

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Town of Gardiner raising funds for open space preservation?

The Town of Gardiner, the municipality, is not raising the funds. A group of Gardiner citizens, both town officials (as private citizens) and other residents have come together to attempt to encourage people to donate to the town in response to a request for local support by the Open Space Institute on a project they initiated, which is the purchase of development rights to the Kiernan Farm, located on Brynswyck Road. The group's members work in conjunction with the Town of Gardiner Board members and Open Space Commission members and other interested citizens, but are not officially part of the town government.

What does "purchase of development rights" mean?

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a relatively new method of preserving land. It is essentially a deed restriction that is called a "conservation easement", that the owner of the land agrees to. The owner of the land continues to own it, and pay taxes on it, but can no longer subdivide land. In essence, the owner is paid to keep the land open. In this particular instance, OSI, in conjunction with the Federal government (via a Farm and Ranch-lands grant) is paying the owners

What are the specifics of this particular deal?

The "development rights" for the Kiernan farm have been calculated to be \$880,000 (this was determined via an appraisal that compared the value of the land if developed vs. the value of the land if left undeveloped) The grant that OSI obtained from the Federal government is for \$440,000 (50% of the \$880,000). OSI's share is also \$440,00 (the other 50%), and OSI is asking that Gardiner contribute \$50,000, which would reduce their share to \$390,000. In it's request to Gardiner for \$50,000, OSI has allowed Gardiner 3 years to fulfill the request.

Why isn't the Town using the Open Space Bond law to borrow the money?

While the town of Gardiner has passed an Open Space Bond law that allows them to bond (borrow) up to \$1.5 million for this purpose, the Town Board felt that in the current stressed economy borrowing money was not prudent, and they voted instead to pass a resolution that they would set a goal of privately raising the \$50,000 towards the OSI/Kiernan deal - as both a sign of open space protection commitment and good faith. Just as people give to charities that they feel passionate about, setting up this fund allows them to contribute to preserving Gardiners open vistas and working farms, and they know that all of the money will stay within the community.

What if more than the goal \$50,000 is raised?

If at some point more than \$50,000 is raised, it will be up to the town board to determine how to apply the funds to future open space endeavors. Under no circumstances will the additional money go into the towns general fund.

Will there be other open space fund raising projects?

At this time no other fund raising projects are anticipated.

What if I want to give towards open space, but don't want the money designated for the Kiernan/OSI project, can I designate it otherwise?

If you would like to make a significant contribution, but do not want it to go towards the Kiernan/OSI project, please discuss it with a member of the committee. We are open to discussing other options.

Is the donation I give part of the Town of Gardiner budget, and can it be used for anything else?

The donation is NOT part of the Town of Gardiner budget. A separate interest bearing account has been set up for this project at the Empire State Bank.

Who is responsible and accountable for the donations?

All donations, after delivery to the town hall, are recorded by the town bookkeeper and checked by one of the co-chairs of the committee. They are deposited weekly,

Can "in kind" services be donated instead of money?

We would appreciate monetary donations, but if you have a service or product that you would like to donate for an auction or raffle, it will be considered. We are currently not set up to do an auction or raffle. If there is enough interest we will consider doing it.

Can my business or organization be involved in a way other than a monetary donation?

You can participate by displaying and distributing information about the fund raising effort to your employees and customers. Please contact us for details.

How can I donate ?

You can donate by sending a check to the Town of Gardiner (specify "open space project") or going to the town website www.townofgardiner.org/KiernanFarm.cfm and donate via PayPal.

Is the fund raising "group" an official "not-for-profit" and subject to those reporting and accounting laws?

No, we are not. We only encourage you to donate directly to the Town of Gardiner. Donating to the Town of Gardiner is fully tax deductible.

How will the fund raising group and the Town keep donors informed about the fund raising efforts and how the money is spent?

The donation total will be announced at each town board meeting. The only spending of the money will be when the Town writes a check to OSI for the \$50,000 it requested of it.

What benefits do I get from the preservation of this land as a farm?

This is an question that each individual has to answer. It can be an intangible if you just get a good feeling from helping to avoid development, or helping someone to farm, or keep a farm going. That same avoidance of development can be a tangible to someone else. Since this is a voluntarily donation, no local taxes will be raised. It is acknowledged that your tax dollars are being used, because the fed's (using our money) and OSI (using donations that are tax deductible) are doing the heavy lifting here. Each one of us has to decide for ourselves.

Will the land stay on the tax roll?

YES!