



Town of Tusten

Natural Resources Inventory and Open Space Plan

MEETING SUMMARY

Purpose: Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting #4
Date and Time: October 17, 2024, 1:00 pm
Location: Via Zoom
Attendees: See Below

Agenda Item	Discussion	Key Decisions & Outcomes
Welcome	Jane Luchsinger, Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) Chair welcomed everyone. Jane Luchsinger, CAC Chair, initiated the approval of past meeting minutes.	Meeting minutes for August 15, 2024 approved
Project Schedule Update	Sarah Starke (MJ) presented an update of the project schedule and key milestones throughout the project. Summer 2024 • 1st Public Engagement • Community Survey Fall 2024 • Draft NRI • 2nd Public Engagement • Stakeholder Meetings • Initiate Open Space Plan Winter 2024-25 • 3rd Public Engagement • Draft Open Space Plan Spring 2025 • Final Open Space Plan Summer 2025 • Adoption of Plan • Implementation	N/A

Public Engagement	Sarah Starke Hesse (MJ) presented an update of the Public engagement for the project. Public Engagement • Community Vision Survey • Stakeholder Groups • Public Open House #2 Community Visioning Survey Update • Survey Closed September 30th • Surveys mailed to all residents • 101 online responses, 80 hard copy responses received • MJ to develop Survey Summary Jane Luchsinger noted that the paper copies were mailed to MJ. MJ will input all data from the paper copies and provide a Survey Summary and raw survey data to the CAC. Community Visioning Survey Highlights (online responses) • Majority of respondents are full-time residents • Top 3 activities include: Walking or Hiking, Paddling, and Swimming • 93% of respondents find open space and scenery very important • Top 3 types of open space to preserve: Forests, Delaware River Riverfront, and areas around lakes and waterways (ex. Ten Mile River) • What do you value most about natural resources and open space in Tusten? ○ Preservation of Natural Beauty and Ecosystems ○ Peace, Quiet, and Solitude ○ Accessibility and Recreational Use • 90% of respondents feel increasing public access and developing recreation opportunities are somewhat or very important. Priority areas include: ○ Areas of high scenic quality and/or views of Delaware River ○ Riverfront areas and other water bodies • What information would you like to see come out of the OSRP? ○ Preservation and Expansion of Open Space	MJ to send Survey Summary and raw data to CAC
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Public Engagement	○ Transparency and Public Involvement ○ Plans for Recreational Infrastructure and Activities It was noted that many of the responses correspond with the responses received in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan survey. The CAC discussed the different recreational opportunities available in Tusten that may not be as prevalent in other communities. The CAC discussed transparency and how public comments will be included throughout the process and within the plan. The CAC discussed the disconnect between conserving open space and the desire for more recreation in the survey answers. A suggestion was made to address this issue by recommending time restrictions on activities, seasonal uses, and certain times of the week. Specific areas can also be identified for more preservation or recreation. Stakeholder Group Meetings • September 25, 2024 • Groups: ○ Community Organizations & Volunteer Groups ○ Local & Regional Partners ○ Recreation ○ Sustainability Stakeholder Meeting Highlights • 10 Organizations participated • Makeup meeting to be scheduled with stakeholders who were unable to attend. • Summaries prepared MJ will hold an additional makeup stakeholder meeting for groups such as UDC, NPS, and County Planning. CAC members are encouraged to attend. • Update on BSA Lands ○ Currently in Phase 1 of acquisition – Area between Rte 97 and the Delaware River.	MJ to send Stakeholder meeting summaries to CAC MJ to hold additional stakeholder meeting
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Public Engagement	Land is being held by the non-profit Conservation Fund. ○ Intention for DEC to manage land as State Forest which includes recreational uses ○ Existing public trails may be rerouted around scout camp once in possession of DEC to protect the safety of the scouts. ○ Understand that DEC intends to complete a Unit Management Plan once transferred. The UMP will include a public process with an opportunity for community and Town to comment The CAC discussed the BSA land. It was noted that once the transfer of the BSA land to the DEC was complete, the public will have an opportunity to weigh in on the Unit Management Plan. The CAC discussed how the Town can utilize the Open Space and Recreation Plan to leverage the Unit Management Plan as it will be an adopted document. It was noted that public trails may need to be rerouted in the BSA lands to ensure the safety of the scouts. A CAC member inquired about the designation of the BSA land and its allowable uses. It was noted that some recreation would be allowed, MJ will send a list of allowable uses. ● Volunteer groups, Job Corp as future partners for trail maintenance ● Fireman's field, river walk as potential opportunities ● Need for outreach and environmental education for visitors and youth ● Need for additional youth recreation The CAC discussed surrounding municipalities such as Cochection and Bethel and their role in the Open Space and Recreation Plan as a portion of the BSA land is within their boundaries. They should be considered stakeholders as what becomes of the BSA land will also impact their municipalities. Public Workshop #2 ● In Person Open House ● Town Hall	MJ to send a list of allowable uses under the BSA designation to the CAC.
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	- December 4, 2024 7:00 – 8:30 PM - Introduce Open Space Plan - Interactive exercise to gather feedback on Open Space & Recreation Goals and Priorities - MJ to prepare publicity materials	
Open Space and Recreation Plan	Sarah Starke (MJ) discussed the Open Space & Recreation Plan: - Outline - Identifying Priorities - Mapping Exercise Outline - Common components of an Open Space & Recreation Plan: - Community Overview and Vision - Local & Regional Planning - Existing Open Space & Recreation Assets - NRI Highlights - Process & Public Engagement - Open Space & Recreation Priorities - Implementation Actions & Voluntary Tools It was noted that there may be additional elements discussed in the plan for Tusten. A CAC member suggested discussing the Comprehensive Plan and the ongoing transfer of the BSA land should be discussed in the Local & Regional Planning section. It was noted that the county has undertaken a county-wide Open Space Plan, which could also be discussed in the Local & regional Planning section. What are Open Space & Recreation Priorities? - Can be broad (protect stream corridors) or specific (improvements to a specific park) - Can be short term (expanded a trail) or long term (Work with NYSDEC during transfer of former BSA lands). - Can be future connections	N/A

Open Space and Recreation Plan	How can Open Space & Recreation Priorities be Identified? • Town and CAC Input (Local knowledge) • Public Input (Survey, stakeholder & Public Meetings) • GIS based Mapping Tool – The Conservation Analysis Tool Conservation Analysis Tool (“Mapping Tool”) Overview: • GIS-based mapping tool (model) • Objectively identifies priorities for open space by overlapping important resources • Can be used as a resource by the Town and landowner for future planning and conservation efforts Mapping Tool Inputs • Land area to evaluate (Town) • Conservation Criteria/Data Layers ◦ Resources identified through the NRI such as wetlands, habitats, forests, existing parks, trails, etc. Example Criteria/Data Layers: • Wetlands • Flood zones • Wildlife Habitats • Existing Parks & Conserved Lands • Forests • Potential Stream or Lake Access Mapping Tool Process: • Tests each land segment against a criteria (natural resource) • Sums up all criteria met • Determines conservation value – i.e. – How many important resources are present in this area It was noted the conservation value correlates to a numerical value. Mapping Tool Results: • Static map that can inform the Town and landowners of important natural resources	N/A
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Open Space and Recreation Plan	• Can identify potential areas for future recreation or voluntary conservation (ex. Conservation subdivisions, voluntary easement, etc.) Mapping Tool in Action – CAC Exercise • Includes: ○ Habitats ○ Water Resources (wetlands, flood zones, streams, lakes) ○ Existing parks, conserved lands, forest management lands Sarah Starke (MJ) asked the CAC what areas of the map surprised you? • Members of the CAC were surprised at the lack of resources in the grey areas noting that some of these areas were forests. MJ noted that more layers could be added that may identify these areas. • It was noted that this mapping tool could be used as an informational tool and not for regulatory mandates. Sarah Starke (MJ) asked the CAC what additional layers they would like to see added to the map: • Scenery/viewsheds ○ This would likely be identified by local knowledge ○ A mapping exercise in the next public meeting may be helpful in identifying important viewsheds. ○ Participants could also bring pictures of their favorite view or scenery in Tusten. • Archaeological/historic sites • Habitat preservation areas • Landowners • Forests • Ridge lines • Steep slopes	MJ to send NRI Maps to CAC
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Next Steps	Sarah Starke Hesse (MJ) provided an overview of the next steps in the process: • CAC to provide feedback on mapping exercise • Mapping Tool Development • Public Meeting #2 – Dec 4 ○ Jane noted MJ can use the TV screens for the public open house ○ MJ to work on publicity materials so the CAC may begin publicizing. • Next CAC Meeting – Dec 12	MJ send meeting summaries to CAC.
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This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Grace Sherburne, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, PC

cc: Consultant Team, Conservation Advisory Council, Peter Manning

Conservation Advisory Council

Name	Present
Jane Luchsinger	☒
Cathleen Breen	☒
Bernie Lohmann	☒
Alexandra Climent	☐
Donovan Sylvest	☒
Spencer Branch	☐

Project Partners

Name	Present
Peter Manning	☒

Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	✗
Sarah Starke Hesse	M.J. Engineering	✓
Grace Sherburne	M.J. Engineering	✓
Jen Ceponis	M.J. Engineering	✗