

**Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
Monday, 2/25/2019, 6:30 p.m., New Hartford Town Hall, Sessions Conference Room**

Members present: Jean Cronauer (Chairperson), Caren Ross, Bill Michaud, Madeline McClave, Karen Griswold-Nelson, Jean Darlington (Secretary). Guest: First Selectman Dan Jerram

Call to order, public comment: Jean C. called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Opportunity for Public Comment: No members of the public were present, but Mr. Jerram reported on a parcel on Town Hill Road that he plans to discuss with the Beekley Foundation. He showed us a draft of a conceptual site plan of a staffed park-like area that he envisions as involving an observation tower, a pond, etc.

Butler Project: Conservation easement, walking trail:

Dan said he had talked with Linda Francois, the New Hartford Land Trust's attorney, about the language in the proposed conservation easement. He expressed the Board of Selectmen's concerns regarding the wording of the part of the conservation easement that describes the walking trail's features, such as surface and width. For example, the BOS wants the option (possibly in the distant future) to surface the trail to the standards of the Rails-to-Trails network if future additions to that network on nearby parcels should ever become possible to link to the Butler trail. Open Space Commissioners emphasized that, because the Butler project is a land and river conservation project, any work the Town does on the trail must be in compliance with the Town's Open Space Ordinance*, Zoning and Wetlands regulations, and the federal Farmington River Wild and Scenic designation. Protection of the river's water quality and wildlife habitat are of paramount importance. Furthermore, in order for the conservation easement to be accepted by the NHLT, it must satisfy the NHLT's conservation values. We discussed the issue at length, and agreed that a subcommittee should set up a separate meeting very soon to craft wording that all parties (OSPC, BOS, and NHLT) can agree to present to the voters at a Town Meeting.

** Language from the New Hartford Open Space Ordinance: "Appropriations from the Land Preservation Fund shall be used for costs associated with the acquisition of parcels of land or development rights or easements, interests or rights therein, the use of which shall be limited to the retention of the parcel in its natural condition or for the protection of agriculture or forestry, the rural character of the Town, water quality, scenic views, wildlife or natural resources, or passive recreation as defined in the Open Space Plan."*

Butler Farm signage, opening plans: We discussed the need for signage to inform the public about allowed uses of the property, and that such uses need to be consistent with the conservation easement, the Open Space Plan, Zoning and Wetlands regulations, and the Farmington River Wild and Scenic designation. We need to do this very soon because good hiking weather is imminent.

Approval of Minutes 1/29/2018: Bill moved to approve the minutes with the following amendment:

In the Butler project paragraph, change "... the town's attorney approved of the language in the conservation easement" to "...the town's attorney found the draft easement language to be legally appropriate."

Jean D. seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Tax Abatement Program: Jean C. reported that she had spoken with Tax Assessor Cory Iacino. Madeline and Bill reported on progress they have made in drafting a form for a pre-application notice of intent, which would include a baseline report, survey with corners and angle points mapped and marked on the ground, etc.

Goula, Jones Management Plans: Bill and Madeline have been reviewing the Kings Mark and other reports.

Farmington River Wild & Scenic Federal Designation, 25th Anniversary: Karen G-N reported that more is known today regarding climate adaptations, erosion, slopes, and ways to protect rivers than when the 100-foot setback was put in place years ago. Jean C. recommended that we ask the new Director of the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA) and Liz Lacy, Director of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC), to come meet with us. Jean C. will try to set up a time for them to meet with us.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: At 8:10 p.m., Caren R. moved we enter executive session.

Bill seconded and the motion passed unanimously. At 8:20 p.m., Caren R. moved we leave executive session to discuss real estate. Karen G-N seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2015 POCAD progress report: discussion postponed until the next meeting

At 8:40 p.m., Jean D. moved to adjourn. Caren R. seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Darlington, Secretary