a kid." You know, at least you're trying to then make your decisions based on data, which you can always deviate from that. But it gives you a nice place to start having conversations

154 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:28:30.849 --> 00:28:32.879  
from.

155 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:28:32.879 --> 00:28:52.879  
And so the experience in New Paltz, we held the referendum in November 2020. We added a 1 and a half percent tax to be paid by the buyer. The resolution passed with 72% of the voters. 95% of the voters actually turned the ballot

156 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:28:52.879 --> 00:29:01.739  
over and saw it and then 72% vote in favor of it. So it went into place in February of 2021. And

157 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:29:01.739 --> 00:29:10.409  
under the Hudson Valley preservation act, the median home price for the county

158 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:29:10.409 --> 00:29:15.119  
is exempt from the tax.

159 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:29:15.119 --> 00:29:29.789

In 2019 that was 245,000 dollars. So if you were buying a house for 245,000 dollars, you didn't pay any tax and now it's 350,000. It's been a crazy couple of years. You don't pay anything if you're buying a house that's

160 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:29:29.789 --> 00:29:49.789

250,000 dollars or less, and to date, you know, we've had 509 sales, 186 or 37% have been below the median. So those people have not paid any of the taxes. And our preservation committee is currently working with several landowners and a land preservation organizations on

161 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:29:49.789 --> 00:29:59.579

Purchases. We've bought some parcels at county auction, but we really haven't had like, a landmark proposal yet.

162 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:29:59.579 --> 00:30:04.469

We have the money and we have the connections now and it's made this,

163 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:30:04.469 --> 00:30:20.939

the process of preserving through easements or purchases, much more straightforward and now it's about the value of the property and not really the, whether we have the money or not. And so we're able to meet the goals of what we're trying to do.

164 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:30:20.939 --> 00:30:25.739

And I think that's about it.

165 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:30:25.739 --> 00:30:29.369

And if anyone has any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

167 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:30:37.259 --> 00:30:54.479

Thanks, Neil. That was great. And you did finish a little early. There is a question. There's a question that I anticipate Robert will also want to address, but we have time. Now, Ruven

168 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:30:54.479 --> 00:30:58.889

asked if an area of focus, like, in those 7 focus areas you talked about

169 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:30:58.889 --> 00:31:04.295

could have included land for affordable housing. Do you want to talk about that now? Or do you want to wait till the larger Q. and A.

170 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:04.295 --> 00:31:08.249  
after Robert's presentation. So under the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act,

171 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:08.249 --> 00:31:13.829  
that's not part of what we were allowed to do.

172 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:13.829 --> 00:31:18.509  
I think that that varies by.

173 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:18.509 --> 00:31:23.459  
the authorizing legislation and so.

174 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:23.459 --> 00:31:27.809  
For us, the land has to be preserved.

175 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:27.809 --> 00:31:31.398  
And it can't be sold after that. So there can be an easement or

176 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)  
00:31:31.398 --> 00:31:32.575  
Purchase on it,

177 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:32.575 --> 00:31:37.769  
Or it can be agriculture, but for this

178 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:37.769 --> 00:31:41.549  
authorizing legislation, we're not allowed to

179 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:41.549 --> 00:31:45.209  
put that money towards affordable housing.

180 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)  
00:31:45.209 --> 00:31:51.733  
But, you know, maybe we could do the acquisition of the land, but I don't know about that. So, it's something to look into.

181 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)  
00:31:51.733 --> 00:31:58.751  
Yeah, and I'm not 100 percent sure but I think we'll hear a little bit about one project in Red Hook



183 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:31:59.714 --> 00:32:16.515

that is balancing conservation and housing, but there's another question, a couple more questions for you, Neil, and we still have lots of time. Was there a parcel size threshold used for the ranking process in New Paltz. For example maybe only parcels over .5 acres were considered?

184 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:32:16.515 --> 00:32:25.889

I don't, I don't think so. In the end, the smaller parcels didn't have as many of the.

185 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:32:25.889 --> 00:32:43.777

criteria to make it onto ranking, I think, you know, if some of the parcels were already developed, some of them made the cut, because there we include a historic preservation as well. So, there could be small older lots that had historical value on them.

186 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:32:43.777 --> 00:32:46.889

Great, thank you.

187 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:32:46.889 --> 00:32:55.895

Oh, man, the 1 million dollar question -Once a property is purchased by the town, how do you cover the cost of maintaining those property?

188 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:32:55.895 --> 00:33:05.639

Excellent question. Under the law you're allowed to use 10% of the funds for ongoing maintenance.

189 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:05.639 --> 00:33:09.209

Of the property, so,

190 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:09.209 --> 00:33:17.339

Say you've raised 100,000 dollars in real estate transfer tax you could use up to 10,000 dollars

191 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:17.339 --> 00:33:37.339

towards maintenance of that property, such as monitoring an easement or something like that. So there's not an ongoing cost unlike some of the other projects that we purchased with the bond act. We have easements on them and we have to monitor those easements every year. So there's an ongoing cost to the taxpayers, even after

192 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:37.339 --> 00:33:41.279

We paid the bond off for the parcel. You still have to,

193 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:41.279 --> 00:33:50.399

the taxpayers still have to come up with the cost of maintaining and monitoring that under the easement. Whereas with the preservation act,

194 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:50.399 --> 00:33:53.429

that's covered under the fund.

195 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:33:53.429 --> 00:33:57.946

So, it doesn't, it does not cost the taxpayers in the future.

196 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:33:57.946 --> 00:34:07.199

Thank you well, that, I mean, I don't know if you want to follow up any, or if you have any follow up thoughts on

197 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:34:07.199 --> 00:34:13.439

Where else... so, for example, with the projects that were funded through the bond,

198 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:34:13.439 --> 00:34:19.290

where do you generate money? Is there, you know, besides appropriations for management and...

199 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:34:19.290 --> 00:34:28.619

For some, people that donate money, or time, but most of it has to come out of the

200 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:34:28.619 --> 00:34:37.979

Taxes, right. But we haven't, you know, the, the one parcel that we did acquire, it's really like an urban park.

201 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:34:37.979 --> 00:34:55.049

And it's right adjacent to the village. , we're just finishing up some new trail work. We've got a grant for that. So you can get grants to fund them as well. We're putting a bridge in building some trails. We have a local volunteer organization that does a lot of work in there, but it,

202 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:34:55.049 --> 00:35:00.845

you know, it, it is an ongoing cost, just like any park is, right? Or playground or.

203 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:35:00.845 --> 00:35:03.761

Or something like that. Yeah, it's good to be reminded.

204 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:35:03.761 --> 00:35:14.584

That's part of the thing, but if, if you were to just put an easement on something, and then you had to monitor that easement going forward, that would also be an ongoing cost. And the town has some of those as well.

205 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:35:14.584 --> 00:35:31.649

Let's see, we have a few more questions. We have a few more minutes before Robert starts. I'm going to take 1 or 2 of these, and then we can revisit some of these questions at the larger Q and A.

206 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:35:34.739 --> 00:35:42.580

What resources exist for setting up a numeric scale system for land evaluation? Boy, really good volunteers.

207 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:35:42.580 --> 00:35:48.569

Yeah, well, we were very lucky in New Paltz in that we have some really

208 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:35:48.569 --> 00:35:56.549

Really dedicated and smart volunteers but I think other towns have subsequently also passed

209 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:35:56.549 --> 00:36:00.299

the same sort of preservation

210 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:00.299 --> 00:36:06.209

fund, and they were able to get grants, I think from Hudson River Valley Greenway.

211 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:06.209 --> 00:36:10.604

Or other organizations to help them put their plans together.

212 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:36:10.604 --> 00:36:18.239

Great, thank you. , let's see. And then there was a question

213 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:36:18.239 --> 00:36:22.681

What is the source of the money to fund the bonds?

214 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:22.681 --> 00:36:26.729

A little explanation on how that works.

215 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:26.729 --> 00:36:31.559

The, the taxpayers, you know, it's the, and that's one of the

216 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:31.559 --> 00:36:41.459

Issues, one of the reasons we wanted to go for the preservation fund is because you're then weighing, , you know, like I said.

217 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:41.459 --> 00:36:44.819

10-12 years there were only really two

218 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:44.819 --> 00:36:53.339

approved applications for purchase of land. And, you know, the goal for, like I said, the goal for

219 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:53.339 --> 00:36:59.219

the state and the federal government is to preserve 30% of the land.

220 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:36:59.219 --> 00:37:07.439

In the, in the country, New Paltz, like people think that oh, everything's preserved in New Paltz. We've been working on plans like this since,

221 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:37:07.439 --> 00:37:15.179

well, before we had the master plan in 95, it's been a focus and we're nowhere near 30%. I think we're less than 10%.

222 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:37:15.179 --> 00:37:23.999

And so you need to if we're going to get there and preserve the land, you need a sustainable way to do it without, , making the the

223 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:37:23.999 --> 00:37:31.199

taxpayers who've already been paying for things like roads and firehouses and things like that pay for it. I mean,

224 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:37:31.199 --> 00:37:51.199

There are people who can describe it better than I can, but it's really about making the people who are moving into a community, contribute a fair amount towards it. And I've talked to some people who have

moved here over the last few years. And I thought they'd be upset that they had to pay this extra amount and they actually were pretty happy because they

225 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:37:51.199 --> 00:37:59.602

want things to stay the way they are. They were very concerned that everything that the reason they moved here, then it's not going to stay that way. Right?

226 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:37:59.602 --> 00:38:10.559

Right in the last minute before we switch over to the Red Hook case study, did you hire any pollsters or lobbyists to get the message out to residents?

227 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:38:10.559 --> 00:38:15.056

It's probably more than a minute answer. We could defer this to after.

228 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:15.056 --> 00:38:30.559

We ended up working a lot with different volunteer groups to kind of put the word out but, you know, we were the first, one of the first towns to do this. I think, since Red Hook, and there was a lot of pushback from

229 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:30.559 --> 00:38:42.030

from different organizations, and they sent mailers out. I think they spent another organization spent like, 150,000 dollars trying to

230 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:42.030 --> 00:38:45.180

stop this from happening. We still won.

231 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:45.180 --> 00:38:48.780

Subsequently 2 other towns have

232 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:48.780 --> 00:38:52.350

tried to do this and they've had no pushback whatsoever.

233 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

00:38:52.350 --> 00:39:07.060

And I think people are beginning to realize the value of this, and I've talked to a lot of real estate agents who were initially opposed to it and 3 years in they are like "oh, yeah. That was a good idea. I'm not sure why I was opposed it." It didn't seem to affect the ability to sell houses in the town.

234 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:39:07.060 --> 00:39:23.640

Well, that's a good takeaway. A message to wrap up your case study. Thank you so much for sharing all that, Neil. And Neil, after Robert's presentation we will open up again for more. Q and A. But, yeah, at this point, Ingrid, if you want to share Robert's slides and

Take it away and it's a terrific job that Neil and company are doing there in New Paltz. I'm, I'm very happy that.

237 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:39:35.820 --> 00:39:43.020

Neil has agreed to stay on so that all 1572 parcels are preserved. Thank you. Now.

238 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:39:46.380 --> 00:39:49.500

Okay, .

239 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:39:49.500 --> 00:39:56.040

Well, very good. Community preservation fund case study, Town of Red Hook.

240 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:39:56.040 --> 00:40:17.330

Many of you may know about the Town of Red Hook, our work in land preservation, and especially with working landscapes, following Scenic Hudson's pilot programs

241 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:40:17.330 --> 00:40:37.330

with two municipalities- the town of Red Hook, and the town of Stuyvesant in the late 1990s- through encouragement from myself and others. Shortly thereafter, we endeavor to try to convince the town board to

242 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:40:37.330 --> 00:40:57.330

have a purchase of development rights program paid with a bond authorization to leverage funds with both land trust, county, state, and you'll see in one example, the federal government to buy development rights.

243 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:40:57.330 --> 00:41:17.330

But at the time in 2003, somebody was running for office in Dutchess county and decided to make an issue of it and get his name out there. It became a public referendum, which in turn turned out to be a good thing. So, in short order, 45 to 62 days,

244 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:41:17.330 --> 00:41:37.330

you have in order to schedule a public referendum, a campaign was waged featuring one of my cows. Daisy. It's cheaper to keep our accounts. Don't go to school. And the referendum was put up for a vote.

245 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:41:37.330 --> 00:41:46.860

in October of 2003 and 83% approval rate, which is amongst the highest across the nation.

246 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:41:46.860 --> 00:42:06.860

Continuing with the work after protecting 3 farms, looking at trying to get the Hudson Valley authorization for community preservation approved of in Albany. Red Hook was impatient.

247 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:42:06.860 --> 00:42:14.520

We decided that we were going to ask for home rule. We reached out to our members in both the Assembly and the Senate

248 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:42:14.520 --> 00:42:34.520

to see, if they would carry a bill to allow us to do it. So, we, at the time, decided that we were not going to levy the real estate transfer fee at anything below County median sales [price], which now has become the norm and

249 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:42:34.520 --> 00:42:42.750

we received permission, and put that to the voters at a really untimely.

250 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:42:42.750 --> 00:43:02.750

period, right during the middle of the real estate recession, 2007 and 8, and we had the president of the New York State Board of Realtors was a Red Hook resident, and decided that they were going to use some of their mobilization fund to

251 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:43:02.750 --> 00:43:11.280

nip this in the bud before it started to spread to other communities. And so it was a fairly well heeled

252 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:43:11.280 --> 00:43:20.790

anti campaign for this. The voters did approve it, however, in 2007 and next slide please.

253 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:43:20.790 --> 00:43:43.340

During the course of this time ,we were working on identifying areas that we like many communities wanted to discourage development. We came up with this concept of having an agricultural business district, trying to get across two messages:

254 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:43:43.340 --> 00:44:03.340

One is identifying where we want to protect. Two, is trying to educate people as to agriculture, being an industry in that you should anticipate if you move into this area, that you might encounter activities that you might not enjoy every single day of the year.

255 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:44:03.340 --> 00:44:22.620

Critical mass, obviously, you see in that map, here's an example of a project that we did using CPF funds, leveraging it with both the county land trust and the farm and ranch program, the federal government program.

256 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:44:22.620 --> 00:44:29.040

USDA [United States Department of Agriculture], we worked to protect

257 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:44:29.040 --> 00:44:49.040

8 properties along one roadway, it's the entrance to the village. Typically if you're familiar with our municipality in northwest dutchess County, we had members of that area work together to put

258 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:44:49.040 --> 00:44:57.330

one application. Scenic Hudson was very instrumental in actually getting,

259 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:44:57.330 --> 00:45:10.260

folks from the ag community nationwide to come to right up to understand what a small farming is and was all about at the time.

260 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:10.260 --> 00:45:30.260

And here you see that that project - the yellow properties, there was one application. It built upon the blue properties that you see that was already concerned and now you can start to see

261 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:30.260 --> 00:45:38.610

the creation of the contiguous, critical mass that continues today in that area.

262 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:38.610 --> 00:45:44.220

An additional 600 acres of farmland

263 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:44.220 --> 00:45:49.800

was added to that region.

264 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:49.800 --> 00:45:59.370

Next slide please. So one of the things we talk about so much is the environmental benefits.

265 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:45:59.370 --> 00:46:08.340



The benefits for the community as a whole. Property values. We oftentimes don't

266 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:46:08.340 --> 00:46:28.340

focus enough, I think, on the economic benefits to the industry and so I'll give you one case study.

Actually Mead orchards, believe it or not was the 1st farm in New York state to be protected. It's in the northern part of our township and it

267 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:46:28.340 --> 00:46:35.040

was protected in the 90's. New York state was very late to the party with farmland protection.

268 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:46:35.040 --> 00:46:49.680

The farm decided to expand and purchase the adjoining farm land with the sale of its development rights. It took the money from the 2nd conservation easement fund and used it towards infrastructure.

269 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:46:49.680 --> 00:46:56.730

The end result of, which was that revenues increased in less than 2 years by 70%.

270 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:46:56.730 --> 00:47:07.170

Next line, and there's just an indication of where that sat with the assemblage.

271 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:07.170 --> 00:47:17.280

Remember we talked about West Corley Corners which that road is there all of those properties that are now protected. Next slide please.

272 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:17.280 --> 00:47:23.010

There it is -the adjoining 2 properties.

273 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:23.010 --> 00:47:31.260

They have purchased the second one with money from the first one and sold the development rights from the second.

274 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:31.260 --> 00:47:36.840

And built a cold storage facility

275 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:36.840 --> 00:47:42.180

which allow them to sell product throughout the year.

276 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:42.180 --> 00:47:59.520

And we have seen in our community that this preservation has really turned out to be quite an economic driver. Most of the capital that has been invested in our community has actually been in the farms not as much in the downtown.

277 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:47:59.520 --> 00:48:10.590

Next slide please and here is a breakdown of this particular parcel.

278 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:10.590 --> 00:48:17.130

And some of the items that they are growing there, and you see.

279 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:17.130 --> 00:48:23.040

Some adjoining wetlands. We also talk about

280 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:23.040 --> 00:48:27.930

farms as if every acre is being cultivated.

281 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:27.930 --> 00:48:34.890

Or livestock is roaming, , on every acre and, of course, that's not the case. There's incredible

282 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:34.890 --> 00:48:45.480

diversity on these farms and so we can accomplish many goals on 1 farm or 1 parcel even.

283 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:45.480 --> 00:48:50.430

Next slide please.

284 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:50.430 --> 00:48:54.000

This is now an old map

285 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:48:54.000 --> 00:49:02.370

even though it says 2021, we have since protected, about 300 some odd more acres.

286 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:49:02.370 --> 00:49:15.960

I think Neal had mentioned the goal of trying to preserve a 30% of the land mass in a community and we are quickly approaching that. We are

287 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:49:15.960 --> 00:49:22.890

We have several projects that either have just been completed, or are in the works right now.

288 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:49:22.890 --> 00:49:37.260

We have over 45 farm parcels that have been protected, several 1000 acres as well as some DEC lands and other conservation easements on non agricultural lands in our community.

290 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:49:45.150 --> 00:49:58.590

Here's the zoning map. One of the ways that we have accomplished this, and you've heard about, , several tools. One of the tools that we have also added to our

291 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:49:58.590 --> 00:50:08.370

toolbox is something called incentive zoning. So you see by the color green parcels, there are agricultural business district

292 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:50:08.370 --> 00:50:21.450

parcels where we want to protect. We also have identified where we want to incentivize development and that's in the lower portion just below the Village of Red hook.

293 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:50:21.450 --> 00:50:37.380

We want to have instead of sprawl, concentrated, walkable, traditional neighborhood districts and if you look to the bottom right of this zoning map here, it is focused in on several.

294 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:50:37.380 --> 00:50:47.220

of the traditional neighborhood districts, residential commercial center, and we even have an office industrial area.

295 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:50:47.220 --> 00:50:55.920

What we're looking for is not only critical mass of preserving our farmlands. We're looking for critical mass

296 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:50:55.920 --> 00:51:03.570

to help inspire our downtowns as well and give our local businesses

297 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:03.570 --> 00:51:23.570

the type of chance to succeed there as well. So we used incentive zoning and in the traditional neighborhood districts, a developer can come in and actually get a bonus density pay for it.

298 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:23.570 --> 00:51:29.040

Funds can then be deposited into an incentive zoning fund.

299 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:29.040 --> 00:51:32.940

To later be deployed on to protect

300 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:32.940 --> 00:51:36.660

open spaces within the agricultural

301 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:36.660 --> 00:51:50.490

business district area. We recently earlier this year modified the incentive zoning law to allow for lands to be acquired also for affordable housing.

302 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:51:50.490 --> 00:52:00.750

Next slide please, here's a project that we're working on

303 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:52:00.750 --> 00:52:20.750

It's called the Cookingham farm the Cookinghams have been in this community for near a 100 years. They were on the farmers on both sides of Albany Post road or Route 9 it is the gateway in the village and township. In fact, the farm

304 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:52:20.750 --> 00:52:41.360

passes through both the village and town on both sides, making it a rather interesting place to have a farm in the village and to figure out what to do with it. It was about to be sold for development, Levittown style, sprawling development.

305 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:52:41.360 --> 00:52:55.110

Would destroy both incredible prime soils, which you see on the part that is green and near the roadway there are some of the best soils in the country and

306 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:52:55.110 --> 00:53:15.110

Of the town and we decided that we had to act quickly before one of those contracts were executed. And so we took the extraordinary step of actually acquiring the lands in order to preserve them. And during the course of the acquisition,

307 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:53:15.110 --> 00:53:23.040

walking the property, realized that there was an opportunity at the southern portion. There. You'll see there's a

308 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:53:23.040 --> 00:53:26.460

Small greyed out

309 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:53:26.460 --> 00:53:30.720

area there down there, thank you very much, highlighted.

310 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:53:30.720 --> 00:53:50.720

Which we've reserved those 12 acres, not currently being farmed, and that is going to be an affordable housing development. Twenty single family homes and 20 multi-family right there on route 9. we have you can see some of the water

311 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:53:50.720 --> 00:54:10.720

bodies there in green, so we are able to we have resource protection so there are very limited activities that can take place near that large water body. If you look all the way to the right of your map, you'll see a blue line going up and down. That's actually the

312 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:10.720 --> 00:54:31.820

tributary, and so what we've been able to do here as well as not only have an agricultural easement, but you'll see there's a little green area there that we have reserved where no cultivation or spraying can occur. So that we can protect the Sawkill, a class B stream, but is, in fact, the

313 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:31.820 --> 00:54:36.180

drinking water source for Bard college and our community.

314 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:36.180 --> 00:54:41.250

You can also see the blue line over on the left there.

315 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:41.250 --> 00:54:45.180

Where the Sawkill comes back.

316 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:45.180 --> 00:54:57.780

Thank you very much. And we are protecting all of those areas where our water treatment facility exists , just the right of that.

317 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:54:57.780 --> 00:55:03.210

And we are able to provide an adequate buffer.

318 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:55:03.210 --> 00:55:17.640

which we previously did not have for that facility. You'll also see on the West side that through this project, which is funded by a community preservation fund,

319 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:55:17.640 --> 00:55:37.640

revenues and matched by Scenic Hudson with an easement held by Dutchess Land Conservancy, you'll see the dotted look red lines are actually trails. So we are going to have a very unusual project for us because it's in the village and the property that joins with a village

320 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:55:37.640 --> 00:55:54.990

park that's at the bottom there, those red dotted lines and you see them right there. Exactly. That's a village park. And so we are going to extend a pathway there into and through the farm and then it's going to connect over,

321 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:55:54.990 --> 00:56:14.990

Once we get approval from DEC to have a bridge over the Sawkill to our recreation park, and you can see a recreation park over there where there's yet another blue line, going up and down. You might be able to see the baseball fields and so on and so forth. So we have a wonderful opportunity here with one project to protect a lot of water resources., agricultural soils, create a connection between.

323 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:56:34.990 --> 00:56:40.110

2 public parks by adding a couple of miles worth of trails.

324 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:56:40.110 --> 00:56:58.920

At the same time, and I believe that is the last slide I have, I did send one over last minute during the course of this. We did have a project a few years ago

325 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:56:58.920 --> 00:57:12.750

Winnakee land trust applied for

326 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:57:12.750 --> 00:57:16.590

A WQIP grant,

327 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:57:16.590 --> 00:57:26.250

You see these areas that are colored in brown, these are areas that are probably initially a little too wet

328 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:57:26.250 --> 00:57:46.250

to continue the suburban style development that was created back in the fifties and sixties when IBM came into the Hudson Valley. And Winnakee applied for state funds, we use CPF money to match and to get public access easement.

329 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:57:46.250 --> 00:57:55.830

These are a continuation of trails you'll see some of the lines there throughout. So we have been able to protect

330 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:57:55.830 --> 00:58:08.310

This is what we call the trail you may, or may not be able to see on this map, the blue lines running through it. It's continuation of the hill.

331 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:58:08.310 --> 00:58:12.210

Just west of that recreation park.

332 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:58:12.210 --> 00:58:16.800

That we have seen on the previous slide. Very good.

333 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

00:58:16.800 --> 00:58:38.370

So we have accomplished a lot of protection of the water resources at the same time that we've been able to create passive recreation and to create a protect habitat and so on and so forth.

334 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:58:38.370 --> 00:58:44.940

And that is the Red Hook case study.

335 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:58:44.940 --> 00:59:02.460

Thank you so much. That was great and impressively, right on the money. 3 o'clock. We have 5 minutes for some really great questions have been coming in. I first wanted to say, thank you so much for reminding everybody too about the importance of partnership. You know, you've talked about Winnakee Land Trust, .

336 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:02.460 --> 00:59:11.790

Dutchess Land Conservancy, Scenic Hudson. You know, a lot of the success I think you've seen in the town right has been enhanced by those partnerships and

337 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:11.790 --> 00:59:15.750

you also emphasized something that.

338 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:15.750 --> 00:59:30.420

we hear more and more with regards to smart growth. The idea of not only prioritizing conservation areas, but prioritizing your development growth areas. And for either one of those to be in a vacuum is probably not going to lead to

339 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:30.420 --> 00:59:50.420

te amount of success that you would see if you were thinking about both where the town can grow, or the villages can grow and where to conserve. And so I think that's an important take home message for everybody to think not in those silos, not to make a farming reference, but to kind of break down the silos and think about those together. Absolutely. Yeah. So a couple of questions.

340 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:50.420 --> 00:59:57.390

One is about how an incentive zoning fund is established by the town board. , They asked

341 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

00:59:57.390 --> 01:00:01.939

if it's a valid initiative for that established by the town board. So basically, how does incentive zoning

342 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:00:01.939 --> 01:00:13.290

work in the way you talked about it? It's authorized understate enabling legislation, the town can go ahead and do it as it would enact any other type of law?

343 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:00:13.290 --> 01:00:28.500

You have to follow the usual procedures, public hearings and so on and so forth. But you do need to understand and articulate what are the community benefits that you would

344 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:00:28.500 --> 01:00:32.495

obtain with those incentive zoning funds.

345 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:00:32.495 --> 01:00:40.620

And then another great question that I'm not sure either one of you touched on is the

346 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:00:40.620 --> 01:00:47.175

updates, but the question is, can parcels be added after the establishment of the CPF? Or do they all.

347 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:00:47.175 --> 01:01:09.110

have to be identified before the vote? Well, that's yeah, that's a great question. And as I was teasing about Neil offering to stay on till all 5172 parcels are preserved. I think what you can, , the take away from that is, is that you're best to err on the side of including

348 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)



01:01:09.110 --> 01:01:29.110

as much as you can, and you have a ranking so that you, you see where a parcel or a project falls before you decide whether or not, you're going to fund it or wait till some other day. We've, we've had to do that. The law actually.

349 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:01:29.110 --> 01:01:49.110

requires that you not make changes to it initially for a period of time but then you must update it every few years, which is a good exercise anyway. And so when we first started out way back when so now we're talking 16 years ago.

350 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:01:49.110 --> 01:02:07.555

our emphasis was a priority of agricultural lands. In one of our more recent updates we prioritize water resource protection, which is, of course, critical to the community as well.

351 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:02:10.719 --> 01:02:31.620

Right, Neil, did you want to add anything? Yeah, no, Robert explained it really well, you are expected to update it periodically. And it's a good thing to update, but it's a good thing, not to do it every single time, because we've already found parcels that we're like "oh, I can't believe we didn't add that." And so keeping track of, like, things that you

352 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:02:31.620 --> 01:02:35.297

know, like riparian areas and things like that.

353 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:02:35.297 --> 01:02:40.500

So, I just want to shift gears. We had a couple of questions about

354 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:02:40.500 --> 01:02:52.530

A proposed legislation to expand authorization of community preservation fund. Are you aware of any movement in Dutchess county? For state legislation? Allowing all towns to pursue real estate transfer taxes?

355 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:02:52.530 --> 01:02:59.175

Or do you want to talk about any statewide initiatives to expand authorization?

356 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:02:59.175 --> 01:03:07.740

Okay, I'm not up on the latest and greatest. Neil may know. .

357 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:03:07.740 --> 01:03:12.133

Neil, obviously, you're newer to the party.

358 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:03:12.133 --> 01:03:27.740

I know that it has come up, you know, to do a state-wide [authorization]. I don't know if it made it out of committee last year or not. Someone else may know more than I do, but it's always worth talking to your

359 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:03:27.740 --> 01:03:31.050

local elected officials, that's how we were able to get

360 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:03:31.050 --> 01:03:49.140

Ulster county added on, you know. There had basically been, we've been wanting to do this for a while. We knew Red Hook was doing the right thing and, you know, we had talked about this and there was basically a moratorium for a long time. And then we had some, some shifts at the, at the state level, in the Senate and the Assembly.

361 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

01:03:49.140 --> 01:03:57.141

And we were lucky enough to have a senator that was willing to push this forward for us. And so it never hurts to talk to, your

362 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:03:57.141 --> 01:04:19.010

elected officials. Yeah, there's, you know, obviously politics being what it is, nobody necessarily wants to jump in front of something that's going to have an added fee to constituents in a district. But, you know, it's important for folks to understand. This is really just an insurance policy. You wouldn't

363 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:04:19.010 --> 01:04:31.470

remove homeowner's insurance from your house and so this is another form of insurance to what is in fact, oftentimes the largest investment.

364 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:04:31.470 --> 01:04:44.070

You know, that folks have in their names so having this community preservation fund stabilizes real estate values.

365 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:04:44.070 --> 01:04:54.810

Way back when, when we did the analysis, maybe 20 years ago before PDR, we looked at some studies and it showed that communities with it

366 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:04:54.810 --> 01:05:08.820

had on average of course, there was no average community, about 22% higher valuations and you can take a look at Hilton Head island as sort of the prime example of

367 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:05:08.820 --> 01:05:14.610

If you're familiar with how that developed out in the thirty's, they actually preserved,

368 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:05:14.610 --> 01:05:26.995

or earlier, they preserved the nearly one fourth of Hilton Head island before they developed it. And you can see that it's remained an attractive place for people to live and invest.

369 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:05:26.995 --> 01:05:42.691

Thank you both for your presentations, thanks to the participants for the interesting questions and your responses. I know we're supposed to be going to break, which I think Christine is going to lead us into. Carli- Did you want to say anything now or do you want to can you touch upon.

370 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:05:42.691 --> 01:05:43.874

This in your presentation>

371 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:05:43.874 --> 01:05:47.520

I'll touch on it later. Great, perfect.

372 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:05:47.520 --> 01:05:52.589

Wonderful well, thanks to our first two presenters looking forward to the rest of the session. Christine, that's all you.

373 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:05:52.589 --> 01:06:08.760

Well, before we take a break, we wanted to put up a poll question. Hear from our participants a little bit about their sense of local open space priorities and where their communities may be at with

374 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:08.760 --> 01:06:13.410

local open space planning and financing. So I'm going to open a poll.

375 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:13.410 --> 01:06:17.820

And if you would respond, it's 2 questions.

376 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:17.820 --> 01:06:22.800

Take a look.

377 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:22.800 --> 01:06:27.756

, to do so.

378 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:06:27.756 --> 01:06:34.795

Okay.

379 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:34.795 --> 01:06:39.570

You should see a poll.

380 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:44.790 --> 01:06:51.000

After you've taken the poll, you can then give yourself a break, stand up, get a drink.

381 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:06:51.000 --> 01:06:54.031

We'll come back at 3:12.

382 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

01:06:54.031 --> 01:07:02.490

Okay.

383 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:07:19.065 --> 01:07:26.600

I just wanted to share with folks who are on if they can't see the questions for the poll all the

384 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:07:26.600 --> 01:07:41.970

Way, you can actually expand your poll window. So there's a little button in the right hand corner with an arrow that shows kind of the expansion option. So that's one way. You can then adjust the size of the box. So you can see the full questions.

385 "Laura Heady (she, her)" (331472640)

01:07:41.970 --> 01:08:01.970

Thank you.

386 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:10:50.988 --> 01:10:56.160

Hi, we are already at 312.

387 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:10:56.160 --> 01:11:06.960

So, I'm going to close the poll and share.

388 "Christine Vanderlan" (4228381696)

01:11:06.960 --> 01:11:18.687

Results.

389 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:11:18.687 --> 01:11:22.564

I'm not seeing the results are.

"Ingrid Haeckel"

so hello everyone .

396 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:11:53.040 --> 01:11:57.000

My name is Ingrid Haeckel and so I'll

397 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:11:57.000 --> 01:12:17.000

I'll look through these results. We asked about what kinds of open spaces are top priorities in your community and the top response is areas important for biodiversity, wildlife, habitat and nature preserves. That was 47%. 40% said water resource.

398 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:12:17.000 --> 01:12:24.180

Including wetlands, streams and ponds, and then it looks like areas important for ground water.

399 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:12:24.180 --> 01:12:35.610

and as well as areas important for parks and passive recreation were tied for 3rd. So that's interesting.

400 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:12:35.610 --> 01:12:38.820

401 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:12:38.820 --> 01:12:58.820

All right, so welcome back from the break. My name is Ingrid Haeckel, and I was recently promoted to manager of the Hudson River Estuary Program at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and I'll be presenting this next section together with Carli.

402 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:12:58.820 --> 01:13:10.860

who is the state policy manager at Scenic Hudson about some tools funding and training available to get started with conservation planning and financing.

403 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:13:10.860 --> 01:13:30.860

And just as a reminder, here's our agenda and many thanks again to our speakers to Neil and Robert for their presentations in the first, part of the program. So, the second half of the program will also include two more case studies from the Town of Bethlehem. And the city of Kingston, and will introduce

404 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:13:30.860 --> 01:13:42.240

those speakers shortly, and then we'll have again some extended time for Q and A, at the end and aim to wrap up by 4:30.

405 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:13:42.240 --> 01:13:58.860

So, if you're just getting started with considering local options for financing, open space protection, my suggestion is to become knowledgeable about the prior studies and planning your community has already completed to identify priorities.

406 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:13:58.860 --> 01:14:18.720

And Neil touched on this as well in his presentation, your community may already have laid the groundwork for such an effort by creating a natural resources inventory, or undertaking other studies, like habitat mapping, or you might already have an open space inventory or plan identifying conservation priorities.

407 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:14:18.720 --> 01:14:35.016

Or, perhaps there are priorities in your comprehensive plan, maybe your comprehensive plan already includes recommendations to pursue conservation finance strategies. So, become knowledgeable about this prior planning work and what you already have

408 "" (0)

01:14:35.000 --> 01:14:38.779

And, how the community has been engaged in this.

409 "" (0)

01:14:38.779 --> 01:14:58.779

to date. In addition, county and regional open space conservation plans can be useful to providing context for priorities in your community. And it's also really helpful to begin thinking early on about potential partners, especially land trusts and start to have conversations

410 "" (0)

01:14:58.779 --> 01:15:04.610

about your ideas.

411 "" (0)

01:15:04.610 --> 01:15:24.610

If your community doesn't already have an open space plan or a community preservation plan, then a next step may be to engage the public on this topic and to identify conservation priorities and outline strategies, including possible financing options. Our Hudson River Estuary Grants Program

412 "" (0)

01:15:24.610 --> 01:15:33.050

Stewardship planning grants can fund these types of plans as well as conservation finance feasibility studies.

413 "" (0)

01:15:33.050 --> 01:15:44.870

In addition, some communities have used Hudson River Valley Greenway Community Planning Grants to fund these projects. And so I'm going to share two quick examples of funded projects.

414 "" (0)

01:15:44.870 --> 01:16:04.870

So, the first, is the Phillips town conservation finance feasibility study and this was a component of an intermunicipal habitat connectivity plan that was undertaken by Hudson Highlands Land Trust in cooperation with the two municipalities Phillipstown and Putnam Valley.

415 "" (0)

01:16:04.870 --> 01:16:24.870

Funded by an estuary grant, they subcontracted with the Trust for Public Land to conduct the feasibility study, which evaluated public financing options, and estimated potential revenues from an hypothetical community preservation fund. And it also analyzed municipal voting record

416 "" (0)

01:16:24.870 --> 01:16:28.460

on different tax measures.

417 "" (0)

01:16:28.460 --> 01:16:40.490

The land trust subsequently worked with Phillipstown to create a community preservation plan also with some funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program. And that plan was adopted a few months ago.

418 "" (0)

01:16:40.490 --> 01:17:02.770

And the next examples from the town of Gardiner in Ulster County, and Gardiner received funding to create a community preservation plan from a Hudson River Valley, Greenway grant, the program also contributed some funding to that effort through our partnership with Cornell University, which helps cover mapping related expenses.

419 "" (0)

01:17:02.770 --> 01:17:22.490

And this was the committee that worked on the plan, which utilized a recently completed NRI that we had supported and the town's prior open space plan as the basis for prioritizing parcels for preservation. And Gardiner voters went on to approve a CPF ballot measure in November of last year.

420 "" (0)

01:17:22.490 --> 01:17:44.170

NYS also offers some grants to municipalities throughout the state for land protection projects. And the first program is the community forest conservation grant program, which offers grants of between 50 and 300,000 dollars for municipal land acquisition of properties of

421 "" (0)

01:17:44.170 --> 01:17:59.630

10 acres or more to establish community forest, the community forests are intended to build local ownership of forests and increased community participation in forest land management, and also promote community connections to forest benefits.

422 "" (0)

01:17:59.630 --> 01:18:19.630

And the 2nd program is the WQIP land acquisition funding for source water protection and Robert mentioned this grant program was a source of funding. And in that last example, from Red Hook, this also provides grants of up to 5 million dollars to municipalities, land trusts, and

423 "" (0)

01:18:19.630 --> 01:18:39.630

Soil and water conservation districts to purchase land and or conservation easement to protect public drinking water, such as lands surrounding reservoirs, or other areas that drain to public water supplies. And you can access the for both of these opportunities through web pages listed here.

424 "" (0)

01:18:39.630 --> 01:18:47.947

We will be sharing all the slides so I'm going to pass them now to Carli to continue the presentation.

425 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:18:51.080 --> 01:19:11.080

Thank you Ingrid. Yeah, so now that we have learned quite a bit more about conservation finance options, and there's still a lot more valuable information to come. So stay on the edge of your seats here , you might be thinking, at this point, let's do it. I'm ready to go how can I learn more and

426 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:11.080 --> 01:19:18.199

Something in my own community, and there are many resources available from a variety of different sources to get you started.

427 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:18.199 --> 01:19:23.419

So, we've talked a little bit about resources from the Hudson River Estuary Program.

428 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:23.419 --> 01:19:31.999

We also, Scenic Hudson has a web page dedicated to community preservation funds on our Defend the Valley website.

429 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:31.999 --> 01:19:41.629

And the Trust for Public Land also has a conservation finance program that you can learn more about. They've been a really valuable partner.

430 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:41.629 --> 01:19:51.769



For many of the communities that have done conservation finance options in the past that we have worked with. , and then Ingrid mentioned.

431 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:19:51.769 --> 01:20:07.669

A little bit earlier partnerships with local land trusts, or your local environmental not for profit organizations. Having a partner in one of these organizations is really valuable when pursuing community or conservation finance just because

432 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:20:07.669 --> 01:20:15.589

they have technical resources, they have staff available to help you. They can connect you to the right people who have information on

433 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:20:15.589 --> 01:20:32.239

a program that you're trying to accomplish and really, it just makes the process go a lot smoother when you have a strong local land trust or environmental organization on your side. And then finally I'm going to talk about trainings, but you'll see

434 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:20:32.239 --> 01:20:50.089

all of these links here, there's a ton of resources. If you're furiously writing or trying to take screenshots, we're going to send all of these out and you'll be able to click on the links afterwards, we're going to be sending out a follow up email within the next couple of weeks here. So everything will be in there that you need to know. And that I've talked about today.

435 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:20:50.089 --> 01:21:04.999

We also have held trainings in the past for conservation finance and community preservation funding. , you can see in the photo there.

436 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:21:04.999 --> 01:21:24.999

We held a training way back in November of 2019, coincidentally, on this day, back in 2019. so we've been holding these trainings for many years, and many years before I became involved in conservation, finance and community preservation funds. So we have a lot of strong panelists.

437 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:21:24.999 --> 01:21:35.149

Like the ones that are on this webinar today that are able to talk about what they've done in their communities. We

438 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:21:35.149 --> 01:21:55.149

learn from them what options do we have? How can we begin? and specifically on community preservation funding, we have ballot measure trainings that we've called with the Campaign Workshop,

which is an organization that helps has helped communities in the Hudson Valley with their community preservation fund

439 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:21:55.149 --> 01:21:59.809

campaigns, and also the Trust for Public Land has been a really great partner

440 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:21:59.809 --> 01:22:16.699

in helping communities on their path from passing the local laws, all the way up to getting language on the ballot that voters will vote on in November. So, these trainings create this learning network that we're hoping

441 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:22:16.699 --> 01:22:24.889

will enable new municipalities that are just starting to think about this to learn from people who have done it in the past.

442 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:22:24.889 --> 01:22:33.529

And, we think it's been a really great resource, and we will continue to hold trainings in the future. Like this.

443 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:22:33.529 --> 01:22:47.689

Next slide please. So speaking of information gathering and learning from other municipalities, I convene a community preservation fund coalition

444 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:22:47.689 --> 01:23:02.209

that meets every month, and this meeting is meant to be an information sharing session where municipal representatives have the opportunity to share what's going on in their communities, hear lessons and stories from others, and then ask questions of me,

445 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:02.209 --> 01:23:07.549

local land trust staff who attend the meeting, and also other municipal leaders. So we have about.

446 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:07.549 --> 01:23:21.469

15 municipalities that participate in the coalition, and this allows for really robust discussions and our next meeting is happening on November 28 as you can see there at 3:00 PM. So, if you're interested in attending.

447 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:21.469 --> 01:23:24.739

Please email me and I'll add you to our list.

448 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:24.739 --> 01:23:38.449

The coalition meetings are also a great place to hear about upcoming events and opportunities in the local conservation finance world. Like today's training, as well as policy efforts that are happening both at the local level

449 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:38.449 --> 01:23:44.929

and statewide, and just to respond to the question about statewide authorization.

450 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:44.929 --> 01:23:49.639

If anyone is interested in taking a look at the legislation, if you're a little bit wonky,

451 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:23:49.639 --> 01:24:01.039

the bill numbers are a 16,257 in the assembly and asks 40 98 in the Senate. I'll put those in the chat as well if you're interested, but basically what the legislation would do

452 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:24:01.039 --> 01:24:09.649

Is give state authorization to any municipality, other than New York City to establish a community preservation fund. So currently,

453 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:24:09.649 --> 01:24:19.819

we saw earlier in the presentation that only 3 counties have statewide authorization under the Hudson Valley community preservation act. This would expand.

454 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:24:19.819 --> 01:24:37.099

The authorization statewide, but in order to do this, a lot of support is needed all the way from local volunteers to our state legislators and, like Supervisor Bettez said, I encourage you all to signal your interest if you are interested,

455 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:24:37.099 --> 01:24:51.589

to your local government officials who can then begin to advance this issue all the way up to the governor's office where it has to go for her to sign it in order for everyone to get a state authorization. So, you can also reach out to me for more information on this if you'd like.

456 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:24:57.619 --> 01:25:05.209

And now I am very excited to pass it on to our next speakers here.

457 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:05.209 --> 01:25:10.609

Rob Leslie is the director of planning for the Town of Bethlehem.

458 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:10.609 --> 01:25:15.889

And he has been involved with open space planning initiatives in Bethlehem since 2007.

459 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:15.889 --> 01:25:22.309

And has been guiding the town through planning efforts, administration and implementation of conservation easement

460 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:22.309 --> 01:25:25.699

funding sources and acquisition and management.

461 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:25.699 --> 01:25:35.299

And our other speaker following Rob will be Julie Noble. She is the environmental education and sustainability coordinator for the City of Kingston and in this capacity.

462 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:35.299 --> 01:25:40.819

Julie manages Kingston environmental projects, initiatives and programming, including

463 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:40.819 --> 01:25:44.329

energy plans, land use, climate adaptation, transportation,

464 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:44.329 --> 01:25:58.789

solid waste, and environmental education and serves as the climate smart community coordinator and conservation advisory council liaison as well as the vice president of the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions. So we've got two.

465 "Carli Fraccarolli" (3399157760)

01:25:58.789 --> 01:26:07.620

Very busy speakers who are doing such great work here. And I will pass it onto Rob.

466 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:26:11.059 --> 01:26:14.119

Great. Thanks, Carli. Let me, , share my screen.

467 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:26:22.909 --> 01:26:38.629

Okay, so good afternoon everyone, , thanks for having me, excited to learn about the programs in Red Hook and New Paltz and, and also excited to share experience

468 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:26:38.629 --> 01:26:42.049

with our farms and forest conservation program.

469 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:26:42.049 --> 01:26:47.599

We are located in the capital district.

470 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:26:47.599 --> 01:27:07.599

, just outside of the city of Albany, just south of the city of Albany, we do have a Hudson River waterfront. About 10 miles of our town boundary is Hudson River. But we are, , you know, obviously located in a capital region and so I'm glad to share, capital regions experience in open space conservation.

471 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:27:07.599 --> 01:27:27.639

Bethlehem is a community of about 35,000 people , we mainly have our developed areas in the central and northern portions of our town. , but as you move to the to the southern, Southern central part of our town, it starts to become more rural, more open and becomes the focus of our open space,

472 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:27:27.639 --> 01:27:31.879

recent efforts in the southern and Western areas of our community.

473 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:27:31.879 --> 01:27:39.919

I'm going to start the presentation this afternoon with some lessons learned. I always like to get into those quick.

474 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:27:39.919 --> 01:27:52.279

Quick information pieces first, and then hopefully, as you listen to the remaining part of the presentation, you'll see, you know, where we've come to these conclusions and lessons learned. And so the first one is open space is a finite resource.

475 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:27:52.279 --> 01:28:05.299

We really are not making any more land. And so we, we certainly respect that there's a urgency of you know, putting funding in place, putting plans in place to conserve open space in Bethlehem.

476 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:28:05.299 --> 01:28:08.929

And so that also leads to being prepared, you know, plan now.

477 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:28:08.929 --> 01:28:28.929

The best time to plan is yesterday and knowing what areas of your town you want to conserve is important. So document those areas of town that are important to you. And that could be done through,

committees through, you know, through grant funds but also, knowing what areas are important to you can help you tell your story.

478 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:28:28.929 --> 01:28:37.579

To grant reviewers, or telling your story to other conservation organizations, who would look to partner with you.

479 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:28:37.579 --> 01:28:47.509

You also need to have a commitment from your elected officials. They need to be prepared to navigate some of the politics that they get involved with, with open space conservation. Well, you may have.

480 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:28:47.509 --> 01:29:07.509

Your documents in hand, with your comprehensive plan, or open space plan, you know, times change and people change and having that documentation is good. But you also need elected officials to stay the course and, keep pursuing the town's goals and keep pursuing the town's vision for their for community, if open space conservation

481 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:29:07.509 --> 01:29:23.779

Amongst those goals. Elected officials are also helpful in continuing the communication with other town departments in Bethlehem. Any of the land that we own and maintain, you know, is maintained by, maybe it's a combination of our parks department or our highway department.

482 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:29:23.779 --> 01:29:31.189

You know, keeping an eye on things, monitoring the property, taking down fallen dead trees.

483 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:29:31.189 --> 01:29:51.189

Management of the land is also needed, and you have several resources at your disposal through your town departments in Bethlehem. It's our parks and highway department, leaning on your controller to help, you know, sift through any, you know, open space financing options that might be available to using your planning department to facilitate committee discussions and document

484 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:29:51.189 --> 01:30:09.289

production to help you plan for your areas in town that are important to you are also important. And then in Bethlehem we also use our engineering department as we pursue our conservation easement easements with property owners. There may be some GPS technology that's needed, surveys that are needed, and our engineering department

485 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:30:09.289 --> 01:30:14.629

is involved in that as well. And then applying those municipal resources

486 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:30:14.629 --> 01:30:26.269

towards conservation measures is to have a successful municipal open space program, you really need to be applying open space resources in addition to all those departments that I mentioned.

487 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:30:26.269 --> 01:30:46.269

We've had some success in Bethlehem and initially using our planning staff to move along some of our open space initiatives, but they are also those staff are also, you know, pushed on other projects in town, whether it's bicycle ped, transportation, development reviews. And so we really started to see

488 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:30:46.269 --> 01:31:06.269

in our open space conservation program through a specific open space coordinator that was hired part time to be the sole focus of open space conservation in our town. In your community, if you don't have resources to to hire an open space coordinator, you know, maybe it's a volunteer position where somebody can start off volunteer and then maybe it leads into a part time

489 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:31:06.269 --> 01:31:17.179

open space position. We really started to see efforts being achieved and, you know, goals being achieved once we had somebody, , dedicated to open space conservation.

490 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:31:17.179 --> 01:31:37.179

And then grassroots support is also critical having community groups, advocacy groups continue to, , you know, provide positive messaging around town, supporting the town board on decisions, encouraging the town board to continue with funding opportunities or pursuing grants applications.

491 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:31:37.179 --> 01:31:48.259

Having those grassroots efforts is critical, so that when a time is right for an opportunity, when an opportunity arises, you have that advocacy a role in place to advance projects.

492 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:31:48.259 --> 01:31:57.799

And then finally staying the course. These things take time. Looking back on Bethlehem farms and forest conservation program,

493 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:31:57.799 --> 01:32:00.979

I would say it probably started in its

494 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:00.979 --> 01:32:20.979

In its infancy with the adoption of our 2005 comprehensive plan. That really started the ball rolling with some committees being started community conversations happening. And then now, where we are

today with a, a program that has funding in place and conservation easement exemption tools in place, ,  
Tt's taking time- we're close to 20 years now. As far as where we've.

495 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:20.979 --> 01:32:27.919

been back to 2005 and we are today, so it takes time and stay the course is the message, for that lesson  
learned.

496 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:27.919 --> 01:32:32.839

So, our program here is is really about land owner options and community benefits.

497 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:32.839 --> 01:32:41.179

It is staffed through our town planning departments and with the main capacity serving from our open  
space coordinator.

498 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:41.179 --> 01:32:52.549

And so, Bethlehem, like, the other presenters earlier today talked about, we've gone through our open  
space planning efforts with our comprehensive plan. We've done some community surveys

499 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:52.549 --> 01:32:58.189

, to really get folks involved and engaged in in the community's goal of open space.

500 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:32:58.189 --> 01:33:14.479

Conservation. And so, , speaking to, you know, some of the prior speakers today with the community  
preservation fund, we attempted to move ahead with a community preservation fund back in 2016. We ,  
spoke with our local legislators and

501 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:33:14.479 --> 01:33:34.479

got it passed through the Assembly, and then it was, it was not brought to the Senate and basically  
failed at that point. There was a strong real estate lobby that came on when this was put out into the  
legislature and we weren't prepared to give it the support that it needed. We didn't have the grassroots  
efforts in place.

502 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:33:34.479 --> 01:33:46.039

We didn't have messaging out there. There aren't any local community groups that would put out  
mailers in support of this. And the real realtor lobby really pushed back strong and

503 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:33:46.039 --> 01:34:04.969

it was never acted upon (in the Senate). So, in hindsight, you know, lessons learned, be prepared, you  
know, have the commitment from elected officials, educate your community, , you know, beforehand



and be prepared to, you know, put up an opposition to those who are opposing a community preservation fund.

504 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:34:04.969 --> 01:34:24.649

For Bethlehem, I think it will probably be some time before we even think about this again. We have been successful with other conservation measures and so, you know, all has not been lost. But if we were pursuing something like this, it would be some time before we actually, we actually pursue this again. And you'll, you'll see some of the other tools we're using, for our program on the next few slides.

505 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:34:24.649 --> 01:34:44.649

So, after 2016, as I said, when the community preservation fund was not successful, we started to do a little more, , community education and we held a scenic photo survey asking people to, you know, go out, take some photos of lands and areas in town that are most important to you, and it really started to stir up a conversation about the

506 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:34:44.649 --> 01:34:56.029

preserving lands with willing land owner involvement. That was a strong. component of our program that willing landowners participating in a voluntary program is key to our

507 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:34:56.029 --> 01:35:07.459

mission for open space conservation in town. The opinion survey in 2017 and 2018 generated a lot of responses really keying us into what is important to people.

508 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:35:07.459 --> 01:35:20.179

And we've also prepared a open space conservation values, maps, sort of a natural resource inventory for our town that really looks at all the natural resource elements in our community.

509 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:35:20.179 --> 01:35:40.179

And we've taken those natural resources and evaluated them through what we call our 25 criteria of natural resources, and then taking those parcels and apply those parcels to the natural resource, maps and really identified areas in our town that have the most significant amount of conservation value, so.

510 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:35:40.179 --> 01:35:57.619

You can see here in this blue map, the dark blue colors here, our parcels represent, areas that are significant value, and then the areas in light blue are more moderate, all of these are important to us. but when we have potential funding, you know, limitations and you have multiple

511 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:35:57.619 --> 01:36:07.189

properties that might be eligible or interested in conservation, this conservation priority areas map helps us make some decisions. It's not the final decision making here, but it's

512 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:36:07.189 --> 01:36:11.509

it's one of the informative tools we use when making decisions.

513 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:36:11.509 --> 01:36:33.399

We've also taken it upon ourselves to provide public education through events. Like, today, this webinar. We have some local events in person about 2 years ago. We were really focused on this and meeting at environmental education center, Indian Ladder farms, putting on programs for town, residents and landowners to learn

514 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:36:33.399 --> 01:36:53.399

about the conservation options, landowners were specifically invited. Calls are made really to get folks in town who may have large properties and might be interested to learn more about the options that are available to them. Now, I believe we had about 100 people in attendance at both programs. So it was very well attended and well supported.

515 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:36:53.399 --> 01:37:00.649

So, moving on from that, we implemented our term conservation easement exemption program.

516 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:37:00.649 --> 01:37:20.649

as well as, you know, implementing our parkland set aside fund, I can only assume that the other the other speakers, today also have parkland set aside funds in place where, anytime there's residential development in your community, you can apply essentially a park land fee for that new home. In Bethlehem it is 2,200

517 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:37:20.649 --> 01:37:40.649

dollars for each single family home and then for other residential types, it's on a scale. Those fees come in at the time of building permit, and then we use those funds to either buy additional parkland for the community, or invest in new improvements to our existing parks. So, that

518 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:37:40.649 --> 01:37:50.689

Is one of the components and tools for our open space conservation program and our term conservation easement is also another tool. The term conservation easement exemption is a program that

519 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:37:50.689 --> 01:38:08.449

essentially allows us to provide a tax exemption on real property taxes. So, New York state real property tax law 491 allows municipalities to issue tax exemptions on property that is foregoing development. So, for a period of

520 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:08.449 --> 01:38:18.739

15 years, land can be placed into a conservation easement with the town. The easement is filed with the deed in the county clerk's office.

521 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:18.739 --> 01:38:26.269

And the owner will receive a 50% exemption, and you can see here on the table, , 50% exemption on their assessed value of the land.

522 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:26.269 --> 01:38:34.189

, to receive the savings again, the benefit being the land is not developed and the land owner receives a exemption on their property taxes.

523 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:34.189 --> 01:38:37.249

Similar to some other state laws,

524 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:37.249 --> 01:38:51.079

each municipality who is interested in this term conservation easement exemption has to apply to the legislature. The legislature has to approve, approve the municipality individually and then you can go ahead and establish your program.

525 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:38:51.079 --> 01:39:11.079

You then also need to receive approval from each of the taxing jurisdiction. So, for us, it's our county as well as our 3 school districts. We have 3 school districts that span our border and so to date we have approval from Bethlehem school district which is the largest school district in town. The town of Guilderland ---what?

526 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:39:11.079 --> 01:39:31.079

Just recently received their special legislation and so, because we have such a small area of town in the Guilderland school district, we're doing what we can to support the town of Guilderland and pursuing school tax exemption. And then we still have, you know, some early stages of speaking with the Ravena Coeymans school district to see if they would be willing to come

527 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:39:31.079 --> 01:39:37.639

into the program. So again, this program has

528 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:39:37.639 --> 01:39:56.509

conserved over 200 about 217 acres in our town, and is a just 1 tool of you know, options to achieve open space. ,. We don't buy the land. The owner continues to own the land. They're just receiving an exemption on the assessed value of their of their property.

529 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:39:56.509 --> 01:40:00.859

The school districts, I do want to mention the school district tax is important, because

530 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:40:00.859 --> 01:40:14.359

it represents about 70% of your property tax, so having the school districts on board so that it applies to the school districts district is key. If you are going to attract people who are interested in the financial incentive of such an exemption.

531 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:40:14.359 --> 01:40:23.329

And so the conservation easement exemption program is operated by our conservation easement review board, that board reviews applications along with

532 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:40:23.329 --> 01:40:28.969

a lot of work from our open space coordinator to review the applications,

533 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:40:28.969 --> 01:40:48.649

make a recommendation to the town board and then the town board will hold the public hearing on the matter and then consider approval after the public hearing. The public hearing gives us an opportunity to promote the program. And so we do take, you know, send out letters. Letting folks know that, hey, your neighbor's applying for a conservation easement, perhaps it in inspire someone to apply as well.

534 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:40:48.649 --> 01:41:08.649

So, using our parkland set aside fund, we also have purchased recently 68 acres of land in, the Delmar area of town to create a 147 acres park, , nature preserve park. Lesson learned here on this purchase was that it did come with a pre existing lease. So, as you get into your

535 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:41:08.649 --> 01:41:18.379

land acquisition program and buying land. Some lands may be encumbered with other leases

536 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:41:18.379 --> 01:41:27.949

And so know what you're getting into, and then try and work with what's there. In this case, we did have to change our town code to allow hunting on town parkland.

537 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:41:27.949 --> 01:41:42.949

And so, this currently comes with a 10 year lease, and we have to modify our town hunting law to allow preexisting leases on town land on town parkland to continue. So, with another, I think, maybe 5 years or so this lease will expire. And the hunting will

538 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:41:42.949 --> 01:41:56.269

we'll go away We, mark the property, the area that is allowed for hunting, there are signs up to warn folks that, between October and December, you know, hunting is occurring and it's, you know, a type situation.

539 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:41:56.269 --> 01:42:16.269

So, we were using the parkland set aside funds to purchase land. We've partnered Scenic Hudson to buy land, , in a partnership opportunity. The conservation easement exemption has been helpful in conserving land through property tax exemption. But we were missing that that funding tool.

540 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:42:16.269 --> 01:42:36.269

As I mentioned in 2016, we were unsuccessful in that community preservation fund and so we still had that that desire to fund open space conservation. And because we know that you need to be ready. You need to be prepared when landowners are ready to sell. You can't then be looking for your funds. You need to have those funds in place and so in

541 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:42:36.269 --> 01:42:47.119

working with our town controller, we established a farms and forest fund through which is essentially it's a capital reserve account.

542 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:42:47.119 --> 01:42:50.809

The forest and farmers fund is used to purchase conservation easements.

543 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:42:50.809 --> 01:43:10.069

The land owner retains the property, but the development rights of the property are essentially, extinguished and the owner receives the, the value of the development rights. They can do what they want with that property. The town can also use the farms and forest fund to purchase land also use it to leverage state and federal funds, pay other transaction costs.

544 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:10.069 --> 01:43:17.059

Those who have been involved in open space land acquisition knows there are land appraisals to pay for, title searches and land surveys.

545 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:17.059 --> 01:43:28.279

So, these funds can also be used for all those, soft cost type type, ,tech needs. , and it helps us to partner with other conservation organizations like, well, Mohawk Hudson and Scenic Hudson and others.

546 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:28.279 --> 01:43:44.839

And so the, the farms and forests fund authority is given to all municipalities, you don't need any special legislation for this one. So this is a good one to to have. New York state general, municipal law section, 60 and permitting municipalities to establish a capital reserve funds

547 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:44.839 --> 01:43:48.229

for the purchase of land or rights in land and so we established our

548 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:48.229 --> 01:43:54.979

capital reserve fund specifically for the purchase of open space land. We call it our farms and forest fund.

549 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:43:54.979 --> 01:44:01.909

And so essentially, , the way it works is, , it's funded by a percentage of the surplus

550 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:01.909 --> 01:44:10.369

in our general fund operating front at year end. So we hold a 20%, , you know, a fund balance to, to be in line with

551 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:10.369 --> 01:44:16.699

With our fund balance policy and then anytime there's a surplus over that 20%, .

552 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:16.699 --> 01:44:20.689

, a portion of those funds will go to a general capital reserve account.

553 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:20.689 --> 01:44:31.879

, and then also the farms and forest fund account. So, in Bethlehem if we do, tend to see a surplus, it's because we experienced they higher than expected mortgage, recording tax here.

554 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:31.879 --> 01:44:51.139

Maybe we had a better than expected sales tax year, or maybe there was some employment turnover, and we didn't fill positions and so all those unexpected unassigned funds go into this capital reserve account, which then can be split into the farms and forest fund and the general capital reserve account. And so.

555 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:51.139 --> 01:44:56.629

in setting this up in 2019 we look back on the previous 5 year, period

556 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:44:56.629 --> 01:45:05.029

and we said, well, you know, in the past 5 years, you know, the, the account, if we had this created, it would have grown to about 500,000 dollars.

557 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:05.029 --> 01:45:21.259

But to our surprise in 2021, , we saw that there was 2Million dollars put into the fund based on this on this formula. And an opportunity arose at the right time and correspond to have a 2Million dollars in the account.

558 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:21.259 --> 01:45:25.219

We had a land owner who was willing to sell, 300 acres of

559 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:25.219 --> 01:45:29.239

Of their property in an area of town that was seeing growth pressure.

560 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:29.239 --> 01:45:34.669

This was the historic key farm area at the intersection of Route 9 W and Wemple road.

561 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:34.669 --> 01:45:54.669

And this owner had about 300 acres available from the past years. He had looked to develop the property, but had some starts and stops and never really were able to get it, get it going. And so we pursued this with the owner, came to an agreement on the sales price and moved ahead with using the farms and forest fund and our open space.

562 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:45:54.669 --> 01:46:09.859

For this, for this purchase, anytime funds being used from a capital reserve account, those capital reserve funds are subject to a referendum. And in this case, there was a contingent contingency in town who was opposed to the town using

563 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:46:09.859 --> 01:46:29.859

these funds for open space conservation, and so they, , forced the referendum in November of that election year. And so, with that election, certainly, you know, there was a group supporting the proposal and there was also a group, in opposition to the proposal. And so, as we typically.

564 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:46:29.859 --> 01:46:44.239

In election cycles, September, October lot of political signs, lot of social media campaigning, going on to the the opposition of, you know, farmers say no, no to prep 2. and then you had the

565 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:46:44.239 --> 01:47:04.239

, supporting, , folks countering that opposition, putting the word out, getting out there on social media, setting, up websites and...Really, you know, trying to educate people that the farms and forest fund was set up for this exact purpose. Buying this land is what we did back in 2019 when we set up this account, and we're pursuing the, the purchase of land.

566 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:47:04.239 --> 01:47:08.059

with w willing land owner,

567 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:47:08.059 --> 01:47:28.059

The success here was that the vote was approved and so in November of 2022 proposition 2 passed with 61% of the vote, and the town successfully closed on the ownership of that land earlier this year, February of 2023. so successfully purchasing that 307 acres. We are now moving ahead with

568 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:47:28.059 --> 01:47:41.659

heath farm advisory committee to set up a vision for that land and move that vision ahead to, to the town board to look at some options and recommendations that can be used... to lease the land to a farmer, sell the land,

569 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:47:41.659 --> 01:47:48.649

extinguish the development rights, All those options around the table will be working with this committee to do. So, instead of a plan moving forward.

570 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:47:48.649 --> 01:47:58.147

And with that, I see, I'm approaching my 20 minutes, glad to

571 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:47:58.147 --> 01:48:01.399

wrap up here and answer questions as they, they come along.

572 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:01.399 --> 01:48:07.339

Thanks so much Rob, that was a wonderful presentation and it.

573 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:07.339 --> 01:48:27.339

It's just a wonderful example of a community that's you know, that tried to pursue the CPF authorization and didn't stop when that didn't come through. Right? And the communities been able to pursue some really creative alternatives to generating funding for open space conservation. , so that.

574 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:27.339 --> 01:48:33.355

That actually addresses one of the questions we have come up right before this. So, it's just for communities that



575 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:48:33.355 --> 01:48:41.599

have not been able to get that authorization, strategies they can.. I think the difference here is that with with the farms and forest fund,

576 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:48:41.599 --> 01:48:50.269

all community members are paying for open space. It's not for the real estate transfer tax where new homeowners are paying for it here with the

577 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:50.269 --> 01:48:54.439

First one, it's coming out of the general fund and all taxpayers are paying for them.

578 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:54.439 --> 01:48:59.959

Yep, yep. , and I guess maybe.

579 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:48:59.959 --> 01:49:10.246

On that note, also with the conservation easement program, in that case, it's kind of property owners are getting a tax break. Right?

580 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:10.246 --> 01:49:22.879

So, sort of being covered by all tax payers in the town in a way. Exactly. If there's a loss in the assessed value, other taxpayers are making up for that for that loss. And so, you know, on thousands of parcels,

581 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:22.879 --> 01:49:28.249

It's such a new increase to each property owners taxes to make up for the loss

582 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:28.249 --> 01:49:32.269

in assessed value from a, you know, open space parcel that's being preserved.

583 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:32.269 --> 01:49:42.019

I see no reason why, and maybe a handful of other communities in the state should have that special legislation for the conservation easement exemption. It's just another example of.

584 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:42.019 --> 01:49:48.019

It should be make it allowed for every community. Should they choose to pursue it.

585 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:48.019 --> 01:49:54.169

You know, having to go through a special legislation, Bethlehem, learn how to do it, our neighboring community, and just went through it.

586 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:49:54.169 --> 01:50:00.349

It it doesn't make sense to me, but but, you know, that's the way it is. And then, so I would certainly support, you know.

587 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:50:00.349 --> 01:50:03.600

, you know, full full approval for any municipality that wants to move ahead with the conservation easement tax exemption. Mm. Hmm.

589 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:50:07.099 --> 01:50:16.003

So, we had a couple questions in the chat. One was the clarification of whether the.

590 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:50:16.003 --> 01:50:24.598

Forest fund is maxed at 500,000 or that's just for a given year. Right? So, it's Max, it's maxed at 500,000 for a given year.

591 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:50:24.598 --> 01:50:27.522

So the amount of money that can go into that annually is

592 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:50:27.522 --> 01:50:34.404

no, more than 500,000. okay. But it can accrue over time more than that correct exactly. So for 2 years.

593 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:50:34.404 --> 01:50:43.159

Over 2 years, you could get a 1Million dollars available in there, right? And there's a question about

594 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:50:43.159 --> 01:50:50.462

You had noted that the town had to allow hunting on town parkland, , for one of those projects.

595 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:50:50.462 --> 01:50:54.439

Wondering how that affected town insurance rates.

596 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:50:54.439 --> 01:51:03.764

It wasn't an issue, so it's not something I yeah, I don't think it was an issue because it's not something that was brought to my attention.

597 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:51:03.764 --> 01:51:08.389

We didn't really, , I wouldn't say it wasn't an issue.

598 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:51:08.389 --> 01:51:24.319

Yeah, so this other question, I think kind of refers back to it Robert McKeon's previous presentation. So, maybe I'll hold that for later, but I have a question, which is just

599 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:51:24.319 --> 01:51:40.519

Over years, you've been doing a lot of outreach to land owners about these programs. , and I'm curious what you found in terms of how property owners are coming to you. Is it has it been a combination of just of, of people.

600 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:51:40.519 --> 01:51:50.199

Going to those events and becoming aware. Is it word of mouth? How do how are you reaching property owners? Or is the town also

601 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:51:50.199 --> 01:51:59.269

Proactively reaching out to some owners? Yeah, we are we have sent out, you know, those

602 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:51:59.269 --> 01:52:02.779

glossy mailers, informing folks about the program.

603 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:52:02.779 --> 01:52:16.759

, letting them know that these opportunities are available to them. Supervisor puts out messages in his monthly. There's a monthly newspaper publication that goes to every door in town, and he writes letters in that publication. So he's always talking about that.

604 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:52:16.759 --> 01:52:27.049

, , word of mouth is strong. The open space coordinator will just meet with people, whether it's in town hall or or go to their kitchen table and and sit and talk with them. , and, you know

605 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:52:27.049 --> 01:52:45.889

building that trust there's, there's a level of trust that needs to be built and these conversations take time, you know, these, these open space opportunities aren't happening overnight. And I'm starting a conversation through, , word of mouth is is, , is certainly key. And we have had some success in the mailers that have gone out.

606 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:52:45.889 --> 01:52:51.523

Receiving interest, hey, I read to Mailer. Can I speak with you? So those are some of the proactive ways we've

607 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:52:51.523 --> 01:52:58.722

getting the word out about conservation yeah. Great. And one last quick question.

608 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:52:58.722 --> 01:53:02.180

And is whether you're considering another pass at CPF.

609 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:53:02.180 --> 01:53:06.710

Not at this time. Yeah, not at this time. We're

610 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:53:06.710 --> 01:53:10.460

pursuing our current, we're utilizing our current tools.

611 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

01:53:10.460 --> 01:53:16.633

And at some point maybe, but yeah, there's no energy

612 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:16.633 --> 01:53:20.360

at this point for pursuing community preservation again.

613 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:20.360 --> 01:53:26.390

Great, thank you. ,

614 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:26.390 --> 01:53:30.090

Our next speaker is Julie Noble from the city.

615 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:53:30.090 --> 01:53:35.191

You have Kingston and Julie, you can put your slides up. Thanks so much.

616 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:35.191 --> 01:53:39.410

Great nice to see you. Bye you too.

617 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:39.410 --> 01:53:43.430

And we'll have more time for Q and A, for both.

618 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

01:53:43.430 --> 01:53:47.360

Rob and Julie, and any of the previous speakers at 415.

622 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:54:13.010 --> 01:54:33.010

All right so thanks so much for having me. My name is Julie Noble, and I am the sustainability coordinator for the city of Kingston and it's great to see everyone. It's like a reunion to see all the folks that I've been working with on conservation planning up until now. So, today I'm going to talk about

623 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:54:33.010 --> 01:54:50.150

the preliminary planning that the city of Kingston has gone through, that sets the foundation for pursuing finance strategies. So I'm going to kind of get into the nuts and bolts of the planning that we've done. And the steps that we've taken to lead us towards financing.

624 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:54:50.150 --> 01:55:01.190

First, perspective of where the city of Kingston is, we are located in Ulster County, an hour south of Albany, and 2 hours north of New York City, on the Hudson River.

625 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:01.190 --> 01:55:21.190

And we have a community of 24,000 people, so we are a, an urban city, but still a small city and we're only about 3 miles wide. So we're not very large, and we don't have a ton of open space. So, this makes it for a very interesting set of conservation plans and so it's been

626 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:21.190 --> 01:55:26.720

a really interesting process to go through. We've had a

627 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:26.720 --> 01:55:46.720

great track record thus far of our climate initiatives. Starting back in 2007 when I was hired as the city's first, environmental educator from there, we became a city of plans, not just of sustainability plans, but many others but some of the ones that have been most.

628 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:46.720 --> 01:55:50.810

poignant for us here in the city are our climate action plan,

629 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:50.810 --> 01:55:57.860

, back in 2012, our first climate action plan, then our resiliency plan in 2013.

630 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:55:57.860 --> 01:56:04.250

We have adopted our natural resources inventory in 2018 and I'll get into details about that.

631 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:56:04.250 --> 01:56:08.240

From there, we adopted our open space plan in 2020.

632 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:56:08.240 --> 01:56:26.630

And recently our community preservation plan in 2023, and now we're working on advancing our second climate action plan, which we passed just recently. So we've got a lot of different designations and we're working really hard, but we couldn't do it without the support of the state. And lots of other partners.

633 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:56:26.630 --> 01:56:45.590

So, the first step that we started was back in 2011, just like Rob mentioned previously, this has been a long and iterative process for the City of Kingston, and stay the course is a great recommendation that we also provide. And a key part of this

634 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:56:45.590 --> 01:57:05.590

although I work for the municipality and I'm employed by the city, so I wake up every morning and do this for a living and get paid to do it. I couldn't have done any of this conservation work without the partnership of our conservation advisory council. So, every municipality in New York state, by general municipal law is permitted to have a

635 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:57:05.590 --> 01:57:25.590

Conservation Advisory Council, this is an advisory body, and I highly recommend if your community does not have one to look into forming a CAC, to help to advance sustainability work. If you do have a CAC, really try to engage them. So, this all work and begins in our city in our conservation advisory council.

636 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:57:25.590 --> 01:57:42.980

And, frankly, at the time, we thought the CAC would handle all of this without any professional staff. And that ended up not being the case we needed to seek additional funding and support. So, for each of our plans, I'm just going to outline

637 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:57:42.980 --> 01:58:02.980

where we got the funding from, how much it costs, and how much work it was, so that folks can have an idea, at least for our community what, you know, what kind of commitment you're looking at. Our natural resources inventory was done by a, a mapping professional John Nicholson, we got a grant through

638 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:58:02.980 --> 01:58:11.720

State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary program and so that's when I started working with Laura and with Ingrid.

639 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:58:11.720 --> 01:58:15.050

And it was for 22,000 dollars, not a lot of money.

640 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:58:15.050 --> 01:58:35.050

We worked with the CAC, and I also use an intern from SUNY New Paltz who was in the GIS department. So I said, you know, this is a great opportunity to bring in and offset the funding with internship use. We partnered with the Kingston land trust, which is our local land trust, because we knew that we needed to have that relationship.

641 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:58:35.050 --> 01:58:41.690

The total project cost was 38,000 dollars. So the difference in that ended up being staff time my time.

642 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:58:41.690 --> 01:59:00.860

It took us 685.58 hours and 9 people total worked on it and we did this over the course of 3 and a quarter years. So, a long time I would say it was a not very efficient process. We could have done it a little bit more efficiently, but

643 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:00.860 --> 01:59:05.600

Either way it was, it was great and we ended up with the great natural resources inventory.

644 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:05.600 --> 01:59:25.600

And in that map, in that set of maps, we mapped our land canopy cover, our street trees, our corridors or habitat our waters, our parkland. So some of our specific parks we got into more detail on amenities in the parks, we did our soils.

645 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:25.600 --> 01:59:35.990

All these different things. Some of this data we created new unique to the City of Kingston and other data we found publicly available data and cropped it to the city.

646 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:35.990 --> 01:59:39.890

But none of us had existed before for us. So this is a great value.

647 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:39.890 --> 01:59:59.890

And the fact that we worked with other partners, particularly SUNY New Paltz, and others in CAC the really brought in a lot of workforce development, frankly as well. So we took the different layers, the recreation layers, the buffers, the historic resources, which was an important part for us. The cultural areas.

648 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

01:59:59.890 --> 02:00:09.950

We are a municipality that is urban. We didn't we don't have large tracts of land. We don't have huge farms. We don't have all that so we valued

649 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:00:09.950 --> 02:00:16.730

Historic spaces, cultural spaces, parkland and.

650 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:00:16.730 --> 02:00:31.670

As much as we could, forest cover and other significant habitats. So we layered all those together and we created a composite map, basically a heat map. And again, I'm kind of walking you through the baseline process of how we

651 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:00:31.670 --> 02:00:46.010

get through this conservation planning. So this is the city of Kingston, the darker areas mean there are a lot of values overlapped together. You can see that. The concentrated area in the center is gray, which means there's not a lot of

652 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:00:46.010 --> 02:00:53.060

natural Resource value, but that's how a city should be concentrated urban spaces, in fill development,

653 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:00:53.060 --> 02:01:07.100

And then using the periphery to, as your preservation of open space. Development in the core and conservation on the, on the fringes.

654 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:01:07.100 --> 02:01:10.160

So, that's what we started to see with our NRI.

655 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:01:10.160 --> 02:01:31.240

From there, though, we needed to create a plan, so we sought additional funding and the key here was that I sought additional funding from the same funding source. DEC Hudson River Estuary Program local stewardship planning grant, this time for 24,500 dollars?. A little bit more. It was a partnership with myself and the conservation advisory

656 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:01:31.240 --> 02:01:35.450

council and we brought on a planning and design firm, Behan Planning and Design.

657 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:01:35.450 --> 02:01:40.940

That total project we overlapped, so I still had my



658 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:01:40.940 --> 02:01:44.750  
consultant for my NRI was still in contract with the city

659 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:01:44.750 --> 02:01:48.110  
and I brought on the open space

660 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:01:48.110 --> 02:02:06.740  
consultant, so that they could transfer the information from one to another. And that total project cost us to 35,000 dollars. It took us 451.7 hours of staff and volunteer time. Fourteen of us put that project together. And we did it over the course of 2 years again, there was some overlap.

661 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:06.740 --> 02:02:10.880  
So, the point of our open space plan was to take that

662 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:10.880 --> 02:02:17.480  
objective data, so the objective layers, this is where the trees are; this is where the water is; this is what the soil is.

663 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:17.480 --> 02:02:24.080  
And create a subjective set of values for how to preserve that land.

664 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:24.080 --> 02:02:34.340  
So, from that sort of composite heat map that we had created with the NRI, we created an open space vision map.

665 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:34.340 --> 02:02:39.380  
Again, we don't have huge tracts of open space so we focused on things like urban and

666 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:39.380 --> 02:02:43.130  
Community gardens, additional

667 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:43.130 --> 02:02:50.420  
public access on our waterfront. So we are surrounded by water. We have the Esopus, the Rondout, and the Hudson River surrounding our city.

668 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:02:50.420 --> 02:02:57.980  
And frankly, pretty minimal amount of actual public space, public access. So we prioritize that.

669 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:02:57.980 --> 02:03:06.740

We don't have large tracts of forestland, so we've made goals for a 1000 new trees being planted in the next 10 years and

670 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:06.740 --> 02:03:10.790

We created corridor or zones

671 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:10.790 --> 02:03:14.960

where we wanted to permanently protect contiguous

672 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:14.960 --> 02:03:19.790

acreage, and it was important to us to also look at the

673 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:19.790 --> 02:03:23.420

communities next to ours to understand that.

674 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:23.420 --> 02:03:37.190

We knew that these habitats would overlap beyond our boundaries and so it was important for us to value those spaces, not only on the periphery of our city, but that would connect to other spaces in other communities. You know, adding a neighborhood park.

675 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:37.190 --> 02:03:41.780

These are things that work that we valued in our urban

676 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:41.780 --> 02:03:49.340

Open Space plan. And creating partnerships. We knew that we needed to partner with landowners.

677 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:03:49.340 --> 02:04:00.440

With a local land trust, and we've been working with Scenic Hudson, who's been a huge partner, our YMCA and our farm hub and Riverkeeper so all different.

678 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:00.440 --> 02:04:12.020

partners that have their hands in understanding and connecting to the land and how we could continue to do that here in the city. Also state agencies, federal agencies.

679 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:12.020 --> 02:04:22.310

And the public and across different departments, because I don't work in the planning office. I work in the parks department, but we need to coordinate with planning and other agencies.

680 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:22.310 --> 02:04:33.290

So, from there, we have this open space plan, but it didn't get down to the parcel level, and I'll get to the lessons learned in just a minute, but it didn't get down to.

681 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:33.290 --> 02:04:40.070

101 Wilson Avenue, we need to do this on this parcel. So we took that open space plan vision,

682 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:40.070 --> 02:04:49.310

the principals of what we wanted to do, and we brought it to the final level here, which is our community preservation plan. This process began in 2022.

683 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:49.310 --> 02:04:56.510

Same funder, NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program local stewardship planning program. Same funding

684 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:04:56.510 --> 02:05:16.510

stream all 3 times. This one was 50,000 dollars- big deal. So we use the same funding. We went out to RFP and we got the same consultant Behan planning and design and also the same GIS firm, Upstate GIS. We worked with the Conservation Advisory Council, and the land trust, continue to collaborate together on this. And this project costs us 57,000.

685 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:05:16.510 --> 02:05:22.700

A total, 300 hours, 10 people over 1.75 years.

686 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:05:22.700 --> 02:05:28.520

Creating our community preservation plan. This took that same composite map

687 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:05:28.520 --> 02:05:36.350

And our vision, and created a prioritization and scores for each individual parcel to say

688 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:05:36.350 --> 02:05:42.860

in this case, the darker the parcel, the larger value, the larger the score in terms of

689 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:05:42.860 --> 02:05:52.970

community preservation. And so you can say this is consistent with our NRI, and we can see that it really shows us now by the parcel level

690 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:05:52.970 --> 02:05:56.180  
where we should focus our energies.

691 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:05:56.180 --> 02:06:03.260  
This was really very interesting part of the whole process because it then got down to.

692 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:03.260 --> 02:06:23.260  
the level of being able to speak with and communicate with specific landowners to say yes, your parcel is now part of this or maybe your parcel is not. It was also very interesting, because we found a lot of folks who live in what we call mid town. The center part of Kingston saying, but wait, why, why doesn't why parcel of any color on it? And we did a lot of it

693 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:23.260 --> 02:06:30.920  
explanation and have continued to that. This is still very objective data. It means that maybe your partial doesn't have

694 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:30.920 --> 02:06:37.730  
Significant soils, so it doesn't have forest cover. It doesn't have an aquifer under it. It doesn't have

695 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:37.730 --> 02:06:49.610  
a wetland on it, it doesn't have, you know, it's not valuable farmland. It's not any of these other things doesn't mean that it's not culturally valuable or it doesn't mean that it's not good for housing

696 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:49.610 --> 02:06:52.910  
or other things, but from this.

697 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:52.910 --> 02:06:56.300  
Parcel prioritization for this.

698 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:56.300 --> 02:06:59.900  
This lens, that's this is the distinction.

699 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:06:59.900 --> 02:07:05.030  
So that's one of the key takeaways: First of all collaborating with partners.

700 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)  
02:07:05.030 --> 02:07:11.990

Because of the, the nature of this process, my, my job here is actually pretty much done.

701 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:07:11.990 --> 02:07:31.990

So, as a municipal employee, I'm not able to work on that campaign for community preservation fund. We are now partnering with the Kingston Land Trust. We had a meeting today about advancing this forward to a community preservation fund in next year's election cycle, to go to referendum. But that's not a process that I can do as a city staff person.

702 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:07:31.990 --> 02:07:39.350

Legally, so it's a key for us that we need to have that collaborative Kingston Land Trust, or some partner in the community.

703 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:07:39.350 --> 02:07:50.270

What was really important also to us, was to clearly articulate our goals, the intent, and the scope, and manage expectations of the community and our Common Council.

704 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:07:50.270 --> 02:07:58.580

Our authorization board And be clear about what the plans are and what they aren't. So when we came out with our open space plan, for instance.

705 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:07:58.580 --> 02:08:10.490

There were these big tracks of land that said, you know, we should preserve 50 acres within this space. And suddenly we had land owners who were all up in arms. Wait a second, you're saying you're taking away my land.

706 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:08:10.490 --> 02:08:24.380

And we had to do a lot of discussion about, you know, this is a general principle. This is the space we're going to be working with you, and as we got to the to the parcel level, of course, this whole thing is contingent on willing landowners, as has been stated before.

707 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:08:24.380 --> 02:08:32.600

And as I mentioned managing expectations of what the community preservation plan can, and cannot do.

708 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:08:32.600 --> 02:08:37.340

In the City of Kingston is this urban area one of the big concerns that we

709 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:08:37.340 --> 02:08:42.230

have at the top of our list all the time is housing and so folks

710 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:08:42.230 --> 02:09:02.230

At first, we're seeing this and saying, I can't believe you're taking away all this land. We should be preserving this for housing. You're gonna raise all this money through a fund. You should be spending this on housing. Why are you spending this on conservation and not on paving the roads? So it was really important for us to articulate what a community preservation plan can do and what it cannot.

711 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:09:02.230 --> 02:09:24.010

It cannot fund housing, it cannot fund infrastructure improvements on roads, and so it cannot fund new sewer systems. We need all those things in the city. We know, but this fund cannot fund those things. It is a dedicated part of money with specifically prescriptive uses. And so that was something we needed to articulate

712 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:09:24.010 --> 02:09:42.590

very early on, as was mentioned before understanding your local plans. Our zoning code was overhauled during this entire process. So we were struggling with that process and actually we're able to align that together and we identified those champions early. And the last thing I want to mention

713 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:09:42.590 --> 02:09:46.700

is deciding early when you're if you're doing this planning is

714 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:09:46.700 --> 02:10:06.700

who is going to work on it, whether you're working on it with staff or volunteers, or the consultant, or any combination of those things. As you see the grants that I pursued early on or very low value, and we did what we've could with it. But it meant that I needed to put in an incredible amount of my time and of

715 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:10:06.700 --> 02:10:21.050

volunteer time, so be very mindful that that programs and projects, even if you are a 3 mile square space with 24,000 people in the city of Kingston, that is urban. It still takes a long time.

716 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:10:21.050 --> 02:10:33.830

So manage your time. And so this is where we are going next, we have our 3 plans, we are going to be moving forward, as I said, with

717 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:10:33.830 --> 02:10:53.830

in collaboration with the Kingston land trust, who will be advancing to community preservation fund, looking at that next year. We're working closely with Scenic Hudson, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and the land trust and all the other partners that I mentioned to help us to move this forward. And should we be able to pass

718 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:10:53.830 --> 02:11:13.830

The community preservation fund next year I believe we will be the first city, certainly in the Hudson Valley to be doing so. I'm happy to take any questions and certainly, if anyone wants to follow up with anything, that's not conservation land related. Just a little plug. I also manage our organic program and

719 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:11:13.830 --> 02:11:23.434

the community choice aggregation and all of our energy programs here in this city and recycling and environmental education and lots of other things.

720 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:11:23.434 --> 02:11:41.060

And that all ties in together. So thank you all very much. Thanks so much, Julie. That was wonderful. And it's exciting to see how far you've come and understand the trajectory. So, if folks have questions.

721 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:11:41.060 --> 02:11:45.291

Please enter them using the Q and A function.

725 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:11:57.140 --> 02:12:06.740

I was curious from your experience, having done the open space plan, and the community preservation plan, pretty close to each other on the heels.

726 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:12:06.740 --> 02:12:13.550

, whether you see opportunity for other communities that might be thinking about moving forward.

727 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:12:13.550 --> 02:12:17.540

Not sure, like which plan should I be doing?

728 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:12:17.540 --> 02:12:20.749

Do you think there is an opportunity to integrate those two?

729 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:12:20.749 --> 02:12:25.550

Could there have been a single process and might that be an option, too?

730 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:12:25.550 --> 02:12:42.050

Yeah, it's a great question considering that I've been working on this is 2011 anyway that anyone can consolidate this into fewer plans that better. I know that Laura and Ingrid have been working with us for a long time on this.

731 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:12:42.050 --> 02:12:53.540

But you really, you have to start with the foundation, which which is the natural resources inventory. You need to have the data layers. So you, you have to have that.

732 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:12:53.540 --> 02:12:56.690

And again.

733 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:12:56.690 --> 02:13:05.690

We, we were very ambitious in the beginning. We said, you know, we all have GIS skills. We can do this internally. And this is we'll just do it on our own.

734 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:13:05.690 --> 02:13:15.470

We're not working on something else and that doesn't happen right? There's no not working on something else. So you need to do that. I would say, though, that.

735 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:13:15.470 --> 02:13:24.165

If I had to do this again, and it was great working with all the consultants I worked with, I would have done it in step 1 consultant, which

736 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:13:24.165 --> 02:13:26.786

We've done the NRI and some sort of

737 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:13:26.786 --> 02:13:33.110

combination open space plan and community preservation plan all together, or maybe even cut out the open space plan all together.

738 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:13:33.110 --> 02:13:41.823

In the middle, and just do it all as 1 big thing. I did not do that, but that's what I.

739 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:13:41.823 --> 02:13:47.120

I don't know what that will look like, but yeah.

740 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:13:47.120 --> 02:14:07.120

We've had communities do it through grant funded projects, have the NRI followed by the open space plan. I do want to say, like, an open space plan is broader than a CPF, and it identifies a lot of different types of strategies to protect open space. So, I think there's value in that to the community preservation plans tend to be



741 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:14:07.120 --> 02:14:29.080

focused on parcel level, conservation priorities, but I think if you're going to be. Bethlehem is open space plan, for example, is an example of one that also has those parcel level priorities and we see a wide spectrum of what these plans end up looking like. So, I think it is something to keep in mind for communities.

742 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:14:29.080 --> 02:14:33.451

Who are just starting out that you could probably.

743 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:14:33.451 --> 02:14:38.420

achieve both of these in one plan.

744 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:14:38.420 --> 02:14:43.970

Yeah, I will say, and again, to be mindful of the process of

745 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:14:43.970 --> 02:14:53.886

getting to the parcel level versus getting to the principle of like, the vision level, because the parcel level gets real personal, really fast.

746 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:14:53.886 --> 02:14:58.670

Really fast with landowners, so you really need to manage your communications on that.

747 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:14:58.670 --> 02:15:03.860

Yeah, definitely. I, on that note, I'd love to.

748 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:15:03.860 --> 02:15:08.150

open it back up to any of the prior panelists as well.

749 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:15:08.150 --> 02:15:13.953

You know, as to how that came up in your planning processes, whether you receive pushback.

751 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:15:15.780 --> 02:15:20.870

when you are doing parcel level prioritization and how you

752 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:15:20.870 --> 02:15:24.770

try to minimize that potential.

753 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)  
02:15:24.770 --> 02:15:28.921  
Feelings from landowners

754 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)  
02:15:28.921 --> 02:15:33.470  
that their properties were being singled out.

755 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)  
02:15:33.470 --> 02:15:53.470  
We didn't have that much pushback from parcel landowners. Maybe a few, but not that many, you know, of course, we're not a city so we're not designed for development in many places. So we didn't have that same experience.

756 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)  
02:15:53.470 --> 02:15:58.166  
But, certainly doing things efficiency and doing things at the

757 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:15:58.166 --> 02:16:13.130  
same time, you know, make sense. Yeah Ingrid we, that's why we think we initially started without the parcels and we're still at that level getting land owner pushback because you could tell

758 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:16:13.130 --> 02:16:20.180  
areas of the town based on roads and so we made a decision why not just use the parcels. So we're clear.

759 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:16:20.180 --> 02:16:23.420  
You know, people know, you know, .

760 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:16:23.420 --> 02:16:26.480  
You know what we're talking about, and we're not,

761 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:16:26.480 --> 02:16:32.270  
pretending where that it's not a parcel type approach.

762 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)  
02:16:32.270 --> 02:16:52.711  
The one thing we did on those maps was we did put disclaimers on those maps that say, you know, being on this map does not preclude you from any development. There's no restrictions. Because the fear that we were hearing was, well, once my parcel is on a map right now, somebody's going to take and take it and use it for something else that it wasn't intended for. And so we were clear on putting disclaimers on those maps that these are not to be used for restricting development, restricting some other efforts.

764 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:16:57.890 --> 02:17:17.890

Yeah, we did the same thing and it's also important to be clear when you're sharing this information. It's not like Julie sitting here in her plant-filled office and saying, hey, your parcel is really valuable and I like it because I saw a deer there one time. Like, it's not me just saying, I think parcels cool. And I want to

765 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:17:17.890 --> 02:17:28.974

get off the tax maps. Like it is objective data. It's based on sound science. It's based on, like, publicly available data. It's based on biological value and all these other layers. And so, you know, having that conversation is valuable,

Robert McKeon.

Right. And I think Rob, , emphasizes the important part is you're just eligible for a program if your parcels on there and it's important to message that CPF funds can't be used for a condemnation proceeding so that people understand these are willing sellers.

768 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:17:54.560 --> 02:18:08.840

I think for New Paltz, because we already had so many plans, the parcels, almost every parcel had already been identified for one plan or another anyway. So, I think people already kind of aware of that.

769 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:18:08.840 --> 02:18:29.942

It's hard to say, but it was also during covid. So who knows how involved people were. But I'd like to think it was because we've been working on so many of these things. And, like you said, it's based on data, that's already out there and available like, well, they already know they have wetlands or which or their in, or something like that or maybe they did. Now they do, you know, and I think that hopefully was helpful.

771 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:18:35.300 --> 02:18:42.091

I imagine Neal, as I was teasing you earlier, 1572 parcels. So I believe It's hard for anybody to feel singled out if there's 1572 of them.

773 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:18:47.150 --> 02:19:00.470

That's true yeah, exactly that. Yeah, you're right. That's probably another aspect of it. We didn't we didn't identify say, just one area of town where both that's where we're going to preserve all the land. , you know, every.

774 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:19:00.470 --> 02:19:04.190

You know, most of the parcels in town have some sort of value.

775 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:19:04.190 --> 02:19:10.156

and we're lucky we didn't get pushed back like, well, how come mine's not worth anything?

I'm not seeing new questions in the chat or the Q. A, but something that I'd be interested in hearing from

the panelists about in the open space planning, or creating the community preservation plan, if you could talk a little bit about how you engaged with members of the public and got that kind of input.

781 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:19:47.720 --> 02:19:55.010

Well, I think, as was mentioned, there's an advisory board that is created.

782 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:19:55.010 --> 02:20:11.060

to establish the plan in getting public input and having stakeholder groups. So, meeting with farmers, for example, on one occasion, and then meeting with other owners of different

783 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:20:11.060 --> 02:20:31.060

types of open space, I think is important. There was a fairly lengthy process. We, we were fortunate back in 2007. we had a one year exemption from the requirement to have a community preservation plan. We had our adopted open space plan and the legislature

784 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:20:31.060 --> 02:20:47.060

said for a year, you can go ahead and use that. And, you know, one of the drawbacks from this tool is that you don't have an enormous amount of money in the first year anyway, because it's transactions that

785 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:20:47.060 --> 02:21:02.870

fund the pot, but slow and steady, I think was mentioned earlier and over the 16 years now that we've had as we've raised over 6 Million dollars and leveraged it almost 4 to 1.

786 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:21:02.870 --> 02:21:15.448

And I've been able to accomplish that. But as far as stakeholder groups. Take your time, make sure that everybody feels they've had an opportunity to weigh in on and see draft maps and so on and so forth.

Neil Bettez Yeah. Yeah. I think we, we were also building on, , other plans and we had groups because of the bonding, but it's really, I think it's important to have a

788 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:21:30.560 --> 02:21:50.560

group of committed volunteers who do the outreach. So it's not just the town elected officials telling people what they should or shouldn't do, it's their community members and they're they're friends and family members and I think it helps a lot. That is really what helps with the buy in, is that there's a group of people.

789 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:21:50.560 --> 02:21:53.720

And that we know we were lucky to have that here in New Paltz.

790 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:21:53.720 --> 02:21:57.129

Very good volunteers that I think did a lot the outreach

791 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:21:57.129 --> 02:22:01.760

And and selling it to their friends and neighbors and family members.

792 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:01.760 --> 02:22:11.840

Yeah, we had the same we've had a project advisory committee for each of our projects, and it was also key for us to have our

793 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:11.840 --> 02:22:15.350

Some of our alderman on our

794 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:15.350 --> 02:22:21.080

Project advisory committees, so they could connect with their constituents as well. And so we had.

795 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:21.080 --> 02:22:36.380

large product advisory committees that would help to kind of reach out to the community, but we also set up public engagement web pages for websites for each of our plans. So we did surveys we posted our, all of our

796 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:36.380 --> 02:22:39.470

presentations.

797 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:39.470 --> 02:22:54.050

Live Q and A on those kind of websites and so we were able to kind of reach out. We wanted to do, like, a statistically relevant survey, which is really challenging to gather that kind of information.

798 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:54.050 --> 02:22:57.440

But we did the best we could and, you know.

799 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:22:57.440 --> 02:23:04.443

Went to public places and did outreach and then had remote things. So we worked through Covid also and did a variety of things with community.

801 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:08.690 --> 02:23:13.970

In Bethlehem, we did all those same approaches, but I just want to highlight.

802 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:13.970 --> 02:23:18.410

We almost, I think we probably did it one of the items a little backwards. We, we actually.

803 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:18.410 --> 02:23:22.490

We actually started our conservation easement exemption program.

804 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:22.490 --> 02:23:30.560

Before we had the conservation criteria and the natural resource mapping in place, and it actually served

805 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:30.560 --> 02:23:35.480

And in hindsight, served to our benefit, because when we put the maps together, we were able to say

806 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:35.480 --> 02:23:45.590

to the public, we need these maps because we have this tool in place and in order to evaluate an application where somebody is looking for a tax exemption, we need to know if this land is valuable to us.

807 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:45.590 --> 02:23:53.150

So, having the tool in place really gave us to an opportunity to to message the need for the, for the conservation maps.

808 "Rob Leslie, Bethlehem" (895160320)

02:23:53.150 --> 02:24:05.915

in a certain way that I think helped, you know, helps, but, you know, receive the support from the community. And even some of the large land owners that typically are opposed to any town

809 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:24:05.915 --> 02:24:08.073

type of municipal governments, you know

810 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:24:08.073 --> 02:24:11.300

open Space options.

811 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:24:11.300 --> 02:24:23.958

Thank you all there's, there's another question from Wendy asking whether others did surveys and whether they were important or necessary.

So Julie, you touched on doing a community survey.

813 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:24:29.450 --> 02:24:32.780

Yeah, just to follow up on our survey, .

814 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:24:32.780 --> 02:24:44.960

Surveys can be useful and depending on how you design it, it could be extremely not useful. So, for instance, if you put on a survey that says

815 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:24:44.960 --> 02:24:48.860

You know, which of these are important? open space;

816 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:24:48.860 --> 02:25:05.900

Preservation of habitats; preservation of wetlands; preservation of fill in the blank; and people give a 5 out of 5 to all of them that has no utility to whatsoever. , in my opinion. So we had to figure out, you know, ranking. And how do we gather this information?

817 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:05.900 --> 02:25:09.170

It's actually going to give us any utility whatsoever.

818 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:09.170 --> 02:25:12.710

So, what one of the things that we did do is more like,

819 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:12.710 --> 02:25:17.060

this is all the objective data we have. Is there anything that's missing that's valuable

820 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:17.060 --> 02:25:22.070

To you as a community person, you know, from the community, maybe a viewshed.

821 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:22.070 --> 02:25:25.940

Maybe a view, you know, if you of something, or a view

822 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:25.940 --> 02:25:37.910

To us, you know, is there a, some historic parcel that is not already on the register that is valuable to us culturally that we should be adding into this? .

823 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:37.910 --> 02:25:45.191

Because we did find that, although we had hundreds of people respond to our surveys, which was actually very, statistically relevant for Kingston,

825 "Julie Noble" (3559681792)

02:25:47.405 --> 02:25:48.749

A lot of it was "Everything is valuable," which doesn't really help.

827 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:25:56.330 --> 02:26:15.290

We didn't do a statistical survey in New Paltz, but we did, do, you know, semi formal informal survey. And I think it helped kind of get some momentum with the volunteers. But it also, when you were talking to people, you say that, well, we've done a survey.

828 "Neil Bettez" (3979855872)

02:26:15.290 --> 02:26:34.566

And it lets you say that this isn't just something that the town board wants to do, or that elected officials want want to do or maybe just the conservation board. You know, you say, look, we've tried to see does the public support this and yeah, I think you have to ask the right questions, but it does help you kind of. messaging saying, and with, just like, letting people know that we're going to be doing this thing as well.

830 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:26:39.500 --> 02:26:59.500

Years ago when we were embarking upon the campaign for we, we did conduct a poll with messaging, both positive and negative messaging by the way to see what would resonate with voters. And it was very interesting to see the results of that drinking

831 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:26:59.500 --> 02:27:05.380

water was actually the number 1 favored reason to

832 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:27:05.380 --> 02:27:12.770

institute a CPF plan. with us as well.

833 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:27:12.770 --> 02:27:32.770

Yeah, apparently people like to drink clean water. I don't know what that's all about, but, so, yeah, there's different methodologies, but I think Julie's right I mean, you just, you have to be careful if you were where you're sourcing your input from. If it's, you know, just solely folks who

834 "Robert McKeon" (590238464)

02:27:32.770 --> 02:27:38.827

are online, or you know, within, you know, some sort of population group,

835 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:27:38.827 --> 02:27:45.110

You may get skewed results .



836 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:27:45.110 --> 02:27:51.560

We are nearing 430, so I think we're going to.

837 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:27:51.560 --> 02:28:11.560

Wrap this up here and I just want to once again each of our speakers Supervisor Neal Bettez, Supervisor Robert McKeon, Rob Leslie and Julie Noble for taking the time to present and share your communities' experiences with conservation planning and financing. It's

838 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:28:11.560 --> 02:28:31.560

Is so valuable to have successful models to work from and knowledgeable leaders willing to share what you've learned along the way. So we really appreciate your time. And thank you to all the listeners who've been joining us as a reminder you'll be invited to fill out an evaluation when you close out of the webinar. So please take a moment to

839 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:28:31.560 --> 02:28:51.560

provide us your feedback, and for those of you seeking municipal training credit, you'll receive an automated confirmation of attendance from Webex after the program and note that will be following up by email in the next week or two, to share the recording the presentations. And links from the chat so thank you again for

840 "Ingrid Haeckel" (3003610368)

02:28:51.560 --> 02:28:55.280

joining us this afternoon and we hope you enjoyed the program.