

**Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
Monday, February 24, 2020 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, Town Hall**

Members present: Jean Cronauer (chairperson), Karen Griswold-Nelson, Doug Roth, Bill Michaud, Jean Darlington (secretary), Rusty Warner.

Guests: Jay Bailey, Selectman David Rosengren. Jean C. called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Jean D. moved to approve the minutes of 1/27/2020. Karen had a point of order: Under NWCOG, Doug e-mailed the link that Karen had volunteered to send. Bill seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Hartford Open Space Ranking Update: We discussed the ranking checklist that the OSPC created in 2004 and the DEEP's new ranking sheet for the Open Space and Watershed Acquisition (OSWA) grant program. Bill volunteered to send Jean D. information the OSPC used in 2004.

Tax Abatement Program: Bill reported that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had approved the public information we had prepared and posted it on the town website. They changed the formal application deadline to September. There are some legal and tax issues that will require the expertise of an attorney experienced in land use issues. Karen emphasized the importance of engaging a land use attorney; she volunteered to draft a letter from the OSPC to the BOS to this effect.

New Hartford Trails:

EDC Proposed Multi-Use Trail: We discussed the public presentation that Anchor Engineering had made at Town Hall on Feb. 13 regarding the proposed rails-to-trails project. We discussed the proposed route and especially the public's concerns about the details of engineering a multi-use trail through the Satan's Kingdom gorge.

Phillips Farm: Doug and Rusty reported that they and Madeline McClave had met with the Phillips family to discuss proposed trail work. We need from the Town Crew:

- 1) a kiosk at the parking area on the Surdam property so we can post information about the trail,
- 2) a path cut through the stone wall across the road from the trailhead, and
- 3) clearing of brush along the stone wall by the road along the Surdam property.

Doug and Rusty plan to announce a volunteer work party for this spring, probably in April, to cut the trail connecting Phillips Farms to the Goula open space preserve. We also need to write a stewardship plan and information for the kiosk. Part of the trail may be re-routed from its current path. Doug and Rusty will work closely with the Phillips family, who has volunteered to do some of the work. Karen noted that certain tasks will require a wetlands permit to determine their "as of right" status.

Franklin P. Kearney Memorial Nature Trail: Jean D. reported that she is working with Town Historian and New Hartford Land Trust Board member Anne Hall, as well as Conservation Commission chairperson Alison Murdock, to organize a public nature/history walk, possibly for April 25. Jean D. visited the Recreation Commission twice last year to discuss this, and she will contact them again about details. She will also check about posting an announcement on the town website.

Butler Riverfront Trail: Jean D. volunteered to call Madeline to work together on putting up informational signs in the kiosk.

Natural Resource Inventory update – Conservation Commission: Jean D. reported that she had spoken with Alison Murdock, who said she had delivered the "shape files" to the Selectmen's Office. The data is now two years old. We discussed technical issues with uploading the files into the town's computers.

CT Land Conservation Conference, March 21, 2020, Middletown: Jean D. has signed up to attend, and Rusty plans to sign up also. The Town has reimbursed Jean D. for the registration fee.

Other Business: none

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: Dave and Jay excused themselves before executive session began. Jean D. moved we enter executive session to discuss real estate at 7:35 p.m. Bill seconded and the motion passed unanimously. At 8:27 p.m., Bill moved we leave executive session and adjourn the meeting. Jean D. seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Darlington, Secretary