

TOWN OF NEWINGTON
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

October 12, 2023 - 6:30 P.M.

Town Council Chamber, Room 103 - Town Hall, 200 Garfield St.
This meeting will be presented as a Zoom Webinar/Hybrid Meeting.
Information on how to attend will be posted on the Town website at:
<https://www.newingtonct.gov/virtualmeetingschedule>

AGENDA

I. ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Election Of Secretary

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval Of April 13, 2023 Minutes

Documents:

[APRIL 13 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.PDF](#)

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Criteria For The Acquisition Of Open Space

1. DRAFT Criteria For The Acquisition Of Open Space

Documents:

[DRAFT_OPEN_SPACE_ACQ_CRITERIA.PDF](#)

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VIII. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

IX. ADJOURN

NEWINGTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2023

Chairman Bernadette Conway called the regular meeting of the Newington Open Space Committee to order at 6:34 pm in Town Council Chambers, Room 103 of the Newington Town Hall, 200 Garfield Street, Newington, CT. This was a hybrid/webinar meeting.

Commissioners Present:

Bernadette Conway
Gail Budrejko
Sandra Austin Goldstein
Gia Pascarelli
Mitch Page

Commissioners Absent:

Town Staff Present:

Paul Dickson, Town Planner
Erik Hinckley, Assistant Town Planner

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I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Dickson read the role call.

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Austin Goldstein made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Page, and approved unanimously.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Conway opened nominations:

Chairperson

Chair Conway's nomination of Commissioner Pascarelli for Chairperson was seconded by Commissioner Austin Goldstein. No other nominations were made and the nomination was approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page)

Vice Chair

Commissioner Pascarelli's nomination of Commissioner Austin Goldstein for Vice Chair was seconded by Chair Conway. Discussion followed with Commissioner Austin Goldstein declining the nomination and Commissioner Pascarelli withdrew her nomination.

Chair Conway's nomination of Chair Conway for Vice Chair was seconded by Commissioner Austin Goldstein. No other nominations were made and the nomination was approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page)

Secretary

Commissioner Pascarelli's motion to table the election of the Secretary was seconded by Chair Conway and approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page)

IV. ADOPTION OF REGULAR MEETING DATES 2023

Commissioner Pascarelli's motion to adopt the schedule of meeting dates was seconded by Commissioner Austin Goldstein and was approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page)

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. July 28, 2022

Commissioner Pascarelli's motion to approve the minutes with corrections was seconded by Commissioner Austin Goldstein and approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page). The correction noted was a name correction to include Austin Goldstein.

a. October 19, 2022

Commissioner Pascarelli's motion to approve the minutes with corrections was seconded by Commissioner Austin Goldstein and approved unanimously. (Conway, Austin Goldstein, Pascarelli, Page). The correction noted was a name correction to include Austin Goldstein.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Budrejko joined the meeting at 6:54pm.

A. POCD open space parcels.

The committee discussed the open space parcels as provided in the packet. Mr. Dickson discussed the list and noted that the list provided was in the POCD and noted the item on the agenda for criteria.

B. Criteria for Prioritization

The committee discussed the criteria as provided by the Town's grant consultant.

Assistant Town Planner Erik Hinckley joined the meeting at 7:25pm.

The committee discussed the individual criteria and the process of recommending parcels to the Town Council for consideration. The committee continued to discuss the process of prioritization of the items on the list and providing ranking and identification of criteria to be included in parcel prioritization.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

IX. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

X. Adjourn

Commissioner Austin Goldstein's motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Commissioner Pascarelli, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Dickson
Town Planner

ROUGH DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION
Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space

The Town of Newington is highly developed, with nearly 90 percent of the land area developed or committed. With little remaining open space, the remaining undeveloped parcels have considerable significance in their opportunity to enhance and expand existing open space. Preserving open space can help protect environmentally sensitive areas, provide wildlife habitat, preserve lands for recreational uses, protect community character, and enhance quality of life.

Generally, open space is considered to be land that is free from intense development and where the natural or cultural characteristics of the landscape are predominant. The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) identifies the existing dedicated and managed open space and sets forth the goals and objectives for acquiring additional open space.

The POCD goals are to:

- Create a Town-wide open space network.
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Protect the small-town character that is here now and provide a sense of space and relief from intensive development.

Purpose of Open Space Selection Criteria

The Open Space Commission wishes to establish open space selection criteria for the orderly acquisition of open space. The following documents and policies should guide the criteria:

- Newington’s Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (established pursuant to C.G.S. §§7-131d to 7-131k, inclusive).
- Open space corridor (Greenways) program established pursuant to Public Act 95-335.
- The Recreation and Natural Heritage Program, as amended by Public Act 98-157.

Proposed Criteria for the Town of Newington

Open space provides many environmental, economic, and cultural functions and benefits. To evaluate the benefit of the acquisition of a particular property, the Town must determine which of these functions provides the most significant benefit.

Not all properties are available for purchase at the same time. Thus, the opportunity for a specific acquisition could be lost. Priority must be given to properties that meet the criteria when they become available for purchase. It is recognized that these criteria may be subject to

differing interpretations, depending on the nature and circumstances of various opportunities for the acquisition of open space. Any particular criteria may receive more or less weight depending on multiple factors. The following functions of open space and other strategic aspects should be considered in identifying high-priority lands for acquisition. Potential open space should **provide a valuable resource for recreation, forestry, fishing, wildlife habitat, or other natural resource initiatives**. The criteria below are grouped relative to the benefits they provide and are, in many cases, intrinsically linked.

1) Natural Resource Protection Open Space Functions

a) Habitat

- Protect the habitat of plant and animal species that are threatened, endangered, or of special concern. Unless a qualified specialist has identified such species, these species should be represented by the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB).
- Protect native ecological communities that are unique or uncommon and represent relatively undisturbed native ecology.
- Protect and enhance wildlife corridors, including preserving open space and agricultural land that aids in wildlife migration.

b) Natural Systems

- Protect Lands that preserve high-quality natural waters and drinking water resources.
- Protect natural lands with high carbon storage/sequestration value, such as core forests and wetlands.
- Protect a naturally occurring feature such as a river, stream, ridgeline, inland wetland, estuary, or geological feature.
- Protect sites with steep slopes and sites that protect against soil erosion.

2) Quality of Life Improvements, including recreation opportunities - The ability to obtain grants to acquire open space may require public access for recreational and educational purposes.

- a) Provide for high-quality, passive recreational uses.
- b) Provide a linkage between existing open space, create or contribute to a developing or existing greenway, and offer recreation or non-motorized transportation opportunities.
- c) Provide sites for active recreation.
- d) Preserves and enhances local agricultural heritage

3) Strategic Planning and Objectives

- a) Preserve open space in the area of Cedar Mountain Desirable Open Space Area.
- b) Protect habitats most at risk from climate change, including forested swamps, lands adjacent to freshwater wetlands, core forests, and riparian lands adjacent to cold water streams.
- c) Ability of the site to be preserved in perpetuity, predominantly in its natural, scenic, and open condition.
- d) Impact on existing businesses, homes, or other establishments including possible displacement.
- e) The level of investment and physical changes to the natural systems of the property required to make the site suitable for passive outdoor recreation.

DRAFT