

East Haddam Conservation Commission

August 16, 2013

Adopted September 10, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee was held on Friday, August 16, 2013, at 7:30 PM at the Gelston residence. The Chairperson (Todd Gelston) being in the Chair and the Secretary of the Conservation Commission being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Sue Merrow (via phone), Todd Gelston, Paul Sienna. Others present: Lori Sienna

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Smith to approve agenda as presented, second by Mr. Sienna, unanimously approved.

3. New Business

a. Sub-Committee vision/strategy

i. General discussion: goals and objectives and FY goals

Mr. Smith suggested that boundaries need to be tagged and properly marked with blazing and painting, etc. Most of the boundaries are marked, but they need to be refreshed. Painting and such makes remarking them every few years much easier. There are standard operating procedures for blazing and painting. The only property that was properly marked and blazed was Nichols. All others were marked but not blazed. Easements will not be blazed as the Town does not own the property. Mr. Smith also noted that it is important to attract people to the open space and that means having at least one trail per parcel within the year. There will need to be focus to get this done. Pizzini, Boot Rock, Hatch Lot, Rose Farm, Sabine, Lord Wellington, Wolf Tree, Shugrue, Davison Walking Park, Gelston, Petticoat Landing, Sabine, Town Beach and Winterbrook are the properties that are large enough to have trails, but require boundary marking.

Mr. Smith also noted that signs must be posted/installed so that people can find the properties. The CC already has signs for Rose Farm, Boot Rock, Pizzini and 2 or 3 others. Ms. Goyette will ask Mr. Smith to send her the list of what signs he already has. There is already a capital budget for parking and signage; the CC must determine if the Public Works can install. Mr. Smith knows where the signs will be posted.

Ms. Merrow suggested that we prioritize the trails over the next 2 years.

Mr. Sienna suggested also taking a look at the trails that are in use now and could be improved or connected to other properties. Ms. Merrow noted that connections are really important and would get quite a bit of use. That is a laudable goal.

Mr. Gelston noted that establishing parking is a MUST, and must allow for car access (not just 4W vehicles but low clearance vehicles).

Ms. Merrow suggested that recruiting people for the busiest parcels to help keep those in good shape. Recruiting volunteers needs to be a priority. Mr. Gelston noted that prior to recruiting volunteers; the trails need to be created. Further discussion is needed around if the CC recruits volunteers to address specific parcels or have a

general volunteer crew. Mr. Gelston noted the Nature Conservancy recruited volunteers to address specific parcels and gave specific guidance. Mr. Smith suggested several ways to get people involved – sending letters to the adjacent property owners – and also utilize *Events* magazine. Mr. Sienna suggested making a sign on the trail head asking for stewards to volunteer to adopt a trail, which targets someone who is using it. The Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee will work with Ms. Gleeson, who is on the Volunteer Activism sub-committee.

Mr. Smith suggested prioritizing the properties with the goal of getting them all marked, blazed and then have trails on them within a year, with the understanding that it could take 2 years.

For Forestry and Stewardship, based on the above discussion, there are 6 priorities:

- 1) Boundaries need to be tagged and properly marked with blazing and painting, etc.
- 2) There needs to be at least one trail per parcel completed within the year.
- 3) Trails that are in use now need to be improved or connected to other properties.
- 4) Establishing parking is a MUST, and must allow for car access (all vehicles).
- 5) Signs must be posted/installed so that people can find the properties.
- 6) Recruiting people to keep the busiest parcels in good shape.

Regarding boundary marking and tagging.

- Properties tagged, with trails, not properly marked:
 - Urbanik
 - Harris
 - Dean
 - Patrell – very popular trail, Mr. Smith will double-check for blazing
- Properties tagged, with no trails, not properly marked:
 - Boot Rock
 - Pizzini
 - Rose Farm Homestead
 - Sabine
 - Wolf Tree
 - Town Beach
 - Winterbrook
 - Hatch Lot
- Properties not tagged fully, with no trails, not properly marked:
 - Lord Wellington
 - Shugrue
 - Davison Walking Park – must be re-surveyed
 - Petticoat Landing – must be re-surveyed
 - Roaring Brook Preserve
- Properties tagged, with trails, properly marked:
 - Gelston

Mr. Smith suggested that as it will part of the linear trail, Pizzini should be one of the first ones addressed. Boot Rock requires the bridge first, before it can become part of the trail. Hatch Lot could be the second one, and then Rose Farm would be the third one addressed. The fourth is Davison Walking Park, and fifth would be Patrell. The sixth would be Roaring Brook Preserve.

For Pizzini, the tags are there, but the property must be blazed and a trail must be marked. A parking area may not be needed as there is a parking lot at the Patrell parcel. Blazing will take about 6 man hours.

For Hatch Lot, it must be blazed, but the trail is flagged including a connector to Dean. The road must be mowed as brush is growing up in it. Blazing will take about 12 man hours. The gate also needs to be moved so that there can be parking inside the property.

Rose Farm needs a parking area on Rt 82, and boundaries must be blazed, taking 12 man hours. No marked trails exist, but there is a semblance of a trail there (the old logging trails). The bulldozer is needed to help make them into usable trails.

Davison needs to have a survey done, which requires figuring out the budget to pay for it, and then flagged, tagged and blazed.

Patrell requires blazing with 12 man hours, and parking must be adjusted due to the tall grass to prevent potential fires from starting due to cars parking on it.

Roaring Brook requires 24 man hours to blaze the boundaries and there are no trails. There is a nice parking area already established by NU.

For the blazing of the 6 properties, it will take 66 man hours in total. Getting a volunteer crew is a must. Mr. Smith suggested reaching out to other groups within town. Mr. Ventres may be able to help involve the Moodus Sportsmen's Club. Rotary Club may also be another organization that could be involved in blazing. A four person crew works great – one or two people tagging, one blazing, and one painting. Mr. Smith and Ms. Goyette will both talk with Mr. Ventres about involving the Sportsmen's club in helping blazing the property. The goal to get the 6 priority parcels blazed is Feb. 28, 2014.

Mr. Smith will also talk with Public Works about their help in getting the parcels' work done.

Mr. Gelston will create a short presentation to present to the CC at the next meeting.

For Forestry Management, Mr. Gelston noted that he would like to have at least one property evaluated for logging by a forester, either for timber stand improvement or for timber harvesting. The wood market is recovering so this is likely a good time to start another evaluation. Shugrue needs to be reviewed for logging potential. Mr. Gelston will ask the Forester to review that property for suitability, and then will bring forth a recommendation to the sub-committee and then the CC after the sub-committee approves the recommendation. Mr. Sienna suggested perhaps talking with the forester about bartering so that the bridge can be built on Chapal Farm. Thus far, the Nichols property was logged, as was Rose Farm Homestead.

4. Announcements and other discussion
None to be noted.
5. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Smith to adjourn at 9:32 pm, second by Mr. Sienna, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary