

New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 29, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

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

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and seated Mary as a regular member.

Approval of Minutes: Jean moved to approve the minutes of the 3/25/2024 regular meeting. Eva seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Open Space Plan: Doug reminded OSPC members to check their email from April 15th for two emails from the Town Clerk, which contain the minutes of the 4/24/2018 Town Meeting and also the 2002 Open Space Ordinance and the May 10, 2014 Amendment to the Open Space Ordinance.

Land Preservation Fund: No report.

Agricultural Review: No report.

Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:

Goula Open Space Preserve: Doug reported that he, Rusty, and Gordon Ross had flagged the new yellow trail and installed two small bog bridges. Eva and Jean reported that they had painted yellow blazes along the trail. Still needed are: 1) a few directional signs, which Doug volunteered to make, and 2) more signs reminding people that vehicles are not allowed (ATV's, dirt bikes, bicycles, etc.). Madeline volunteered to send wording for a new kiosk next week. We discussed details of a new trail map. We discussed the white trail that goes through Goula into Phillips Farm (which is protected open space) and then through the town-owned Surdam and Antolini Woods properties (which are not protected open space). We discussed the benefits to the Town of taking steps to protect the Surdam and Antolini Woods properties as open space preserves. We discussed findings of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) at Goula and Antolini. Madeline volunteered to contact Tree Savers (<https://www.treesaverspa.com/>). We discussed the need for the First Selectman and/or police to speak to the abutting landowners about making sure that no motorized or mechanized vehicles (including ATV's, dirt bikes, bicycles, etc.) travel from their parcels onto the Preserve.

Phillips Farm: Doug reported that he changed a few details of the inspection report that is part of the management plan we had approved at the 3/25/2024 meeting. We discussed the changes. Doug will email updated version to OSPC members, to vote on at an upcoming meeting.

Helen Butler Riverfront Trail Preserve: Mary stated that simple, easily readable signage at the trailhead is needed to tell visitors the most important rules of use (for example, no bikes or ATV's, no swimming, dogs on leash only). Doug said he could make a small, simple wooden sign. Madeline volunteered to order decals to post on the bollards at the entrance. Jean volunteered to call Denton Butler and discuss such signs, since the deed requires the Town to do so. Jean reported that she, her husband, and Mary had pulled up and bagged the invasive plant known as garlic mustard (<https://cipwg.uconn.edu/garlic-mustard-2/>) on two separate occasions recently. Madeline volunteered to coordinate a larger work party for this purpose on Saturday, May 11th at 1:30 p.m. Mary and Jean volunteered to lead this work party.

Jones Mountain: no report

Other Business:

Zoning Issues: We discussed plans for a possible Special Meeting to discuss topics of mutual interest to the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) and OSPC. Doug volunteered to invite P&Z Chairperson Mike Misiorski and Zoning/Wetlands Enforcement Officer Mike Lucas. Among the topics that OSPC members expressed an interest in discussing were: 1) subdivision open space set-asides, 2) marking corners and angles of open space set-asides on the ground according to A-2 survey standards, 3) the process and timeline for the Plan of Conservation Development (POCD) and the need to incorporate the Open Space Plan into it, 4) details of “open space subdivisions.”

Franklin P. Kearney Memorial Nature Trail Nature/History Hike: Jean announced that on Sunday, June 23, from 1 to 3 p.m., she and three other Town commissioners have organized an informational hike. The other hike leaders will be Anne Hall (Inland Wetlands Commission member and also the Town Historian), Alison Murdock (Conservation Commission Chairperson), and Jeremy Schaller (Recreation Commission Member). See the attached flyer for details and registration instructions. Jean said she would be sending the flyer to the Selectman’s Office, the Town Clerk’s Office, and the Recreation/Senior Center Office to publicize this event. Madeline stated that the NHLT could also help to publicize it.

NHLT Annual Meeting: Madeline announced that the NHLT Annual Meeting is scheduled for 5:30 on April 30, 2024 at the South End Fire House. It will include a presentation about Fungi in the Forest, by Connor Hogan, Director of the McLean Game Refuge (<https://mcleancare.org/game-refuge/>).

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: At 8:05 p.m., Mary moved to enter executive session. Eva seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 8:17 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Darlington, Secretary