

**New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, March 25, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

**Members Present:** Doug Roth (chairperson), Eva Barham, Mary Hoag (alternate), Madeline McClave, Karen Griswold Nelson, Jean Darlington (secretary), Rusty Warner (arrived at 6:50).  
Absent: Bill Michaud. Doug called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Open Space Plan:** Doug reported that he had met with Inland Wetlands and Zoning Enforcement Officer Mike Lucas on March 12. They discussed the town's upcoming 2025 update of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and the steps for involving OSPC in the process of updating it. The State of Connecticut requires all towns to update their POCD every ten years (<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP/ORG/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan/Municipal-Plans-of-Conservation-and-Development>). Karen stated that every town's land use decisions must be consistent with its current POCD. She also emphasized the requirement for Planning and Zoning to carry out a new Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as part of this process. We discussed the possibility of a special OSPC meeting on May 13, 2024 to discuss P&Z issues that are relevant to the work of OSPC. We discussed inviting Mike Lucas and P&Z Chairperson Michael Misiorski to this special meeting. In advance of our April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, OSPC members agreed to come up with a list of important topics to discuss.

**Approval of Minutes:** Jean moved to approve the minutes of the 2/26/2024 regular meeting. Karen seconded. The motion passed 5-0. Eva and Mary abstained.

**Land Preservation Fund:** No report.

**Agricultural Review:** We discussed useful information that Rusty and other OSPC members had learned from the CT Land Conservation Council's annual conference on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We discussed collaborating with New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) to make information about grant money, climate-smart practices, etc. available to local farmers.

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

**Goula Open Space Preserve:** Doug and Jean reported that they had walked the proposed new trail on 3/9/24 with Anne Hall and Chris Malik. Anne is a member of the New Hartford Inland Wetlands Commission, and Chris is a retired DEEP Senior Environmental Analyst with experience and expertise in wetlands issues. Anne and Chris are both actively involved with NHLT. Anne and Chris had recommended rerouting a small section of the proposed trail to avoid a wetlands area. Doug walked the proposed trail again on 3/12 with Mike Lucas. Anne, Chris, and Mike did not note any problems with installing three short bog bridges to help hikers to cross small watercourses. We discussed the importance of preserving wildlife habitat on the Town's Open Space Preserves and the impacts of people and dogs on habitats. We discussed enforcement of the law regarding prohibited uses such as ATV's, dirt bikes, and removing trees and other plants. Methods we discussed include signage, game cameras, and personal contact between Town officials and neighbors. Doug plans to discuss enforcement issues with First Selectman Dan Jerram and/or law enforcement officers. Madeline volunteered to draft a letter. We discussed and edited the Management Plan and necessary signage that includes rules of use.

**Phillips Farm:** We reviewed and edited the draft of the Stewardship Plan, and then Doug made a motion to accept it. Rusty seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Doug will email it to OSPC members.

**Helen Butler Riverfront Trail Preserve:** no report

### **Other Business:**

- The CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC)'s annual conference was on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Eva described a presentation she had attended about grant money for forest management plans. We discussed the common misconception that forest management plans are plans for logging only; instead, forest management plans can also focus on preserving ecosystems and wildlife habitats.
- Doug provided the following links that he learned about at the CLCC conference:  
2023 Conserving Northwest Connecticut: Adaptive Strategies for Accelerating the Pace of Conservation: [Publications – Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy](#)  
2022 report, New England's Climate Imperative: [New England Forests: A Natural Climate Solution - Highstead](#)  
2024 UCONN GIS Parcel Prioritization for Source Water Protection: [Parcel Prioritization for Source Water Protection](#)  
Practical Considerations with Boundary Issues: [Terrafirma](#)

Madeline said she would forward links to conference presentations on riparian buffers and managing preserves for wildlife when they become available on the CLCC web site.

- Doug and Madeline reported that they have been sworn in for their new terms, which started on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- We discussed a bill in the CT legislature that addresses wetlands issues, including training requirements for Inland Wetlands commissioners. (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2024/fc/pdf/2024HB-05218-R000099-FC.PDF>). Wetland issues include requirements related to protecting Long Island Sound, since all of Connecticut is in the Long Island Sound watershed. Karen stated that all land use commission/board members need four hours of training relating to their respective roles.

**Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate:** At 8:31 p.m., Rusty moved to enter executive session. Karen seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 8:42 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Darlington, Secretary