

Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting

Monday, October 25, 2021, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

Members Present: Doug Roth (chair), Eva Barham (alternate), Karen Griswold-Nelson, Madeline McClave, Jean Darlington (secretary). **Absent:** Rusty Warner, Bill Michaud. **Guest:** Jon Cottle

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and seated Eva as a regular member. We introduced ourselves to Jon, who introduced himself as an interested member of the public.

Approval of minutes: Jean moved to approve the minutes of the 9/27/2021 regular meeting. Karen seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:

Butler Riverfront: We discussed strategies for mitigating erosion caused by people and dogs walking on the trail. Jean reported that she, Bill, Madeline, and First Selectman Dan Jerram had walked the trail on October 12. We discussed moving two short sections of the trail farther from the river, posting signage to direct people toward appropriate river access points, and creating vegetative buffers and natural visual barriers to direct people away from unauthorized pathways to the river that are too steep and therefore could lead to erosion. We discussed plans to talk with Land Use Administrator Mike Lucas and the Inland Wetlands Commission about any necessary permits. Jean reported plans to attend a subcommittee meeting of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) on November 2. Madeline said she will send members an email in the next two weeks with updates to the Management Plan, which must be approved both by the New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) and a representative of the Board of Selectmen (BOS).

Jones Mountain: Eva reported on volunteer work parties in the past two weeks to clean out clogged culverts and redirect stormwater from the drainage ditches along the carriage road away from the edge of the stone bridge, with the aim of preventing its possible future undermining. We discussed the need for more work to repair eroded areas and prevent future erosion along the carriage road. Madeline pointed out that the baseline study of Jones Mountain had found the soils to be very fragile. Therefore, if any gravel or other such materials are needed, it will be important to bring them in carefully without heavy trucks whose weight could damage the road.

Work on Updating Open Space Plan: Doug, Madeline, and Eva reported about sections of the Plan they had worked on. Madeline said she will email her section to members in the next few days. Karen volunteered to write some information about the economic importance of protecting the Farmington River, as well as information about sustainability and resiliency. She will also work on updating portions of Section VI. We discussed the importance of renewing our cooperative relationship with the Planning and Zoning Commission on open space topics and decided to invite Land Use Administrator Mike Lucas and members of P&Z to our next meeting (Monday, November 22, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall). Members agreed to read the Plan and email their sections to Jean to paste into the evolving document.

New Business: Jean reported that 17 people had attended the Nature/History Hike at the Franklin P. Kearney Memorial Nature Trail on October 9th, led by Town Historian Anne Hall, Conservation Commission Chair Alison Murdock, Recreation Commission member Jeremy Schaller, and herself. Attendees enjoyed the hike and the presentation, and some expressed an interest in getting involved in volunteer opportunities. We talked about doing another one in the spring. Madeline handed out a summary of New Hartford's open space lands intended for public information, ideally to be posted on the town website. She plans to email it to members in the next ten days. Jean proposed the following dates for OSPC meetings in 2022: 1/24, 2/28, 3/28, 4/25, 5/23, 6/27, 7/25, 8/22, 9/26, 10/24, 11/21, 12/19. Madeline moved we approve those dates, Jean seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Jon expressed an interest in getting involved, thanked the commission, and excused himself.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate: A decision was made not to go into executive session. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Darlington, Secretary