

Town of New Paltz
Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)
Approved Minutes as amended, Meeting of Wednesday, March 24, 2021, via Zoom

Members present: Lynn Bowdery, Rich Fiesel, John Gotto, Mike Knutson, Cara Lee, Tom Weiner

Town Officials: None

Public present: None

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

1. Meeting called to order at: 7:05 PM by Chairman John Gotto

2. Public comments: None

3. Review and approve minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting: Some additions were made to fill incomplete notes in the draft Minutes which had been circulated previously. Cara Lee moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mike Knotson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Lynn Bowdery asked how Zoom meetings could be open to the public. Answer: The meetings are posted on the Town website, there is a link to request attendance. John Gotto said that we would gladly welcome any member of the public.

4. Review parcel scoring exercise: Cara started the discussion by saying that the owner of the parcel used in the rating exercise had approached the Community Preservation Fund Advisory Board about protecting the parcel, but the CPFAB told him that it was not yet ready to review proposals. He had cleared some of the land to do house site planning and this caused a problem. He has withdrawn his proposal from the Planning Board for now. The CPFAB wants to integrate its scoring system with CWOSP's, but was advised to have only one scoring system. John said that there is no activity immanent but it is good to test our rating process; he is curious to see how the reviewers results would compare. Here are the results:

Category	Tom	John	Mike	Lynn
Working Farms	0	0	0	0
Water Resources	15	15	26	35
Biodiv. & Ecological Resources	15	10	14	14
Scenic & Cultural Resources	0	0	0	0
Rec. & Educational Opportunities	11	28	28	32
Project Viability	63	34	20	10
Project Impact	10	15	5	20
Total Points	114	102	93	111

Average score: 105

This was about 22% of the total possible points in the CWOSP ratings guidelines.

The parcel scored a 7 on the CPF ranking system out of a possible 35, for a 20% level.

Mike asked what were the scores of all the other parcels that CWOSP rated. Lynn will find them in the records and report on it.

John asked what the median score was of the CPP rankings. Mike said he would look it up as we went on.

John said he felt the exercise had served its purpose, that it was a rational analysis that was defensible, with a general level of consistency.

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Cara said that the CPP scoring was on the presence or absence of attributes and the number of attributes vary greatly by category. The score helps assess parcels, but is not the only thing to be considered. John said they could use the score as a percentage of attributes. Cara said it is an analysis of what makes a parcel eligible to be considered for preservation.

Mike announced his findings. For the CPP parcel rankings the mean average score is 7; the median score is 6; and the mode (most common) score is 2. Zeros were not counted.

Lynn asked how the rankings work with only willing landowners coming forward. Cara replied that the CPFAB will do focused outreach to landowners. John added that the CPF will be in the driver’s seat. Cara continued, In the future we will have to see if we need two committees. John said that CWOSP will put its outreach activities on hold. Cara agreed. John said that CWOSP could take a look at the things that came before CPF as a check.

Mike presented his search findings of the number of CPP parcels for each score. These are the results:

Score	No. of parcels	Score	No. of parcels	Score	No. of parcels
1	145	9	75	17	10
2	173	10	69	18	13
3	172	11	61	19	8
4	139	12	78	20	2
5	124	13	65	21	5
6	102	14	68	22	4
7	102	15	50	23	1
8	83	16	23		

There were lots of zeros. Mike reviewed and corrected these figures.

Cara said that John Orfitelli played with the CPP spreadsheet and could pull up a property and show how it showed on each attribute. John will ask him to do that for this exercise parcel.

Lynn asked how the CPF would go about choosing what to prioritize for outreach. Cara replied that they will consider vulnerabilities and priorities first and scoring to back it up. Farmland is usually the most vulnerable. Mike said they also must consider other protections and be realistic. Cara added that Farmland is very important and woodlands are also unprotected and vulnerable, and the ability to connect forest blocks. The Open Space Plan reflects the same conclusions. “The numbers tell you things but they don’t tell you everything.” Mike said that’s what his exercise was trying to show.

Cara told us that Ingrid Haeckel has made a map of parcels that when you click on a parcel, information comes up keyed to the CPP spreadsheet attributes.

5. New Business: Mike asked if it would help to rank another parcel, one that ranked higher in the CPP spreadsheet. The highest one is Coppersea Farm, Springtown Road, SBN 78.3-3-60.110. Cara asked if that had been Fackler’s farm. Lynn said it was and filled the board in on the background of the Planning Board’s decision to reject an application of the owner between Fackler and Coppersea to subdivide the property on the grounds of flood risk and insufficient escape routes, making a legal precedent when the owner’s lawsuit was lost.

Casa suggested that CWOSP meet every other month instead of on a monthly basis. Mike suggested discussing it at our next meeting. Lynn said that if the weather is warm enough we could meet out of doors.

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Richard Fiesel suggested that parcel evaluations could consider whether parcels had vernal pools, which are very important and not protected. Cara said that while vernal pools support the highest biomass in some settings, they are not well mapped, but they would add to the scoring of a property.

John brought up the question of project viability, said that CPF money is not from the Town budget, so the CWOSP viability ranking of Town's share of expenses paid from taxes is not useful for CPF projects, but still useful for CWOSP projects.

6. Adjournment: Mike moved that the meeting be adjourned. Cara seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.