

**Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission Regular Meeting  
Monday, August 26, 2019m 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, Town Hall**

Members present: Jean Cronauer (chairperson), Karen Griswold-Nelson, Bill Michaud, Caren Ross, Jean Darlington (secretary). Jean C. called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Approval of minutes: Caren R. moved to approve minutes of M 7/22/2019. Bill seconded; motion passed with one abstention.

Goula-Phillips Trail Linkage: Rusty Warner and Doug Roth are working on organizing a work party for September or October.

Summer Progress Report: The New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) has been organizing conducting volunteer work parties at the Town's Butler preserve's hiking trail this summer, to work on removing alien species such as bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, mugwort, barberry, Japanese stilt grass, etc. carefully without harming the river, and to keep the trail walkable. They had a work party with plant specialist Betsy Corrigan, who provided information about controlling invasive plants and encouraging the growth of beneficial native plants. Work will need to be ongoing for the long term because invasive species are very resilient. Jean D. visited the Recreation Commission to discuss collaborating with them and with the Conservation Commission on public educational nature hikes along the Franklin Kearney Nature Trail at BPS. They had several worthwhile suggestions, such as including historical information and informational signs. Jean D. and Doug Roth spoke with ecological consultant Harry White recently about documenting the species that exist at Brodie Park South (BPS), for the purpose of documenting the purpose of a potential conservation easement there, as the Town Plan of Conservation and Development directs.

New Hartford Day: Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> (with New Hartford Farm Day on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>). We discussed how to best convey information about our work to the public.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: none

Report from Northwest Council of Governments (NW COG): Karen G-N reported on a workshop she attended on August 15<sup>th</sup> by the NW COG. She presented about Low Impact Development (LID). The focus was on Sustainable CT (<https://sustainablect.org/>), which 50% of CT towns and many of our neighboring towns have signed up for.

Tax Abatement Application: Jean C. and Bill met with First Selectman Dan Jerram on August 21 to discuss our current drafts of the pre-application form and process. He recommended that the document we give the public more clearly spell out OSPC's criteria for judging the application, including the open space qualities of the parcel and also the completeness of the application. He also suggested having a certain application period each year so we would be able to assess all applications simultaneously. When this document is ready, we plan to post it on the town website. Bill will follow up with the Selectmen.

Butler Conservation Easement: The conservation easement is the final step needed to complete the preservation of the 8.1-acre linear town-owned parcel along the West Branch of the Farmington River as open space in perpetuity. Apparently, the definition of permeable surface needs to be clarified, and details about signage need to be finalized. Voters and donors have been waiting for this final piece of the open space preservation project to be completed. The Board of Selectmen will discuss it again on Tuesday, August 27, 2019. After the final edits have been addressed, the next step will be for the voters to vote on the conservation easement at a Town Meeting, date TBA. This step is necessary to protect the parcel in its natural condition because the New Hartford Open Space Ordinance, adopted in 2002, says:

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.

Other Business: Karen G-N announced the Northwest Conservation District's Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 26, at 5 p.m. (<https://nwcd.org/wpsite/>) Topics will include the meaning and importance of the federal Wild and Scenic designation, federal funding for cleanup of polluted rivers, and a tour of the Bend of the River project.

Next meeting: Monday, September 23, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Darlington, Secretary