

**TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
SENIOR CENTER/MEETING ROOM
TOWN HALL
OCTOBER 29, 2019**

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. He opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectman Jerram opened the floor to nominations for Moderator. Motion Noel Gauthier, second Anne Hall to nominate Alesia Kennerson for Moderator. Hearing no other nominations, First Selectman Jerram entertained a motion to close nominations. Motion Carlene Jerram, second Madeline McClave to close nominations. Unanimously approved by voice vote. First Selectman Jerram called for a voice vote on the motion to elect Alesia Kennerson Moderator. Unanimously approved.

Moderator Alesia Kennerson read the call of the meeting:

**TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD
NOTICE OF A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of New Hartford, CT hereby notifies all electors and citizens entitled to vote in Town Meetings in said Town of New Hartford, that a Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 29, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the Senior Center/Meeting Room of the New Hartford Town Hall, 530 Main Street, in New Hartford, CT for the following purposes:

1. To take such action as the voters deem best with respect to the acceptance of a Conservation Easement by and between the Town of New Hartford and the New Hartford Land Trust, Inc. for 8.1 acres of “protected property” on Blackbridge Road, shown as “Proposed Walk Path” – “Excluded from Development Rights” on a map entitled “Monumented Property Survey Plan Michael D Butler, Trustee”; recorded in the New Hartford Land Records as Maps #2297A and 2297 B.
2. To take such action as the voters deem best with respect to the acceptance of a lease agreement by and between the Town of New Hartford and the Beekley Family Foundation for property identified as 395 Town Hill Road.

Dated at New Hartford, Connecticut, this 8th day of October, 2019.

Board of Selectmen

Daniel V. Jerram, First Selectman

Alesia R. Kennerson, Selectman

Eric B. Claman, Selectman

Moderator Kennerson read the Return of Posting and Publication.

**RETURN OF POSTING AND PUBLICATION
OF NOTICE OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

I, Daniel V. Jerram, First Selectman of the Town of New Hartford, Connecticut, hereby certify that I caused a copy of the foregoing Notice of Special Town Meeting to be posted on the Town signpost on Wednesday, October 9, 2019, and also published in the Hartford Courant a newspaper published in Hartford, Connecticut and having a general circulation in the Town of New Hartford, on Tuesday, October 22, 2019.

Dated this 29th day of October, 2019

Daniel V. Jerram, First Selectman

ITEM NUMBER 1:

To take such action as the voters deem best with respect to the approval of the granting of an Easement by and between the Town of New Hartford and the New Hartford Land Trust Inc. for 8.1 acres of “protected property” on Blackbridge Road, shown as “Proposed Walk Path” – “Excluded from Development Rights” on a map entitled “Monumented Property Survey Plan Michael D Butler, Trustee”; recorded in the New Hartford Land Records as Maps #2297A and 2297 B.

Moderator Kennerson asked for a motion to approve the proposed conservation easement (ATTACHMENT 2) in order to allow for discussion.
Motion Norman Rogers, second Bill Michaud.

Moderator Kennerson introduced Bill Michaud, a member of the Land Trust and Open Space Preservation Commission to present information regarding the conservation easement. Bill Michaud first discussed the Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) , and its charge, which includes overseeing the implementation of the Town's Open Space Plan. That plan is intended to preserve the rural character of the town, protect natural wildlife habitats and permanently preserve for future residents the natural resources of the town. Michaud summarized details from the Information Sheet (ATTACHMENT 1) made available to attendees of the meeting. Speaking for the OSPC, he indicated how pleased the members were that the Michael Butler family came forward with their proposal for preservation of this unique property, that the town approved the purchase and that tonight we have the opportunity to approve the conservation easement. The easement has been a collaborative effort between the Board of Selectmen, the New Hartford Land Conservation Trust and OSPC. OSPC fully endorses this easement as it provides a mechanism for permanent preservation of this riverfront parcel.

First Selectman Dan Jerram thanked all who participated in this Preservation Project, especially the New Hartford Land Conservation Trust which provided the money to purchase this parcel for the town.

Moderator Kennerson opened the floor to comments or questions.

Madeline McClave, President of the New Hartford Land Conservation Trust commented that it was wonderful to be able to acquire this incredible piece of riverfront property on the 25 the anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Designation of the Farmington River. She also extended her thanks to all who have helped.

Moderator Kennerson asked for questions and hearing none called for a voice vote. The motion to accept the conservation easement was unanimously approved.

ITEM NUMBER 2:

To take such action as the voters deem best with respect to the acceptance of a lease agreement by and between the Town of New Hartford and the Beekley Family Foundation for property identified as 395 Town Hill Road.

Moderator Kennerson requested a motion to authorize the First Selectman to enter into a lease agreement between the Town of New Hartford and WMB Realty II, LLC and/or the Beekley Family Foundation for property identified as 395 Town Hill Road. This will enable us to begin discussion. Motion Norman Rogers, second Carlene Jerram.

Moderator Kennerson then turned the floor over to First Selectman Jerram to describe this proposal. Dan Jerram provided the following information. The Beekley Family has offered a long term lease on this 31+ acre parcel to the town for passive recreation, for a fee of \$1 per year, The town will place this property on it's insurance. The 25 year lease will be renewable for another 25 years. The taxes are currently under \$2,800 per year, but with approval of this lease, will no longer be collected. Currently there are about 3 acres being mowed for picnicking and hiking, the remainder is woodlands. The town will need to do some work to make a parking area.

Moderator Kennerson opened the floor to questions.

Noel Gauthier asked if the town would be responsible for mowing? First Selectman Jerram responded that we would. There is a 2 bay garage on the property where equipment could be stored.

Madeline McClave asked if the site plan shown on the overhead screen is the one mentioned in item #7 of the lease. Jerram responded that it is. The town would start with parking, then do trails and possibly a tower for viewing. Town Counsel has advised that if the town were to be investing money for significant improvements such as a tower, it would be in our interest to extend the life of the lease.

David Rosengren questioned where the parking would go. Jerram indicated it would be in the SE corner, a circular drive with 10-15 spaces, which should be adequate for small gatherings.

In response to a question by Steve Bedford regarding if the trails would have to meet the ADA requirements, First Selectman Jerram said that these would be natural earthen trails on fairly level ground, so he did not anticipate any issues with ADA.

Jean Darlington questioned what the level of review would be for additional structures on the site. First Selectman Jerram responded that all improvements would go through Zoning, the Beekley Family Foundation, and funding would have to be approved.

In response to a question regarding permitted winter activities by Fran Herman, First Selectman Jerram said he could see cross country skiing but not snowmobiling.

Anne Hall questioned if the Beekley family could require the town to do improvements. Jerram responded “No”.

Tom Goddu asked if the site had electricity and septic. First Selectman Jerram responded that although there had been a cabin on the property, it had been removed so there was no access to a septic system. Jerram did not believe there was any electric service – however all our parks close at sunset.

Bill Michaud questioned the possibility of permanently preserving the property. Jerram replied that the Beekley Foundation is primarily a medical Foundation and it owns two parcels that don't fit with its mission. This lease is a way to find a use for one of these parcels. The other is located on 219 across from the Beekley Library, and talks are ongoing to perhaps use that parcel to further the mission of the Library and also find a home for Mr. Beekley's extensive collection of ski art.

Bill Michaud was concerned about the observation tower and its potential impact on the viewshed. What would be the process? First Selectman Jerram indicated that in all probability a tower would be no higher than tree level. There is a 160 to 180 degree northerly view. As stated earlier in the meeting, many town agencies would be involved in addition to the Beekley Foundation in the approval process for a tower.

David Rosengren expressed concern that we do not have figures for the costs associated with the improvements or maintenance of the parcel. He believed we should have more details before we agree to approve this lease. He didn't feel we know exactly what we are getting. Motion Rosengren to table this item.

Moderator Kennerson asked First Selectman Jerram to comment. First Selectman Jerram estimate 1-2 hours of staff time to mow the 3 acres. The road crew would be employed to create the parking. Jerram estimated the cost of the tree work would be 3-5 thousand plus the cost of gravel. The town crew would regularly pick up the trash. First Selectman Jerram said he had approached Anne Bailey the property owner to the west about the possibility of adding more acreage and she was not opposed to the idea.

Jay Bailey commented we would be foolish to turn this offer down.

Alison Murdock commented it would be wise to discontinue mowing Brodie South which is really unnecessary when we begin mowing this parcel.

Moderator Kennerson called for a vote on the motion. As a Point of Order David Rosengren asked what motion we were voting on. Moderator Kennerson said the motion to enter into the lease. David Rosengren questioned why we not voting on the motion to table? Moderator Kennerson replied there was no second. Laura Bedford seconded the motion to table. Moderator Kennerson ruled the motion to table as out of order.

Moderator Kennerson called for a vote on the motion to authorize the First Selectman to enter into the lease agreement. By voice vote the motion passes. None were opposed.

Moderator Kennerson announced that since this is a special town meeting, no other business can be conducted. Motion Noel Gauthier to adjourn the meeting, second Madeline McClave. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

A True Copy

Attest: Donna N. LaPlante

New Hartford Town Clerk