

Minutes of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) Regular Meeting
Monday, June 26, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Sessions Conference Room, New Hartford Town Hall

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

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Approval of 5/22/2023 minutes: Jean moved to accept the minutes of the 5/22/2023 meeting. Eva seconded and the motion passed 4-0 (Rusty abstained).

Open Space Plan: We discussed including information about the sale of town-owned land in the next revision of the Plan because it relates both to the Land Preservation Fund and also to the question of the sale of town-owned preserved open space.

Updates on Current Open Space Preserves and Trails:

Jones Mountain: We discussed signage and trail blazes.

Butler Preserve: NHLT volunteers, including several members of OSPC, have been working on cutting down invasive Japanese knotweed this month. We discussed the possibility of seeking an NRCS (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>) grant to plant native plants in place of invasive plants that we remove. Madeline volunteered to email details to us. Doug reported that he had met with First Selectman Dan Jerram about the Board of Selectmen approving the latest version of the Management Plan. We discussed the ownership and stewardship of the 8.1-acre riverfront preserve. The Town of New Hartford owns this parcel and New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) holds the Conservation Easement (CE) on it, so the Management Plan is to be approved and signed annually by a representative of the Town and also by a representative of NHLT. Doug stated that he will speak to Dan again about putting this topic on the agenda of an upcoming BOS meeting. We discussed signage to indicate uses that are not allowed under the CE (no bikes, no fires, etc.). We discussed maintaining relationships and sharing information between the Town and owners of property abutting Town-owned open space.

Goula Preserve: Eva and Jean reported that they had improved the white blazes on the hiking trail that leads from Goula into Phillips Farm. Madeline reported that she needs to find one more piece of information to include in the draft of a Management Plan; she volunteered to email it to us when it is ready. We discussed documenting instances of encroachment and reporting to the First Selectman. We discussed OSPC's role as an advisory commission; members agreed that BOS should ask OSPC when questions arise regarding Town-owned open space. Doug volunteered to follow up with Dan.

Phillips Farm: We discussed signage and trail blazes, especially at the entrance from East Cotton Hill Road and in fields.

Other Business:

Follow the Forest: Madeline reported on the presentation at the NHLT Annual Meeting on the top of the “Follow the Forest Initiative” (<https://followtheforest.org/>). The OSPC members present volunteered to participate in this effort.

Agricultural Commission: Doug stated that he will follow up again with Dan about putting the topic of OSPC’s role as New Hartford’s Agricultural Commission on the agenda of an upcoming BOS meeting.

Public Act 490 (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/Public-Act-490---The-Basics>): We discussed the Conveyance Tax on the sale of PA 490 land.

Land Preservation Fund: Doug reported that the LPF is \$95,000 in arrears. We discussed section 2d of the [Open Space Ordinance](#), which states, “All proceeds from the sale of any Town-owned land shall be deposited into the Land Preservation Fund.”

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Next meeting Monday, July 24, 2023, 6:30 p.m., New Hartford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Darlington, Secretary