

**Town of New Paltz**  
**Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)**  
**Approved Minutes, Meeting of March 21, 2018, at the Community Center**

**Members Present:** Brad Barclay, Kevin Borden, Lynn Bowdery, Richard Fiesel, John Gotto, Michael Knutson, Cara Lee, and Tom Weiner

**Guests:** Daniel Porter

**Town Officials:** Town Board Liaison Marty Irwin

**Public present:** None

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

**Meeting called to order at:** About 7:00 PM by Co-chairman John Gotto

**1. Joint meeting with Town of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board: Input to discussion of proposal the Town law regarding solar power installations (till 8:00PM)**

Members of the Town of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board (EnCB) Ingrid Haeckel, Susan Weil, Joe Bergstein, Rose Rudnitski, Jim Littlefoot, and Janelle Peotter (via phone), New Paltz Planning Board liaison to EnCB Amanda Gotto, and special guest Gardiner Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC) member Roberta Clements, met with the CWOSP Comm. to discuss the content of a law regulating solar photovoltaic installations.

After quick introductions, Chairman John Gotto opened the discussion by saying that the CWOSP Commission's concerns are with how land is used, especially by large-scale solar installations.

Ingrid Haeckel said that the EnCB had the same concerns.

There followed a wide-ranging discussion about aspects of solar generation of electricity, with a back-and-forth of questions and information. Brad Barclay said that projects generating over 25MW of electricity are governed by state law. Cara Lee said that projects under 2MW are considered small. Richard Fiesel asked if the proposed law would also cover solar generation of electricity using mirrors and steam. The answer was no, only photovoltaic projects. Mirror arrays are too huge to be used in our area. We are only talking about projects intended to export power. The amount of land involved is the main issue. Ingrid asked how large a project in acreage used do we want? Marty Irwin said there has been a discussion of the use of the Town's property on Clearwater Road, the capped landfill, for a solar project that would go to the electric grid. He is concerned that a law could preclude the Town using its land. Brad contributed that the key to locating a solar projects is its relation to the grid. Ingrid provided a map of New Paltz showing the location of the three-wire distribution lines where solar projects could be hooked up. At one point the figure **2MW = 20 acres** was mentioned. More efficient solar panels might change that ratio. John Gotto asked where these things can be located, and where should they not be located? Cara said not in wetlands and floodplains, and that for certain sizes there should be a special use permit. Marty added that impact on habitats is a consideration. Kevin Borden asked what Gardiner has done to protect wildlife. Roberta Clements, of the Gardiner ECC, said they had had big discussions about how the required fencing around solar projects affects animals. Ingrid asked Roberta why Gardiner limited the size of solar projects to 20 acres with large setbacks- 100 foot setbacks for solar panels and equipment with screening and fencing, and no more than 50% developed - no specific zone or area but as a special permit issue. Roberta said they needed a clear flow chart on how applications would be handled.

A wide-ranging discussion continued, including how to encourage solar development and still protect the community culture and the environment.

Amanda Gotto asked the CWOSP Commission to come up with the most advantageous or least harmful areas for solar farms.

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Ingrid said that the EnCB was considering devising a conservation overlay district based on the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance analysis (Northern Wallkill Biodiversity Plan). John Gotto said that the CWOSP Comm. was also concerned with aesthetics. Amanda wondered whether we actually want big solar fields? Are the environmental costs too much? Roberta said consider how things would be with full build-out. Brad added that without storage capacity, Central Hudson is very reluctant to allow hook-ups of large solar farms to the grid.

Cara asked what should we come up with for our next meeting?

John said we would benefit from having another joint meeting.

Cara said that NYSEDA has expert consultants- we could invite one to answer our questions.

Richard Fiesel suggested coming up with a list of pros and cons.

Someone mentioned that Tompkins County has a good model law.

Next steps: Cara will see what expert can come. We need a date. We will do a Doodle Poll. For that we need everyone's emails to arrive at a date when EnCB, Planning Board, Town Board and CWOSP Comm. can come. Ingrid will work on that.

End of Joint Meeting.

**The regular CWOSP Commission Meeting was called to order by Co-chairman John Gotto at 8:25 PM.**

Town Board liaison Marty Irwin requested that two new items be put on the agenda under New Business: Taliaferro and signage. Everyone agreed.

**2. Public Comments:** None.

**3. Review and approve minutes of February meeting:** This was tabled and it was decided to send a draft of those minutes to the Town Clerk to do until they could be reviewed and approved at the next meeting.

**4. Presentation by guest Daniel Porter: Land protection opportunities in Libertyville Road area:**

Daniel Porter has lived in the Libertyville area. He described it as containing the Stony Kill Corridor, with Route 299 to the north, Albany Post Road to the west, and Libertyville Road to the south and east. It forms a high quality passageway along the Wallkill River. Using the CWOSP Comm. parcel criteria, it has 600 acres in the area of potentially high density buildout according to the New Paltz buildout analysis. Some of the acres are actively farmed. The goal is to protect Stony Kill from its headwaters to the Wallkill. The area has high biodiversity, as shown in the MCA Northern Wallkill Biodiversity Plan. It is mostly wooded, and has a core habitat area. It has significant frontage on the Shawangunk Mountain Scenic Byway and other scenic roads. Dan has reached out to some of the landowners; some replied and might be interested in open space preservation. Existing neighbors might help. Dan thinks that CWOSP Comm. should reach out to some of the neighbors about open land conservation.

Cara Lee asked him how many parcels were involved. Answer was not heard. (A check on Ulster County Parcel Viewer shows 10 large relatively undeveloped parcels with 15 acres or more in the area described.)

John Gotto asked Dan what got him going on this interest. Dan said that he grew up there as a neighbor. He has heard woodcocks on Albany Post Road.

Cara suggested a way to start by reaching out to neighbors with information about the biodiversity of the land to gauge and encourage their interest, and let us know what their interest is. This is in keeping with

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what CWOSP Comm. is for and a good starting point. Cara mentioned that Scenic Hudson has an internet tool for Hudson Valley conservation strategy that we might explore.

**Thank you, Dan, for your interest!**

**5. New Business:** Marty Irwin announced that the Taliaferro Farm easement closed today. There will be a public meeting to make the announcement. Seth McKee will work on getting a date to do it. [This is an Open Space Bond project in which the cost of the purchase of development rights is split evenly by Scenic Hudson, Ulster County and the Town of New Paltz (using money from the Open Space Bond), with the Wallkill Valley Land Trust holding the conservation easement and paying the costs of the baseline documentation and future stewardship monitoring.]

Marty also asked the CWOSP Comm. for advice on the wording on a sign the Town intends to put up at an undeveloped property it owns with river frontage on Springtown Road. Currently there is no signage at all. People have been cutting trees, having campfires and leaving trash. It has been a fishing spot for a long time. He is working with Building Inspector Stacy Delarede. She suggests that a sign should indicate Town ownership of the property, carry in-carry out policy, no fires, no tree cutting, no motorized vehicles beyond a certain point, open dawn to dusk. It was suggested to add a warning sign about risks in eating fish from the Wallkill. We agreed that those sign elements seemed good. Marty will send an email to Stacy and copy CWOSP Comm. on it.

**6. Review of CWOSP progress with respect to Open Space Plan, and continue discussion towards identifying additional opportunities:** Cara Lee presented a chart of lands in New Paltz protected since 2006. There was a brief discussion of the chart. Cara suggested that we consider reassessing our goals. Kevin Borden said that the success of the Taliaferro project might be useful to push toward more protection of agricultural lands. CWOSP can renew outreach to farmers. Brad Barclay added that personal communications with farmers would be useful. John Gotto asked how to identify whom to invite to a meeting, what's our pitch? Cara said that we have experts on agricultural land preservation that we can invite- Scenic Hudson, Orange County Land Trust. Brad Barclay said that New York Ag. and Markets has a new round of funding. Land trusts and counties can get grants.

John asked for a volunteer to contact farmers and identify parcels. Michael Knutson offered to do that. Also someone else to find experts who would come to a program we might have. Scenic Hudson has a Foodshed Plan - see the Scenic Hudson website <https://www.scenichudson.org/foodshedplan> for a summary and link to downloadable pdf.

Cara added that we should also review the Town of New Paltz Farmland Preservation Plan, [http://www.townofnewpaltz.org/sites/newpaltzny/files/file/new\\_paltz\\_farmland\\_preservation\\_plan\\_13\\_11.pdf](http://www.townofnewpaltz.org/sites/newpaltzny/files/file/new_paltz_farmland_preservation_plan_13_11.pdf)

**7. Adjourn:** Brad Barclay moved that the meeting be adjourned. Cara Lee seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM. The next meeting will be on April 11, 2018.