

Town of New Paltz
Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)
Approved Minutes, Meeting of Wednesday, April 27, 2022 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: 7:03 PM by Chairman John Gotto

2. Public comments: None

3. Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2022 meeting: The draft minutes for the Feb. 23 meeting had been sent out, amended according to members' suggestions, and resent to the board before this meeting. No one suggested any new changes. President John Gotto moved to accept the February minutes as amended; Tom Weiner seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

4. Miscellaneous business: John Gotto reported that the memorandum clarifying the mission and operations of the CWOSP Commission, which was approved at the February meeting, was sent to the New Paltz Town Board and Environmental Protection Board and has been received and acknowledged.

We discussed how we would be meeting at our next meeting on June 22nd. It is not clear whether in-person meetings will be required by then. Cara Lee informed us that the requirement to meet in person had been postponed until June 10, but that it might have to be postponed again. John suggested meeting by Zoom in June. He encouraged everyone to keep alert for likely properties to report to CWOSP and the CPF boards.

5. Report on CPF activities: Cara reported that the CPF Advisory Board has spent the past year getting their footing and making partnerships. Money is accruing in the fund. The Town did secure three wetland parcels from Ulster County. We (CPF board) are working with Wallkill Valley Land Trust. We have sent out some letters of interest and have heard back from two recipients. We are figuring out where we have areas of shared interest with partners, identified some landowners to reach out to. We will learn about what is involved in the process. We need WVLT as a partner to hold the conservation easements. We are working with the Towns of Gardiner and Marbletown helping them to get Community Preservation Funds.

John asked how much is in our fund? Answer: \$580,000 so far. The real estate market is hot. New Paltz is discovered and more people want to live here.

John added that that makes it more urgent to protect what needs to be protected.

Cara said they had a meeting with Marbletown and Supervisor Neil Bettez urged them to persist, that open space was important.

John thinks there should be outreach to people who need to know about the CPF and real estate transfer tax, especially real estate agents. Some people who are buying property have the right mindset to protect it. Keep checking Zillow, also look at the map from the CPP process, useful for identifying important areas.

Cara said she gets sucked in studying maps and info. She has talked to people who recently bought a large parcel and are interested in protecting it, at beginning of thinking about it. There are lots of places to explore. Another is the Coppersea property, which had the highest score in the CPP rankings. They say they are interested in regenerative agriculture.

John observed that discussions start slowly and last a long time. He was approached by someone for a property not in New Paltz.

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Tom asked whether there was any talk about how Historic Preservation will divide or use funding from the CPF.

Cara said that for the short term they will focus on land preservation with focus on historic preservation. They studied façade easements which are very complex—they are not ready for that. Looking at Route 32 N, there are farms with historic buildings. She has become aware that the Community Preservation Plan is weighted toward habitat considerations, with historic getting only one point and scenic getting only one point in the scoring system. Overall, she feels that the system is good at rating what community character to preserve. She knows about a study of historic farms and properties that was done a while ago by Neil Larsen.

John said there were no other agenda items.

Mike Knutson moved to adjourn the meeting. Lynn Bowdery seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM.

The next meeting will be on June 22nd, the fourth Wednesday in June.