

**New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, February 26, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

**Members Present:** Doug Roth (chairperson), Bill Michaud, Madeline McClave, Jean Darlington (secretary), Rusty Warner, Karen Griswold Nelson (arrived at 7 p.m.). Absent: Eva Barham, Mary Hoag (alternate).

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Jean moved to approve the minutes of the 1/22/2024 regular meeting. Rusty seconded and the motion passed 5-0. Jean moved to approve the minutes of the 2/11/2024 special meeting. Bill seconded and the motion passed 4-0. Bill abstained.

**Open Space Plan:** We discussed finding out the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission's timeline for their work on the 2025 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The State of CT requires towns to write a POCD every ten years to guide land use decisions. New Hartford's 2005 and 2015 POCD's have included sections that refer to the Open Space Plan, so we discussed coordinating with P&Z again. Doug volunteered to find out when the next relevant P&Z meeting will be held.

**Land Preservation Fund:** No report.

**Agricultural Review:** We discussed our role as New Hartford's Agricultural Commission. We discussed ways we may be able to help farmers, including those whose land is enrolled in the State's P.A. 490 program. (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/Public-Act-490---The-Basics>) We discussed public outreach and coordinating with other Town commissions, as well as with non-profit land protection organizations.

**Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:**

**Goula Preserve:** We discussed the idea of adding a new hiking trail in the area where we had walked during the 2/11/2024 special meeting. Because sections of the trail would go through wetlands and across small watercourses, we discussed seeking Inland Wetlands approval. We discussed the problem of encroachment from some of the neighboring properties, including illegal ATV and dirt bike use and cutting down of the Town's trees along the property line. Ideas included asking the police and the First Selectman to get involved in enforcing the laws that protect this open space preserve. Doug volunteered to discuss this with First Selectman Dan Jerram. We also discussed the idea of installing a post-and-rail fence and planting native shrubs along the northern property boundary. We discussed using the new trail as an educational opportunity to inform the public about the importance of preserving wetlands.

**Phillips Farm:** Doug displayed the draft of the management plan on the view screen. Madeline said she will email her suggestions within the next week.

**Jones Mountain:** Bill reported that he had walked the trail yesterday and saw various fallen trees.

**Helen Butler Riverfront Trail Preserve:** Rusty reported that he had walked the trail recently. He said it was beautiful and easy to walk on. He recommended planting native vegetation in certain spots to mitigate runoff and erosion. We discussed signage to direct hikers and fishermen to appropriate river access points. We discussed ways in which heavy rain storms and the resulting high water have changed the riverbank.

**Other Business:**

- The CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC)'s annual conference is on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Several OSPC members have volunteered to attend.
- Jean reminded Doug and Madeline to go to the Town Clerk's office to be sworn in for their new terms, which started on Jan. 1.
- We discussed the topic of OSPC and the Conservation Commission (CC). At a recent BOS meeting, someone brought up the idea of merging the two commissions. We agreed that this should not happen. OSPC and CC have separate ordinances with distinct functions. We agreed that BOS should come to one of our meetings and discuss with us if they want to pursue this idea. We discussed the past history of stewardship of Town-owned land, including the 2006-2007 work of the Stewardship Task Force, whose conclusions were evidently never formally adopted by the Town.
- We discussed the idea of organizing another guided hike of the Franklin P. Kearney Memorial Nature Trail with representatives from other commissions, as we did in the fall of 2021.

**Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate:** At 8:28 p.m., Karen moved to enter executive session. Bill seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 8:34 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Darlington, Secretary