

Town of New Paltz
Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)
Approved Minutes, Meeting of February 13, 2018, at the Community Center

Members Present: Kevin Borden, Lynn Bowdery, Richard Fiesel, John Gotto, Michael Knutson, Cara Lee, Andrew Titus and Tom Weiner

Guests: Christie DeBoer, Wallkill Valley Land Trust; Seth McKee, Scenic Hudson

Town Officials: Town Board Liaison Marty Irwin

Public present: None

Minutes taken by: Lynn Bowdery, CWOSP Commission member and Secretary

1. Meeting called to order at: 7:06 PM by Co-chairman Kevin Borden

2. Public comments: None.

3. Review, amend and approve minutes of previous meeting: No changes were suggested, but a typo was corrected. Lynn Bowdery moved that those minutes be approved as amended. Cara Lee seconded the motion. All present voted in favor. *[These were the November 8, 2017 minutes. There was no meeting in December 2017 due to lack of a quorum, and no meeting scheduled for January 2018.]*

At the request of Town Board Liaison Marty Irwin, a discussion about CWOSP Comm. officers for 2018 was inserted here in the agenda. After the resignation of Dennis Moore as Commission president, Cara Lee and Brad Barclay broached the idea of leading as president to Kevin Borden. He felt he would be more comfortable as a co-chair. John Gotto then agreed to be co-chair with Kevin, and they will do it for a year to see how it works out. Cara explained that because the Town Board officially appoints the officers of commissions, we decide who we would like as officers and communicate our preference to the Town Board for approval.

Michael Knutson moved that the CWOSP Commission recommend to the Town Board that Kevin Borden and John Gotto be appointed co-chairs for 2018. Richard Fiesel seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

John proposed working with Kevin as alternating chairs, which Kevin agreed with, although John will be unable to attend the next meeting.

A new regular meeting time must be decided so that Marty Irwin, the Town Board Liaison, can come when the Town/Village Joint Board meetings occur on second Wednesdays. Either the first or third Wednesdays will be OK. All members present are available for either of those. Kevin will check with Brad Barclay about his availability and then check with the Town Clerk and set the time. Occasionally we will want to have joint meetings with the EnCB when we have items of shared interest.

Kevin suggested writing a letter thanking former CWOSP Comm. president Dennis Moore for his service to the Commission and the Town. This was approved by consensus. Kevin and John will write the letter.

At Cara Lee's request, agenda item 6 was moved up.

6. CWOSP Roles Discussion for 2018: Cara suggested having a collection of land use materials available to the public at Elting Memorial Library. She said people have been asking questions about land use at the library.

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Cara also said there should be a history of what the CWOSP Comm. does. We should also look at the Open Space Plan and assess what has been accomplished, what is still to be done, and what new goals might be set.

Andrew agreed that a history would be helpful to raise visibility, create interest, and useful to potential new residents. Cara added that it can enhance our regional reputation, since other Towns might be interested in open space protection and could use our experience. When Kevin asked how we should prioritize our actions, Cara's reply was to reread the Plan.

Kevin said for the next meeting, that the EnCB would like to discuss the Solar Law with us; the Town wants to be prepared for increases in large solar installations, which need to be encouraged but sited well to protect habitats and environment. The Town wants a law in its Town Code. Kevin wondered where CWOSP Comm. comes in on this and whether we are ready for a meeting about it with the EnCB. Richard Fiesel added that the Town should also consider wind generation issues. Cara said large wind farms are not very likely here because we do not have as much wind as other places and turbines would never be allowed on the ridge. Kevin will email the materials he got from the EnCB to the CWOSP Comm. members, who should take a look at what the EnCB has done and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting. Kevin will ask them what their timeline is. We should write our comments down and email them to John Gotto for consolidation.

4. Mill Brook Preserve Update with Christie DeBoer: Christie DeBoer, Executive Director of the Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT) reported that the conservation easements (CEs) on both the Town and Village parcels were finalized in 2017. There are some differences in what is included in each CE. The CEs refer to the Recreation Plan (Rec. Plan) for what activities are to be done and where, and there has been much progress in the creation of the Rec. Plan. A professional-grade map has been prepared with the help of an Orange County Land Trust staff member, and the Plan will have to be approved by the Town, Village, and WVLT. Memorandums of Understanding (MOAs) are being drafted to go with the Rec. Plan to make explicit who is responsible to do what with Mill Brook Preserve (MBP). The Village Board will be looking at it at their meeting of Feb. 14. Nothing can be done in MBP until the MOAs are approved.

Cara Lee asked Christie if she saw a role for the CWOSP Comm. there? Christie said yes, by advocating for MBP, Inc., to help them where needed.

Marty Irwin said that people seemed pretty confident with the Rec. Plan. He added that CWOSP Comm. had discussed moving its focus from MBP.

Christie explained that WVLT's role is to make sure that the operations of MBP, Inc. do not violate the easement.

John Gotto added that it is not the CWOSP Comm.'s role to be involved in the operations of MBP, Inc. Kevin Borden added that we can be cheerleaders. Lynn Bowdery said that the CWOSP Comm. can take some of the credit for MBP's existence since it was instrumental in the acquisition of the first parcel.

Christie said that someone contacted WVLT about protecting a particular piece of land and asked if the CWOSP Comm. was still in the open space business. She was told that there is still \$1.2 million unspent in the bond money and that Supervisor Bettez indicated that the Town Board would support further open space purchases.

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5. Taliaferro Application Update with Seth McKee: Michael Knutson, who works for Scenic Hudson (SH), recused himself at this point and left the room. Seth McKee, Scenic Hudson Land Conservation Director, reported on the status of the Taliaferro application. SH and WVLT are working on the wording of the conservation easement that will be placed on the Taliaferro land when the development rights are bought. WVLT will hold and enforce the CE when it is in place. The development rights are being bought for \$387,000, of which \$129,000 each will be paid by SH, Ulster County, and the Town of New Paltz with its Open Space Bond money. This will be the first Ulster County land protection transaction. The fact of municipal funding impresses other funding partners. Christie DeBoer added that the CE provides for two area carve-outs that allow for residential structures, everything else is farm area except for the Wallkill River buffer. The baseline documentation is well underway, the property has been well surveyed. WVLT is raising funds for Stewardship endowment. There will be no press release until the deal is completed. They are looking at closing dates in March.

Cara Lee went to the recent Conference of Water Quality and Open Space at SUNY, and got the idea that they were more interested in water infrastructure on protected lands than the role of open space in water quality and infiltration; could SH and WVLT help with this issue? Christie said that the MBP CEs consider the impacts of "public municipal drinking water" infrastructure on the conservation values to be protected. Marty said that the Taliaferro CE includes a provision for changes due to climate change-- a good thing to have. He wondered if there is a protection against the water being sold to a private corporation; the wording in the CE does not allow for commercial water sale, only municipal use.

Kevin Borden, in summary, said that when the Taliaferro project is finalized the players involved will want to publicize it. Seth added that they will want a press conference. Kevin said that the CWOSP Comm. should be included for due credit and publicity. Great news!

Tom Weiner wondered if the County will be interested in working with New Paltz again? Seth replied that after this other towns will be seeking County help, too. Kevin said that the CWOSP Comm. can share our rating criteria and process; we can share our experience for the county and other municipalities. It is wonderful that New Paltz has gotten leverage from other public enterprises.

Lynn Bowdery was concerned that some potential funding partners required "prime agricultural soils", to the detriment of important farming, such as orchards, which are not done on prime ag. soils. Cara said that "prime" is being replaced by "viable agricultural land." Michael Knutson was called back in.

7. Thoughts on Next Meeting Agenda and Adjournment: John Gotto said for next month, whether the meeting is on the first or third Wednesday, he will not be able to come, but he will still collage the solar law questions and comments.

Cara Lee told the group that there was going to be a Scenic Hudson conference on Solar Development and Land Use on March 27th.

Tom Weiner asked if there is a complete listing of conservation easements funded by the Town using the \$2 million of bonding approved by the residents. He was told that so far the Town, using the Open Space Bond has, with a 50-50 match from Open Space Institute, bought the conservation easement on the Palmateer property and purchased the Sunset Ridge property outright, which is now a part of Mill Brook Preserve.

Cara moved that the meeting be adjourned. Andrew Titus seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at a time not noted.