

**East Haddam  
Conservation Commission**

February 4, 2014

Adopted March 4, 2014

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 7:26 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Marilyn Gleeson, Paul Sienna. Others present: Emmett Lyman, Noah Ventola

2. Approval of Agenda

Noah Ventola's update will be presented first.

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 1/7/14

Changed date in 1. from 2013 to 2014.

4.d amended to show that Salem, Lyme and East Lyme were involved in the name discussion.

4.a fixed Marilyn's name spelling.

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

4. Approval of Forestry and Stewardship Sub-Committee Minutes for 1/29/14

Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved. Ms. Gelston abstained.

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry & Stewardship – Mr. Gelston provided an updated work day schedule for the group. There are a number of work days that have occurred already and a couple of miles of trails have been completed. The sub-committee is in phase 1 and has been working since August. The focus has been to blaze property lines as well as blaze trails. On the Hatch Lot, there is now maintenance that must be done. There is a plan to include the Cub Scouts in finishing up the trail work on the Hatch Lot. There are little flora and fauna counts and inventories on the properties, so Mr. Gelston queried Mr. Ventola to determine if he was having the Environmental Club conduct those types of counts and inventories. He will forward the information he has to Mr. Gelston, which may be useful in providing to the Cub Scouts to see if they are interested in conducting some types of inventories and counts. Mr. Gelston will provide Mr. Ventola information in about a month on the next work parties so that he can submit an announcement to be broadcast at the Middle School asking for volunteers. The CC will plan an event to provide the Environmental Club participants with patches to celebrate

their volunteerism. Mr. Gelston asked Mr. Smith to put a budget item in related to purchasing patches in the future. Mr. Sienna talked with CL&P about repurposing the old telephone poles; they are now considered hazardous waste so cannot be repurposed to use as parking lot boundary markers. Mr. Gelston also noted there are a number of Eagle Scout projects that can be done on the properties. Also, there was discussion about providing the Scouts with an opportunity to use the Hatch Lot for camping. Mr. Lyman noted that any plan to extend camping rights to the Scouts should be provided to the First Selectmen, so that liability insurance and other things can be considered. The next sub-committee meeting is scheduled for 2/26 at the Gelstons' residence at 6:30pm.

Volunteer Activism – Ms. Gleeson has nothing new to report.

Outreach and Promotions – Ms. Merrow provided an email update, given her inability to join the meeting, on her reach out to the Cub Scouts with easy trails to hike.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Meeting snowed out so nothing to report.

P&Z – Ms. Gleeson noted she attended 2 meetings. She attended the first public hearing on the Shagbark application, which included discussion on resolving outstanding work from a prior P&Z application. The remedial work is going to be completed by July. Blight in general was a discussion topic.

c. Update on open space purchases

The Open Space committee authorized proceeding with 2 open space purchases. Mr. Ventres is initiating the paperwork to put grants together for the state and to go before the various board. The Lena property of 220 acres is being considered on Tater Hill Road. There is another piece near the Salem border that is on Baker Road. There will be no vote to purchase until grant monies are determined.

d. Linear Trail update

Mr. Smith noted the southern part of the linear trail where it went through abandoned town roads that bordered Yale School of Engineering has finally signed off on letting the trail use those roads. There is now permission to run the trail through. The section of the trail through the Pizzini and into the Eightmile has been blazed and cleared by the EHLT. Work continues on getting the trail marked and blazed completely. The CFPA may want to include it as part of their blue trail system. Total mileage is ~10.5 miles.

6. New Business

a. Noah Ventola update

Mr. Ventola provided an update on the after-school Environmental Club. There are 12 students total with 5 to 8 participating regularly, which is a manageable size for the teachers and volunteers. The 12 students are across 7 and 8 grades. Members of the EHLT have joined the group as well for activities, and always bring welcome knowledge around local knowledge and flora and fauna information. There are 2 teachers helping out – two English Language Arts teachers (Danielle Michaud and Glen Anderson). Both have been involved in similar clubs in the past. In terms of actual construction, about ¼ mile of a trail from the soccer field to the stream has been built. The trail is cleared out down to the stream. The next step is to create a loop so that hikers do not have to walk out the same way they walked in. Mr. Smith has marked part of the loop, and now the next step is put the kids to work in

building it. The kids have been enjoying it and have been asking Mr. Ventola for more meetings. The biggest goal is to firm up with Glen Anderson if he is interested in taking over the club going forward, as Mr. Ventola is working in the school as part of an unpaid internship. There are 2 questions for the CC – who is going to replace Mr. Ventola and do the trails needs to be blazed? There is no blazing on the trail right now. Mr. Smith recommended that the trail be blazed as there are multiple activities going on out there. There are a number of different ways that blazing can be done. Mr. Gelston noted that blazing is good training and is a good way to show that work has been done there as well. Jason Peacock, the Principal, also backs the club's work. There is quite a bit of land there to work with and there is opportunity to add other trails. Mr. Ventola would like to also have the kids do a tree educational opportunity. He would like to post small signs telling the tree name. The CC thinks that is an excellent idea, and he will work on implementing that idea. Mr. Gelston asked if Mr. Ventola had thought about doing a full flora and fauna inventory. Mr. Ventola has but wants to keep his focus relatively small to ensure that the trail work gets completed. If that is completed, then he can turn his attention to additional programs. Mr. Ventola also noted that Events magazine will be publishing an article about the club.

b. Bill review and payment

Mr. Gelston will follow up with Rick Shea to make sure he got paid for the recently submitted bill.

7. Next meeting – March 4, 2014, 7:30, at The River House

8. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith picked up the caution tape to put around the old building at Patrell, but he has not been able to get out there to mark it.

The CLCC conference is coming up and a CC member can go with the fees paid by the CC. Ms. Gleeson will look into attending.

There is a new Moodus Reservoir Association that has been created to protect it.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn at 9:04 pm, second by Ms. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette  
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Forestry and Stewardship updated work day schedule & property assignments