

Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting
Monday, February 27, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

Members Present: Bill Michaud, Karen Griswold-Nelson, Rusty Warner, Madeline McClave, Jean Darlington (secretary). Absent: Doug Roth (chairperson), Eva Barham, Mary Hoag (alternate), Bill called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Approval of 12/19/2022 minutes: Postponed until the next meeting (3/27/2023).

Open Space Plan – 2022 Update: Jean reported that our [updated version of the Open Space Plan](#) had been added to the town website in late December.

Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:

Hiking trail on Town-owned Antolini property (not open space): Jean and Madeline reported that the NHLT had coordinated a group of volunteers, including two OSPC members, to investigate reports of faded signs and blazes, fallen trees, and soil damage caused by bikes and dirt bikes at the Town's Antolini Woods trails on February 8th. The volunteers photographed such problems, identified their locations on a trail map, and shared reports and recommendations. We discussed the problem of bikes and ATV's riding where it is prohibited on Town property, including some preserves, and private property. Possible solutions discussed were better enforcing the existing laws, posting signs to inform the public of the laws, posting information about the laws on the Town website and direct communication from Town leaders to residents. The public needs to know where such riding is and is not allowed by law. Members stated that many people are upset by the noise and nuisance of ATV's and motorized bikes riding at all hours in places where it is illegal to do so, including on public roads. Madeline said that the Town received [State of CT OSWA grants](#) to preserve three of our open space preserves, and the Town voted to protect these parcels under the conditions of the grants including that only passive recreation be allowed.

Rusty suggested that OSPC communicate more with Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission about various open space issues.

Jones Mountain: We discussed further work needed to remediate and prevent erosion of the fragile soils on the carriage road. Bill stated that a rainy day is the best time to assess problems with runoff and erosion; he plans to walk there soon with a helper and create a specific action plan.

Butler Riverfront Preserve: Bill reported that he had walked the trail recently and had found it to be in excellent condition. He said the two new short detours of the trail away from the Farmington River were clearly being used. He said that unauthorized trails down to the river will be easier to see when the vegetation starts to grow in the spring. Madeline stated that the postponed presentation about Japanese knotweed control will need to be rescheduled. We reviewed the need for a few small, rustic signs pointing hikers to authorized river access points, which Doug has the ability to make.

Goula Preserve, Phillips Farm: No update.

CT Trails Day: (<https://ctwoodlands.org/events/ct-trails-day/>) We discussed possible hikes to promote for the weekend of June 3-4.

Other business:

- Madeline announced a "Meet Your Greens" networking event sponsored by area land trusts on March 30th at Bad Dog Brewery in Torrington. [Click here](#) for more details.
- Madeline reported that the City of Torrington is applying for a CT trails grant to connect existing trails.

Executive session to discuss real estate: At 7:27, Rusty moved we enter executive session to discuss real estate. Jean seconded and the motion passed 5-0. Executive session ended at 7:40 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next meeting Monday, March 27, 2023, 6:30 p.m., New Hartford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Darlington, Secretary