

Minutes: Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC), Town of New Hartford, CT
Regular Meeting: Monday, September 26, 2016, 6:00 p.m., 3rd Floor Senior Center, Town Hall

Members Present: Jean Cronauer (Chairperson), Bill Michaud, Caren Ross, Rusty Warner, Madeline McClave, Jean Darlington (Secretary). Jean C. called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Member of the Public Present: Denton (Bud) Butler

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Bill moved that we approve the minutes of the August 21, 2016 regular meeting. Jean C. seconded and the motion passed with two abstentions.

Butler Farm, New Hartford Day Review: Members who staffed the OSPC booth at New Hartford Day reported much positive response and interest in our current projects. Most people stopping by the OSPC booth were especially interested in hiking trails with good maps. Response to the Butler Farm project were positive; people especially expressed positive opinions about the State of CT paying 55% of the cost of purchasing and extinguishing the development rights. Some people wondered about the previous owner of the land; Bud said that it was once Johnny Ryan's farm, many decades ago. Jean D. will type up the names and contact information of members of the public who wrote their names on the sheet at NH Day.

Marketing Plan: We discussed plans for informing the public about the Butler Farm project, including information sessions, hikes, poster boards at Town Hall, the libraries, and local businesses. This week, Bill Michaud and Rusty Warner plan to hike the potential trail site with Bud Butler. Bud said any possible trail should be constructed to minimize environmental impact to the Farmington River. We need to make a timeline with First Selectman Dan Jerram to plan the steps needed (P&Z, BOF, etc.) before bringing this project to the townspeople for a vote. Jean C. will talk to Dan about this right away.

Trail Status Update: We need a plan to get our trails onto the Town's website. The public wants downloadable pdf versions of trail maps that they can view on their smart phones. We are still waiting to hear if we can post the yellow blazes on the Brodie-Barella trail yet.

OSPC Archives: Members with documentation about the Goula, Jones Mountain, and Phillips Farms projects said they would share that e-mail with everyone on the commission by e-mail. Rusty volunteered to put it all together. We discussed the possibility of using social media such as Facebook to help promote our work.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: At 7:05 p.m., Jean D. moved to enter executive session to discuss real estate. Bill seconded and the motion passed unanimously. At 7:30 p.m., Jean D. moved to leave executive session to discuss real estate. Caren seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Tax Abatement Tool: The basic concept is that, instead of paying one lump sum for open space up front, over a period of years the Town would abate the taxes of an open space donor. Such a tool would add to the methods we already have for preserving open space. Bill volunteered to make a good Frequently Asked Questions sheet so we can prepare to bring the question of the tax abatement tool to the townspeople for a vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Darlington, Secretary