

**Town of New Paltz**  
**Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)**  
**Approved Minutes, Meeting of July 17, 2019, at the Community Center**

**Members Present:** Lynn Bowdery, John Gotto, Michael Knutson and Tom Weiner

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

**Public present:** None

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

**1. Meeting called to order at:** 7:04 PM by Chairman John Gotto

**2. Public comments:** None

**3. Review and approve minutes June meeting:** The draft minutes of the June 12th meeting were briefly discussed. Mike Knutson moved that they be approved as presented. John Gotto seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**4. Update on path to Mill Brook Preserve - outreach to property owner?:** Chairman Gotto reported that Cara Lee has talked about the land parcel with Tal Ilany, the President of the Board of Mill Brook Preserve, Inc., and Julie Seyfert Lillis, its Executive Director, but that they are still hoping to get together with the landowner. Also, no progress was made on the model letter to landowners.

**5. CWOSP budget request (Marty):** Marty Irwin explained that due to various issues the invoices that the Wallkill Valley Land Trust submitted for the monitoring done on Town of New Paltz conservation easement properties for 2017 and 2018 were finally paid from the 2019 CWOSP budget line. When the invoice comes in for their 2019 monitoring work, there will not be enough left in the CWOSP budget line to cover it. Marty said that there is a way to find funds to cover the expected costs. He explained the steps involved in paying an invoice for a CWOSP expense. Marty will ask the Town Comptroller to write up a narrative of the steps and timing involved in getting an invoice approved and paid.

Talk of budgets led to a brief digression on the topic of Community Preservation Fund (CPF) legislation and Community Preservation Plans (CPP). Lynn Bowdery has a pdf of the draft Town of Chester CPP and will check to see if it has been superseded before sending it out to the CWOSP members and Marty Irwin, for their information. The Town of Red Hook should already have a CCP. Lynn will look for it. Mike will look up the text of the recently passed New York State Law regarding CPFs.

**Not on the agenda:** John sent an email earlier in July, with the Town's request for a letter supporting its application for a grant to replace mowed areas along roadsides and municipally-owned properties with wildflower meadows, to increase pollinator habitat and reduce the emissions and labor caused by mowing. John wrote up a draft letter and attached it to his email. Several suggestions were made, the letter incorporated them, and John sent Kathy Preston, Supervisor Bettez's secretary, a letter of support on CWOSP Commission letterhead. It is appended to these minutes.

**6. Preliminary scoring of CWOSP protection targets:** A parcel of interest was discussed and even though it is one of the most scenic spots in New Paltz, it scored low on our Project Rating Form, because it misses most of the categories that give points. If it were to be subdivided and more built on it, that would greatly damage its scenic value. Lynn will get the deed to the property so we can check for deed restrictions. Possible mechanisms for its preservation were discussed.

To keep track of our work on potential protection targets, Tom Weiner made a chart to aid our discussions, which he showed at the meeting. He will email it to the members.

The other parcels had not been put through the Project Rating procedure. They will be discussed in our next meeting.

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**7. New business:** Town Supervisor Neil Bettez sent John an email concerning a very small parcel of land on North Ohioville that the owner inquired about donating it to the town, and asking what CWOSP thought about the property. He also noticed that Ulster County owned several parcels of land on the east side of North Ohioville Road and asked John to ask if they might be something the Town might be interested in enough to contact Ulster County to see what plans it might have for them. He supplied links to the parcels on the Ulster County Parcel Viewer (UCPV).

We considered the potentially donated parcel, using information from UCPV, and concluded that it was not of a size or location that would be of use to the Town.

We looked at aerial photographs of the parcels owned by Ulster County east of North Ohioville, discussed them, and by using the wetlands overlay feature of UCPV found that they are almost entirely covered by wetlands and only one has any frontage on a road. The wetlands and access issues make development of these lands very unlikely, and of little to no use of the town. Marty said that the Town is hard pressed to use bond money to acquire such land. It has many heritage expenses that are rising quickly. We will run them through our parcel rating at the next meeting.

**8. Adjournment:** Mike Knutson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Tom Weiner seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM.

Our next meeting will be August 14, 2019. This is the **second** Wednesday.

Attached is a letter written by Chairman John Gotto on behalf of the CWOSP Commission in support of the Town of New Paltz's application for a Hudson River Estuary Program grant for Local Stewardship Planning: Pollinator Habitat Pilot Program.



Commissioner Basil Seggos  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
625 Broadway  
Albany, New York 12233-0001

**July 5, 2019**

Dear Commissioner Seggos:

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Town of New Paltz's application for CFA grant funding from the Hudson River Estuary Round 28 - Grants for Local Stewardship Planning: Pollinator Habitat Pilot Program.

This proposal is a win-win for the environment and the community. Open space grassy areas around New Paltz which are typically mowed, requiring high fossil fuel costs, wear and tear of machinery, and labor costs, will be replaced with perennial wildflower meadows which require significantly lower maintenance and attract pollinators. The project aims to create healthy, diverse habitat for pollinators, beautifying the surroundings and saving on costs for allocation elsewhere. This pilot program will serve as a model to other local communities, having a wider environmental impact on the region while addressing the global climate crisis.

For many years, New Paltz has demonstrated its commitment to environmental stewardship. To reverse pollinator declines, it is more important than ever that urban and suburban areas become pollinator-friendly by planting more native flowering plants wherever possible. In addition, decreasing the amount of mowing done by the Town (likely no more than once yearly) not only eliminates emissions from trucks and mowing equipment, it will save taxpayers money on unnecessary and environmentally damaging labor.

The aesthetic advantages of this proposal are very exciting as well. Instead of flat, grassy monotonous roadsides, visitors and residents will be greeted by masses of blooms year after year, providing a visual framework for the natural beauty which abounds in New Paltz.

For these reasons, we support the Town of New Paltz's funding application and urge New York State to give this exciting environmental project due consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Gotto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being particularly prominent.

John Gotto  
Chairman,  
Town of New Paltz Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission