

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

November 19, 2013

Adopted December 3, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at 7:16 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Marilyn Gleeson, Peggy Carlson, Todd Gelston, Paul Sienna, Sue Merrow. Others present:

2. Approval of Agenda

Add under old business: Linear Trail

Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 10/1/13

Added Sue Merrow to attendance and moved (from before Linda's name.

Updated subject/verb agreement under Harris property

Clarified about the orphan piece of property under Harris

Forestry/Stewardship – corrected date

Updated Roaring Brook preserve purchase update to reflect the property transaction is complete.

Motion by Mr. Sienna to approve the minutes as amended. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry & Stewardship – Mr. Gelston provided an update on the work underway. Attached in the minutes is the revised work plan provided. Hatch Lot will be the focus of the next upcoming work party. The end of February was the original end date for the Stewardship work, but the end date is being extended further in the year to allow for the additional time needed to focus on marking boundaries and also marking trails. A participation chart was provided – there are about 7 volunteers who have provided about 90 work hours already. Participation has been very good, and that is exciting to report. The work hours originally estimated must be revised. If there is heavy rain on the next work day (this coming weekend), Mr. Gelston and Mr. Sienna will discuss the possibility of cancelling and will call the volunteers who participated in other work parties to inform them if the event is cancelled. Mr. Smith also noted that if the work day is cancelled, someone needs to also go to the site and let anyone who arrives know that it is cancelled. Mr. Smith noted he has flagged a trail through the laurel on the Hatch Lot. Mr. Smith also marked the trail all the way into the Dean property (it is now white, no longer yellow). The connector is marked from the white to the blue trail. If there is a good turnout of volunteers, quite a bit of work can be done in a relatively short time. There is quite a bit of chainsaw work that must be done in the laurel area. Mr. Gelston also noted that Mr. Sienna talked with Mr. Tarbox who found the Team Captain patches. The

last sighting that Mr. Tarbox had of the patches is in the River House. There are boxes there that must be opened and checked for the patches. Forestry is pretty quiet right now. Mr. Smith noted that on Hatch Lot, there are several large piles of top soil that need to be put back into place. Also needed are picnic table and bench.

Volunteer Activism – Ms. Gleeson got in touch with the Superintendent's assistant who wants Ms. Gleeson to talk directly with the high school principal. Ms. Merrow had heard a rumor that the Superintendent has encountered some health concerns, so it would make sense that Ms. Gleeson talk directly with the principal. Mr. Smith asked if we have let the Environmental Club know, albeit they are in 7th & 8th grade (not in high school), they may involve their parents. There are about 8 children who signed up for the Club. Mr. Smith noted there is interest among the Moodus Sportsmen's Club – Mr. Ventres and Mr. Brady distributed the work party schedule to ensure members are aware there are going to be people on the property during hunting season as well as convey that the work parties offer a great opportunity to get to know the property. Mr. Smith discussed a potential parking lot option for Hatch as well.

Outreach and Promotions – Ms. Merrow noted that if the patches can be found, it would be great publicity to post a picture of them and write an article around them in Events. Ms. Gleeson suggested hosting a trail walk as well to showcase the trail. Mr. Sienna noted that the EHLT site has pictures of all the properties, and that is something that the CC should consider doing as well. Mr. Smith suggested Ms. Gleeson talk with Jolene to learn more about that. Mr. Sienna also suggested looking into using Facebook as well. Mr. Sienna suggested calling the Hartford Courant to feature the new trail on Hatch Lot once it is complete. Mr. Gelston suggested also connecting with youth organizations – Boy and Girl Scouts, etc. Ms. Gleeson volunteered to be part of this committee along with Ms. Merrow. They will talk about the sub-committee work.

Trail guide - \$1206 year to date collected for trail guide donations. An additional \$28 was collected.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – No big news to report.

P&Z – The Oct. 22 public hearing around P&Z changes regarding slope and other items. Several CC members attended; detailed questions were asked around why the changes are proposed but no detailed answers were provided. Letters and comments were provided. However, the P&Z committee voted in favor of the changes.

Ms. Gleeson has volunteered to sit in on the P&Z meetings going forward.

c. Update on open space purchases

Mr. Smith noted that the Open Space Commission is looking at several large parcels that would protect about 500 acres. The State is working with the owners to pursue land conservation in that area. There is a grant that must be submitted by Jan 1, 2014, to request state funding.

d. CC Vision/Strategy continuation

Ms. Merrow noted there is quite a bit of things going on within the CC, but noted that one area that has not had much focus is the Promotion area. She mentioned creating a powerpoint presentation that outlines the work that has been done, and will reach out to Claire Maeder to see if she has any interest in helping develop something like this due to her graphic artist

background. Mr. Sienna noted that the more work the CC does on the properties, the more the public will start to be more connected to the work and what is being done. Mr. Smith noted that the Rotary Club is interested in making a donation for the Linear Trail bridge, so the word is definitely getting out into the public domain about the work that has been done. Much progress has been made and so no need to keep this topic on the agenda for further meetings.

e. Linear Trail

Mr. Smith noted several things have happened: 1) meeting held with Eightmile Committee and there is a possibility that a DEEP grant awarded for trail building which may be able to be used for bridge construction. If we had completed a grant request directly for the bridge, there were a number of administrative items that would have to be done (i.e., a watershed study, etc), which would increase the amount of monies needed to build the bridge. On Wednesday morning (11/20), there is a 3-mile inaugural hike scheduled to walk the first part of the trail. The biggest issue encountered thus far was how to mark the trail, but that has been resolved.

5. Next meeting – Dec. 3, 2013 at The River House

6. Announcements and other discussion

The annual meeting schedule was pulled together, and Mr. Smith will contact the Town Clerk about getting the electronic version.

Educational work shop on Nov. 21, around Freedom of Information. It is open to Boards and Commissions as well as the general public.

Mr. Smith has been invited to an iPark event as they are looking to connect their mission more closely with the Town's open space mission.

Mr. Smith noted that the managers of Ray of Light farm are trying to purchase the property from the owners, and he attended a meeting around that. Ray of Light would like to extend their trail riding which ties in nicely with the CC's vision of use of Rose Farm Homestead right next to the property. The CC now has an account at Shagbark to facilitate the purchase of the boundary marking materials.

Mr. Smith will be ordering CC baseball caps for members.

Mr. Smith asked if the CC wants to renew its membership in the CT Land Conservation Council.

Membership will be discussed at the next CC meeting in Dec.

RiverCog announced a new Regional Council structure.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Merrow to adjourn at 8:40 pm, second by Mr. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Forestry and Stewardship work records
- Work Day schedule

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, November 19, 2013

- CACIWC bulletin