

**NEWINGTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2024**

Chair Gia Pascarelli called the regular meeting of the Newington Open Space Committee to order at 6:30 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:

- Gia Pascarelli
- Bernadette Conway
- Gail Budrejko
- Mitch Page

Commissioners Excused:

- Sandra Austin Goldstein

Town Staff Present:

- Paul Dickson, Town Planner
- Erik S. Hinckley, Asst. Town Planner/ZEO

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 2024 FEB - 6 PM 5: 20  
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 Town Clerk

**I. ROLL CALL**

The presence of the above members was noted.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion to accept the agenda as presented approved by Commissioner Page, seconded by Commissioner Conway and approved unanimously (Pascarelli, Conway, Budrejko, Page).

**III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**A. Election of Chair**

Committee Member Conway's nomination of Committee Member Gia Pascarelli for Chair was seconded by Committee Member Page. No other nominations were made and the nomination was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

**B. Election of Vice Chair**

Committee Member Pascarelli's nomination of Committee Member Bernadette Conway for Vice Chair was seconded by Committee Member Page. No other nominations were made and the nomination was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

**C. Election of Secretary**

Committee Member Conway's motion to table the election of the Secretary was seconded by Committee Member Pascarelli was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

**D. ADOPTION OF REGULAR MEETING DATES 2024**

Committee Member Conway's motion to adopt the regular meeting dates for 2024 was seconded by Committee Member Page and was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Committee Member Budrejko's motion to accept the minutes from the October 12, 2023 meeting was seconded by Committee Member Conway and was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

**VI. NEW BUSINESS****a. Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space**

The Committee continued review of the draft document, Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space, that Town Planner Dickson had provided to members. Mr. Dickson stated that the power point slides contain several additional changes to the original Criteria document. In addition, the Grant Consultant reviewed the criteria and had some minor tweaks. Survey results from the POCD and the Annual Town Community Assessment Survey were reviewed and indicated that preserving open space is a top community issue, with preserving town character and minimizing environmental impact as the other top two priorities. This new document will provide the criteria for open space, so that the Town can then strategically align with the green plan for the State of Connecticut, since municipalities hold a pivotal role in this process. Newington's commitment to open space also contributes to establishing a framework for future funding of open space projects through grant funding. Once approval of

the draft has been implemented, the proposal will move to Town Council for their review and incorporation into a founding document.

Mr. Dickson discussed that based on this document, the Town could work with developers to, not only develop Town land, but to help preserve open space. In looking at natural resource corridors, we would want to look at property, not only next to, but also adjacent to open space. The Town may want to look at an area heat map, rather than just individual parcels to see what might contribute to an environmental resource. We also could look at zoning incentives, and work with developers.

With regard to comparison to surrounding towns, Wethersfield is comparable to Newington in terms of total land area and open space. Since Wethersfield is more agricultural than Newington, there is more agricultural land and dedicated open space in Wethersfield. A comparison of Newington and Rocky Hill; they are very similar in size of towns and land use. Then, the final comparison of Newington and West Hartford indicates that West Hartford has larger land area, but similar in land use.

It was discussed that the proposed Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space document could be forwarded to Town Council for their review now or continue for further review at April meeting. If Town Council had any questions, the Town Planner and Chair Pascarelli could meet with them.

Committee member Bernadette Conway's motion to adopt the Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space and move it to Town Council was seconded by Committee member Page. Following discussion, the maker of the motion and second amended the motion to change the language of the motion from "motion to adopt" to "motion to approve". The amended motion was approved unanimously (Conway, Budrejko, Pascarelli, Page).

Committee member Gail Budrejko inquired about the Hartford Hospital property and its proximity to the Town Center as well as being the gateway to Cedar Mountain. She asked if the Town could purchase, whether through grants or Town funding, some of the land. Mr. Dickson discussed that the land is currently zoned public land to be used for some type of public use, such as government or hospital, etc. For any changes to the proposed use of the land note permitted in the PL Zone, it would need to be rezoned and go through TPZ public hearing process.

Committee member Conway suggested that the committee could pursue the parcel or at least a portion of the parcel for open space. The Committee members decided to prepare a memo which would be provided to the Town Council regarding the Hartford Hospital property to be submitted by the Town Planner.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**VIII. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

None.

**IX. Motion to adjourn**

All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Dickson  
Town Planner

PD/jt