

**Town of New Hartford**  
**Open Space Preservation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 22, 2014**

Members Present: Jean Cronauer, Karen Griswold-Nelson, Madeline McClave, Bill Michaud.  
Guest: David Krimmel, EDC.

Chair Jean Cronauer called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**I. David Krimmel, Economic Development Commission (EDC)**

David said he is here as part of an effort to improve communication between commissions. He reported that EDC is concerned about the imbalance in the tax base (91% residential and 9% commercial/business). EDC embarked on an effort one year ago to promote New Hartford as a town to visit. They have updated the town web site and put businesses on the site. There are more than 500 business entities in New Hartford. Only eleven employ more than one person. Other issues of concern to EDC are the lack of number of users in sewer plant and changing the zoning next to sewer lines to attract more residents to mixed development.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Michaud moved, Griswold-Nelson seconded and all voted to approve the July 28<sup>th</sup> minutes as presented. Griswold-Nelson moved, Cronauer seconded and the August 25<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved as presented. All voted to approve except for Michaud who abstained as he was not present at that meeting.

**III. Policy Initiatives: Tax Abatement**

Cronauer said she would like to review the draft tax abatement policy statement and then send it and the lots of record write-up to the First Selectman. Members decided we should begin to advance this policy by discussing it with the tax assessor and the land use administrator at town hall. Michaud reviewed the Open Space Tax Abatement Program draft. It includes sections on background, advantages, how it works and what needs to be done. It was agreed to add a few sentences about the goals of New Hartford's Open Space Plan. It will include language saying that if a recipient of the abatement owns multiple properties, they can abate taxes on more than one of them to reach the dollar amount of the approved abatement. Should it have a formal Q&A section? Members agreed it should make clear that this is simply a different funding mechanism to achieve the same open space goals. Cronauer will call Steve Sadlowski at Town Hall to ask if he can call the CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and ask about what other towns have adopted a tax abatement policy to support open space preservation other than Danbury.

**IV. Open Space Developments**

Cronauer distributed copies of the town regulations regarding open space development. She reported on the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) meeting where Ken Hrica presented about the Blue Ridge Estates open space subdivision development. OSPC members agreed that open space set-asides should be developable land only. This is not in the regulations so they should be changed. Michaud talked about rules and exceptions. It was agreed that Cronauer will invite Steve Sadlowski, Land Use Administrator, to an OSPC meeting in the near future to discuss this issue and then we will meet with P&Z to discuss with them. McClave said that regarding this particular subdivision, she would like to see the drainage area/systems excluded from the open space set-aside. The open space should be land that is in a natural state and not have manmade structures on it. This is the standard in many other towns.

**V. Community Farms Program**

Cronauer distributed the Cooperative Letter of Agreement from the State of CT with the Town of Hartford. The Selectmen will sign it. Michaud moved, Griswold-Nelson seconded and the members unanimously approved that Jean Cronauer, Chair, sign the cooperative letter of agreement as presented for the OSPC.

## **VI. Stewardship**

McClave said that the town is creating a parking lot on the Surdam property north of where the opening in the wall is across from the walking entrance to Phillips Farm. She said that she had advocated for it to be closer to where hikers would be crossing the road to walk on Phillips. She said she received an estimate from the father of the Boy Scout who is going to build a bridge across the permanent stream at Phillips for the cost of the lumber and hardware for the project. The First Selectman must now approve the approximately \$1,000 expenditure from the Conservation Commission budget. The Commission has approved it. This figure also includes enough hardware for the smaller walkway that will be constructed by another Boy Scout across a seasonally wet area on the path but not for the lumber to build that.

## **VII. Membership**

Members discussed recruitment of new members to the Commission.

## **VIII. Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate**

No discussion.

## **IX. Other Business:** None.

## **X. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the OSPC is set for October 27th.

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. (McClave/Griswold-Nelson) was approved.

Madeline McClave, Secretary

New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission