

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

Monday, May 22, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

Members Present: Doug Roth (chairperson), Eva Barham, Madeline McClave, Bill Michaud, Karen Griswold Nelson, Jean Darlington (secretary). Absent: Rusty Warner, Mary Hoag (alternate).

Guest: Steve Turgeon.

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Members introduced themselves to Steve, who is interested in getting involved in Town activities.

Approval of 4/24/2023 minutes: Bill moved to accept the minutes of the 4/24/2023 meeting. Eva seconded and the motion passed 5-0 (Doug abstained).

Open Space Plan: Madeline and Bill said they would get together to revise the chart of open space lands to create a running database of preserved land. Eva stated that the OSPC page on the Town website needs certain revisions; she volunteered to send a list to Jean, who volunteered to let the Selectman's office know what needs to be updated. Doug emailed members an updated total number of preserved acres. Jean volunteered to keep track of Plan updates that members send to her.

Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:

Goula Preserve: We reviewed basic facts about the preserve (the Town owns the preserve, the State of CT DEEP holds a Conservation Easement on it, the land was preserved in 2006). We discussed issues of encroachment. Madeline said she will email OSPC members updates to the Management Plan as discussed at the April meeting. Eva reported on a work party of several volunteers organized by the New Hartford Land Trust who worked on clearing the trail and identifying places in need of improved trail markers. We discussed stewardship practices, such as mowing guidelines, that should be stated in the Management Plan. Doug said he would bring up stewardship topics with Dan later this week. Jean and Eva volunteered to go back this week to concentrate on improving the painted trail markers.

Butler Preserve: Jean asked if a representative of the Town, and then a representative of NHLT, had yet signed the 2022 Management Plan that Doug had emailed to First Selectman Dan Jerram on January 19th. Doug said he will bring it up when he talks with Dan later this week. Jean reported that several volunteers had worked to clear the hiking trail and to continue mitigation of invasive plants. NHLT, with OSPC, is organizing a Japanese knotweed orientation session and work party for June 4th at 9 a.m.

Jones Mountain: We discussed drafting a Management Plan for this preserve. Eva reported that signs and blazes in certain places are confusing and need to be improved. Doug said he had made a sign to point hikers back toward the parking area. We discussed posting more Town of New Hartford medallions at the boundaries of open space preserves.

Phillips Farm: Owner mowing of the pathways around the edges of fields should be happening soon. This mowing should take place about twice per month, depending on weather conditions and rate of plant growth.

Other Business:

Agricultural Commission: Doug stated that he plans to talk to Dan later this week about the Board of Selectmen codifying OSPC's role as New Hartford's Agricultural Commission.

Hiking Trail through Antolini Woods and Surdam Property: This land is not preserved open space, but the hiking trail connects to the hiking trail through Phillips Farm and the Goula Preserve. Volunteers have reported increased ATVers and dirt bikers riding illegally in this area in recent weeks.

Public Act 490 (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/Public-Act-490---The-Basics>): We discussed how land in P.A. 490 classification may be treated when transferred for preservation in perpetuity.

New Volunteer: Steve expressed an interest in volunteering, especially this summer.

Announcement of Events:

1) Madeline announced the NHLT's Annual Meeting on May 31 at the Beekley Library at 7 p.m. The presentation will be about the "Follow the Forest" initiative (<http://followtheforest.org/>)

2) Madeline announced an educational presentation about invasive plants by Rose Hiskes of the [CT Invasive Plant Working Group](#) (CIPWG) on June 10 at 10:00 a.m. at the Sabolcik Preserve.

Executive session to discuss real estate: At 7:50, Jean moved we enter executive session to discuss real estate. Bill seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 8:07 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Next meeting Monday, June 26, 2023, 6:30 p.m., New Hartford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Darlington, Secretary