

Town of New Paltz
Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission (CWOSP)
Approved Minutes, Meeting of June 12, 2019, at the Community Center

Members Present: Lynn Bowdery, John Gotto, Michael Knutson, Cara Lee, 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: 7:08 PM by Chairman John Gotto

2. Public comments: None

3. Review, amend, and approve minutes May 2019 meeting: The draft minutes of the May 15th meeting were briefly discussed. John Gotto moved that they be approved as presented. Michael Knutson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, except Cara Lee, who did not vote because she had not been at the May meeting.

4. Update on path to Mill Brook Preserve - outreach to property owner?: Cara talked about this with Julie Seyfert Lillis, Director of Mill Brook Preserve (MBP). They agreed to go together to talk to the landowner of a parcel of undeveloped land adjacent to MBP. There have been scheduling difficulties, but they are planning to do it before July 4. Cara will also be meeting with Tal Ilany, newly appointed President of the Board of Directors of Mill Brook Preserve Inc.

5. Discuss proposed Ulster County community preservation fund (CPF) legislation: Background: Ulster County has a resolution before it to request that the New York State Legislature amend the General Municipal Law and the Tax Law to include the County of Ulster within the definition of a "Designated Community" under the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act of 2007. Here is a link to the resolution: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/270%20-%202019.pdf> Two UC legislators from New Paltz, Jim DeLaune and Hector Rodriguez are among the introducers of the resolution. UC asked the municipalities of the county to write supporting letters to the state legislature for this. The Act enables towns to impose a .75% property transfer tax on the amounts of purchases over the average (or median?) price in the town, for a Community Preservation Fund to be used for land protection.

Cara Lee asked if it included affordable housing (possibly but not necessarily), and reported that she attended a Village Board meeting, at which the Village voted not to support the County's request. She said Mayor Rogers had been opposed to it. Lynn mentioned interesting materials from the Village of Chester in Orange County, about their application for CPF status. Legislation enabling Towns to be able to charge a mortgage surtax to fund land preservation without the necessity of being approved by a special vote of the NY legislature was passed in the NY Senate, and is now before the Assembly. The discussion about the CPF legislation before the State was wide-ranging. Regarding open space preservation, Cara said that any updated open space plan of comprehensive plan should include climate-change considerations in land preservation. John Gotto wondered if a new source of open space funding becomes available, how would it change CWOSP's role? The Town Board did vote to support the county resolution. Supervisor Bettez made a point of the fact that Red Hook has had a CPF and it has funded land protection without increasing taxes on town property owners. This is especially important now that there is a tax cap, which makes raising money by bonding very difficult. John asked about affordable housing, and we agreed that that was not within CWOSP's scope. Marty Irwin said that he was on the town board working group on affordable housing, and it was a very hard thing to achieve except through requiring set-asides in multiple unit dwellings.

Cara also mentioned that she had been to a meeting about renovations to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, an initiative by the County, of the stretch from Sojourner Truth Park to Mulberry Street, and from Mulberry Street to Huguenot Street. There will be workshop meetings on June 18, from 4PM to 6PM and from 7PM to 9PM. There are questions about signage, surface, and decisions by consensus of the people who

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come out and participate. The consulting firm involved has lots of experience. It will be funded by the county, part of trail upgrades overall. My notes give the name Brian Slack. [Tom Weiner filled in the following: Brian Slack is a Principal Transportation Planner with the Ulster County Transportation Council. I wasn't there but he probably said that the Rail Trail planning study would result in specific recommendations which could help the Village when applying for federal Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) funds that, if selected, could reimburse the village for eligible costs of improving the Rail trail. (The program was called TAP years ago.)] Also, last Friday the Town put out an RFP for solar development on the landfill site. The Solar Law is almost ready.

6. Preliminary review of CWOSP protection targets: Mike Knutson found three properties of interest, one with important views and Wallkill River Frontage in the Vision Map's Wallkill Flats and River Corridor character area. He also brought up two large orchard areas, one with important views on the southern gateway to the Village and from several well-travelled roads, and the other with beautiful views from the NY Thruway and North Ohioville Road, both in the Orchards, Farms and Ridge View character areas.

Tom Weiner found an interesting parcel with views from Route 32 N in the Vision Map's North Woods and Eastern Wetlands character area, noting that from there to Clearwater Road is mostly wooded, an area mentioned in the proposed CEA Clearwater Woods area. He also brought up a large parcel in the Northern Woods and Wetlands character area that is adjacent to a large tract of already protected land.

Cara Lee mentioned another interesting parcel in the Wallkill Flats and River character area with extensive frontage on the river, some federal wetlands, and most of the parcel in the FEMA floodway or 100 yr floodplain.

Lynn Bowdery talked about a parcel not in any of the character areas, but with great biodiversity and limited developability adjacent to a school. It had been subject to a subdivision application before the Town Planning Board a decade ago and the plan was abandoned due to the recession.

John Gotto brought up a large residential lot in the Butternut-Canaan Foothills character area that is an important element of the views from a major road that might be subdividable.

We discussed the values of these parcels as open space and the likely threats to them. We will come up with project ratings for them. Tom will create a spreadsheet on the parcels we have discussed. John offered thoughts on how to approach landowners. Cara will take a stab at a letter, starting with a recap of New Paltz land preservation efforts.

Marty asked if we saw other entities interested in collaborating with New Paltz on any of these parcels. Collaboration possibilities are one of the elements in the rating guidelines.

7. New business: None.

8. Adjournment: Mike Knutson moved that the meeting be adjourned. John Gotto seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM.

Our next meeting will be July 17, 2019. This is the **third** Wednesday.