

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

February 27, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Meeting Room 3, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission

Present: Holly Kocet, Michael Ablondi, Will Drew, John Dixon, Mark Boland, John Robinson
Staff: Steve Maguire, Deputy Director of Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Public: Tracy Van Buskirk, 18 Poverty Hollow Road
Charles Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of November 14, 2023. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from November 14, 2023 were approved.

APPROVAL OF 2024 CALENDAR

Mr. Boland moved to approve the 2024 Schedule of Meetings. Mr. Dixon seconded. All in favor.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Ablondi moved to approve the Slate of Officers, Holly Kocet as Chairperson and Mark Boland as Vice Chair. Mr. Drew seconded. All in favor.

Ms. Kocet introduced the new Commissioner, John Robinson. The Commissioners welcomed him. Mr. Robinson gave a brief overview of his life.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Discussion of Trail Repairs/New Trails on Open Space as requested by Newtown Bridle Lands Association (NBLA) - Ms. Van Buskirk, the President of the Newtown Bridle Lands Association, gave an overview of two proposed projects. She passed out two site maps titled "Boggs Hill Greenway" and "Farm Meadow Trail" (see attached). Ms. Van Buskirk gave a detailed description of the trails and the proposed scope of work. Ms. Van Buskirk stated the trails are not just for horseback riding but also for hiking and biking. Ms. Van Buskirk is requesting to improve the trails by cutting and pruning trees and using a Bush Hog to clear areas. Ms. Van Buskirk would also like a "horse crossing" sign for crossing over Boggs Hill Road. She spoke about the challenges of parking trailers and the different streets and areas that are being considered.

Ms. Kocet pointed out that clearing the trails would create sun exposure, which invasives thrive in. Ms. Kocet asked whether the NBLA would consider removing invasives alongside the trails in conjunction with the trail clearing. Ms. Van Buskirk was amenable to that request.

Ms. Van Buskirk stated NBLA has received a grant from DEEP to use on the Newtown Forest Association's property for a parking area and to remediate an eroded area.

Ms. Van Buskirk noted the horses will need to cross over a stream. She will meet with

Mr. Maguire regarding the wetland requirements.

After discussing both projects, the Commission was ready to vote on the Boggs Hill Greenway project.

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the NBLA project on Boggs Hill Greenway to clear and beautify the trails with the following condition to submit details on the scope of work to the Land Use Agency. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor.

The Commission would like to walk the open space property on Farm Meadow Trail before making a decision. They will discuss at the next CC meeting.

Discussion of Newtown Forest Association (NFA) Correspondence – Mr. Maguire received a letter from the NFA to the Conservation Commission (CC) asking the CC to partnership with them to preserve Deep Brook Farm, which is located at #21 and #32 Deep Brook Road. NFA would like to acquire this 63-acre parcel from the Draper family with financial assistance from the Town for a conservation easement. Mr. Maguire asked the Commission to walk the property and fill out an open space rating form based on their observations. There will be a discussion at the next CC meeting to decide whether or not the Commission votes to endorse the preservation of the property.

Discussion of Invasive Management/Beautification Plan on Silver Brook Lane as requested by residents of Silver Brook Lane - Mr. Maguire received an email from residents of Silver Brook Lane regarding a strip of open space across the street from their homes. Historically the residents have been mowing and maintaining the area. The residents are asking the CC for approval to work within the open space. Additionally, they are requesting financial assistance for the removal of invasive species and for planting bushes. The Commission would like to walk the area before making a decision. The discussion will continue at the next CC meeting.

Other Topics

Ms. Kocet asked the Commission whether they were interested in volunteering at the Earth Day event on April 27, 2024. The Commissioners responded yes. They will coordinate the details at the next meeting.

Ms. Kocet stated there is “talk” around town regarding the 6 Commerce property adjacent to the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary. She understands there is no proposal at this time but would like to be prepared for when a proposal is submitted. She is strongly opposed to any economic development on that property. Ideally, Ms. Kocet would like to preserve the property and write a letter to show support in the preservation of open space. She asked the Commission whether they would endorse the letter. The Commissioners were in agreeance.

There was a discussion on the creation of a CC application form that can be submitted by residents to the Commission for worked proposed on Town open space. The Commission liked the idea. The form would be used to understand the details of the request.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dixon moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried

Land Use Agency
3 Primrose Street
Newtown Municipal Center
Newtown, CT 06470
Tel. (203) 270-4350
Fax (203) 270-4278



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Conservation Commission

The list below reflects the regular meeting dates scheduled for 2024.
A copy of this schedule is filed with the Town Clerk.

Schedule of Meetings 2024

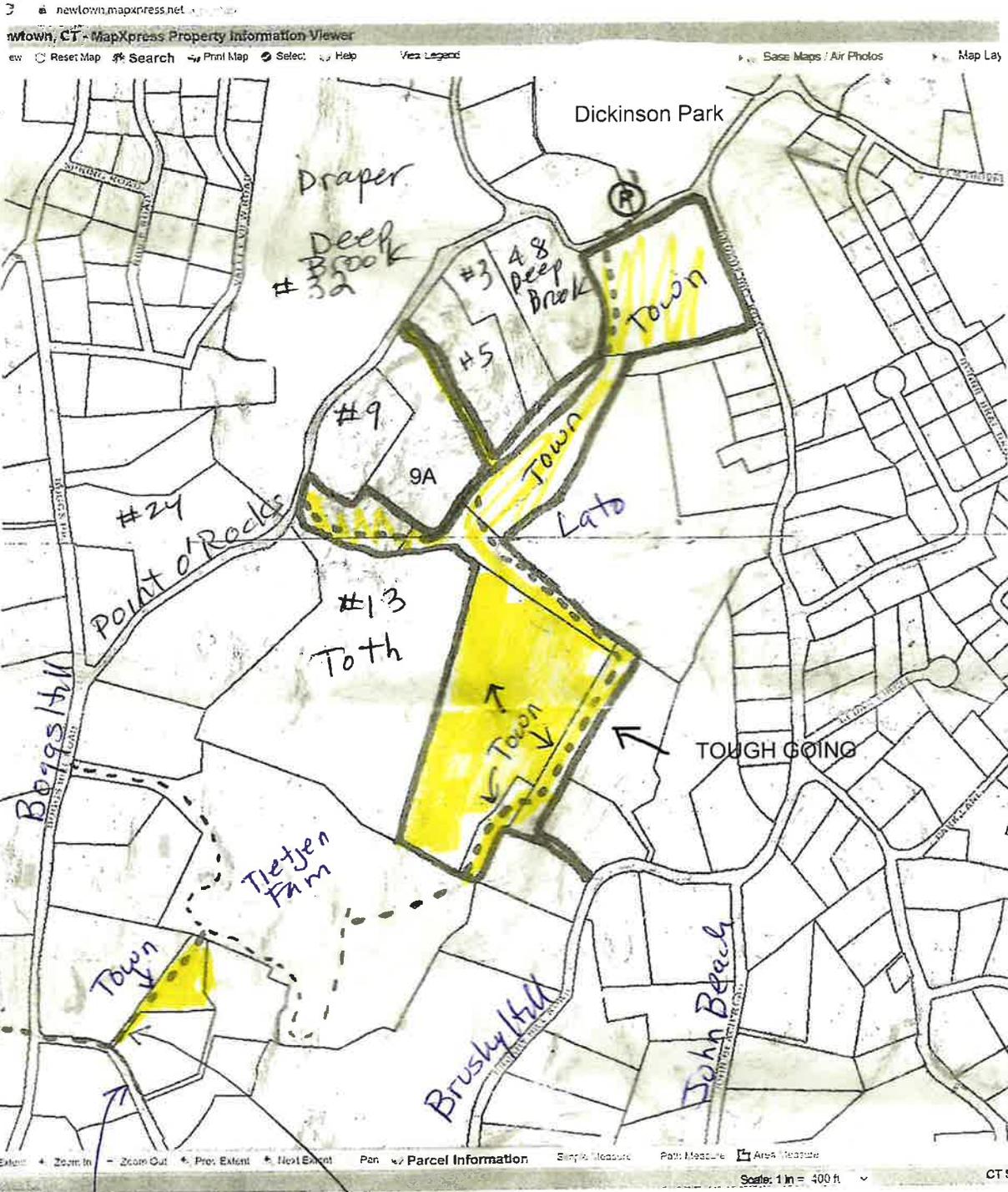
	4 th Tuesday
January	23
February	27
March	26
April	23
May	28
June	25
July	23
August	27
September	24
October	22
November	12
December	10
January 2025	28

Meetings for the Conservation Commission are scheduled for the 4th Tuesday of each month, except in November and December the meetings will be scheduled for the 2nd Tuesday. Also, the meetings will not be scheduled when the holidays interfere; in that case they are scheduled differently.

All meetings open at 7:00 p.m. and are held in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Building, 3 Primrose Street in Newtown. Any cancellations, change in date, time, or location of a meeting will be announced in advance on the posted agendas.

If you plan to attend this meeting and require assisted hearing devices, please contact the Office of the First Selectman at 270-4201 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Boggs Hill Greenway

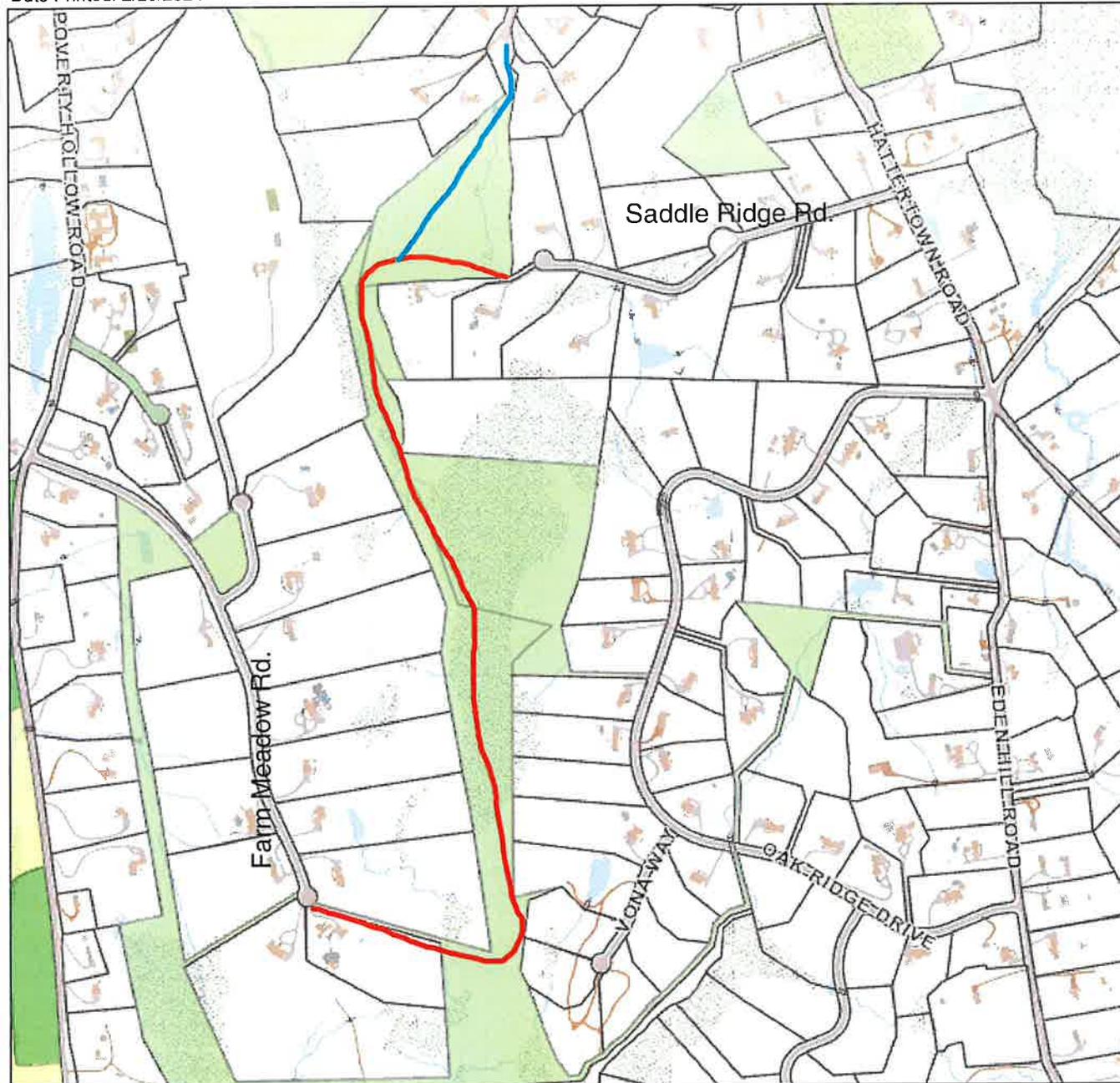


CC meeting
2/27/24
Project #1



Farm Meadow Trail

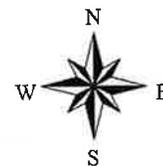
Date Printed: 2/26/2024



MAP DISCLAIMER - NOTICE OF LIABILITY

This map is for assessment purposes only. It is not for legal description or conveyances. All information is subject to verification by any user. The Town of Newtown and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.

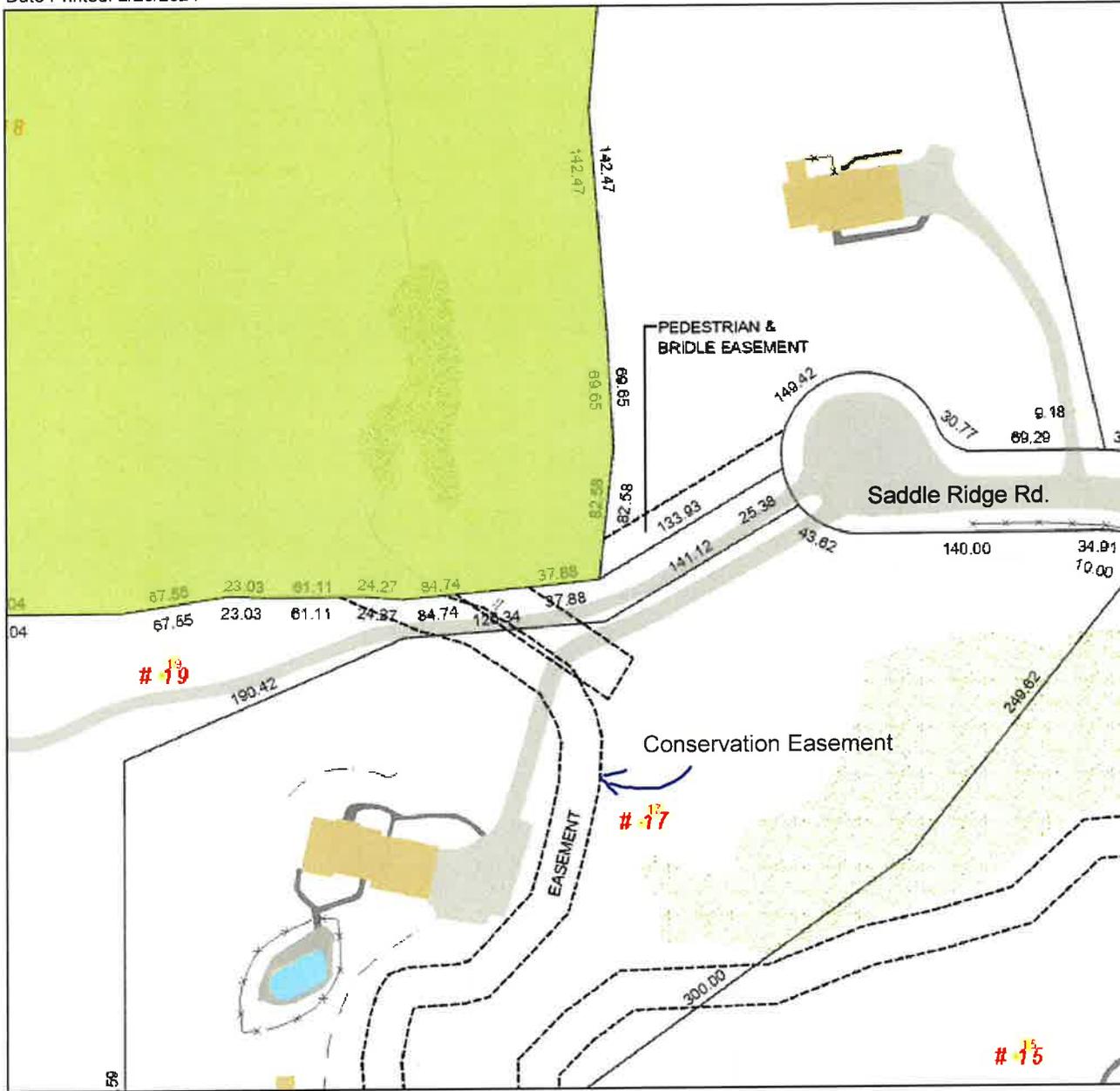
Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 800 feet



*CC meeting
2/27/24
Project #2*



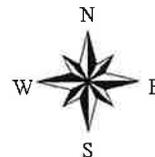
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Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet





Newtown Forest Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 213
Newtown, CT 06470
www.newtownforestassociation.org

A Century of Conservation
Founded 1924

Trent McCann
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Bart Smith, *President*
Jody Eldredge, *Vice President*
Mike Dylag, *Treasurer*
Liliane Gentry, *Secretary*
Scott Baggett
Dan Dalton
Bob Eckenrode
Edward Kelleher
Harvey Pessin
Guy Peterson

The Newtown Forest Association, Inc. is a
501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

EIN # 06-6679949

Rec'd
2/8/24
Rob Sibly

February 7, 2024

To: The Newtown Conservation Commission,

Over the last six months, the Newtown Forest Association ("NFA") has been discussing the potential acquisition of 63 acres at #21 & #32 Deep Brook Road ("Deep Brook Farm"). The Draper family would like to preserve the property, but is unwilling to make an outright donation of the land. We are currently negotiating the final price and are continuing to fundraise to complete the purchase.

Since 2018 the NFA and the Town of Newtown have worked together on the preservation of 30 acres at the former Cherry Grove Farm as well as 20 acres on Boggs Hill Road, abutting Head O Meadow school. The Cherry Grove Preserve is one of our most popular properties and we regularly receive positive feedback from the public. The Town purchasing conservation easements on both properties was crucial in helping the NFA protect them from development.

We are again looking to partner with the Town to continue our preservation efforts. Deep Brook Farm directly abuts The Dickenson Town Park and there would be excellent trail access to the farm from the park. We believe that the people of Newtown recognize the importance and value in having open space available for public use. This is an excellent opportunity for the Town and the NFA to join forces again and continue to preserve the natural beauty of Newtown for generations to come.

This is a historic opportunity! We would like the Town to consider using available funds to help us preserve Deep Brook Farm. We are very excited about keeping this well-known property in its current state and would be happy to discuss the opportunity in more detail. Please let us know when would be a good time to meet, virtually or in person. Thank you so much for your attention to this matter, and your continued interest in joining us in pursuit of preserving the rural character of our town.

Sincerely,

Bart Smith

NFA President

CC meeting
2/27/24
DF



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ENR 7 06 0275548

Deep Brook Farm

The Goal: Preserve 32 & 21 Deep Brook Rd, 63 acres of meadows, woodlands, and wetlands for public use in perpetuity.

What is the NFA:

- Private 501c3 land trust, largely funded by members, donations, & grants.
 - Largest private landowner in Newtown, preserving over 1400 acres, 76 properties.
 - The NFA is celebrating 100 years of conservation this year, 2024!

Key Benefits of Preservation:

- These parcels will NEVER BE DEVELOPED, retaining the rural character of Newtown for generations to come.
- Maintain a wildlife habitat and green corridor.
- Enhance property appreciation.

