

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

June 3, 2014

Adopted July 1, 2014

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, June 3, 2014, at 7:31 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Marilyn Gleeson, Peggy Carlson, Sue Merrow, Rob Smith, Paul Sienna, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston. Others in attendance: Tony D'Addeo – departed 8:22pm, Mark Walter – departed 8:10pm, Peter Simmons – departed 8:10, Neil Mosig – departed 8:22pm, Kyle Mosig – departed 8:22pm, Adam Mosig – departed 8:22pm

2. Approval of Agenda

Add Mr. Walter and Mr. Simmons to New Business

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 5/13/14

7. changed birding to botanical survey on Nichols.

4e. Changed that the only advertising the Gelstons saw was for MA.

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

4. Approval of Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee minutes 4/9

3b. Changed foot to feet.

Changed header date to 4/9

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

5. Approval of Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee minutes 5/23

5c. Changed Z to G in Bernie Gillis name.

Roll Call: Added volunteer before Joe Zaid.

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

6. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry & Stewardship – For the work party this Saturday, on Rose Farm Homestead, Mr. Gelston wants to clear a “horse trail” from across the brook to Ray of Light farm so that horse riders from Ray of Light can begin using it. The connector will cross the brook and connect to

what will be the Red trail. The trail must be tagged and cleared. The parking lot and trails on the Rt. 82 side will need to be addressed with a bull dozer; Mr. Gelston will call and discuss the need with Mr. Walter to determine if the town can provide support quickly. If the town cannot, Mr. Gelston will find an appropriate contractor to address the need.

Volunteer Activism – nothing to report.

Outreach and Promotions – Ms. Merrow noted that the last Events magazine has yielded additional volunteers who are interested in stewarding properties and/or participating in CC work parties. Mr. Smith also conducted an email blast to the EHLT to remind them of the upcoming work parties. Ms. Gleeson suggested sending out regular emails to the volunteer pool. Ms. Merrow also noted that there are several Boy Scouts who are looking to get volunteer hours and may be interested in helping during work parties. There is also the ability to provide patches after 20 volunteer hours.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

P&Z – Ms. Gleeson noted there will be a discussion on June 10, regarding a request to build a new veterinary office. There is quite a bit of concern about Shagbark having a demo of the solar panels when they have not fixed the outstanding issues. Mr. Ventres will go talk with Fred Hunt, owner of Shagbark, about the need to address the issues. On 27 William Palmer Road, a medical practice is expanding to add additional staff. Ms. Gleeson was not able to get the GPS due to the computer virus.

IWWC – Mr. Gelston noted that there was discussion on the CC request for permitting on Rose Farm, but due to the computer issues, nothing happened with the request.

c. Update on open space purchases

Mr. Smith noted that Ms. Lefebvre died so the property purchased for open space will now transfer to the Town, EHLT and a number of other open space interested parties. It is located on Jones Hill Road and Burnham Brook. Regarding the new open space properties, the State approved enough money that East Haddam should receive 50% for the purchase of all new open space. The State still has not compensated the Town for the last 4 property purchases, and that is being worked.

d. Linear Trail update

Permission granted to use Richard H. Goodwin for the trail name by Richard H. Goodwin, Jr. Mr. Smith is waiting to hear from East Lyme to finalize that section of the trail.

7. New Business

a. Eagle Scout project

Adam and Kyle Mosig came to talk with the CC regarding Eagle Scout projects. The biggest requirement for an Eagle Scout project is that it must be a project that the boy leads. Laying out trails is an example of a good Eagle Scout project. Mr. Gelston talked about a number of projects needed for the Hatch Lot property. Griffin Shepherd is creating the campsite already. Building a kiosk to house the map at the trail head is a suggestion, as is building a bridge on the steep hill near the vista within the Hatch Lot. Rose Farm also has the need for a walkway, kiosk and a bridge. Ms. Merrow will pull together the list of the potential projects and provide

to the Scouts. Mr. Gelston asked the Mosigs to attend the July Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee meeting.

b. Sandwich board

Ms. Gleeson walked through some options for sandwich board. Mr. Gelston suggested the 3rd option. Mr. Smith asked for 4 to be purchased with the logo. Ms. Goyette will send an electronic version of the Conservation Commission logo to Ms. Gleeson. Ms. Gleeson will talk with Dawn Snow about how to purchase the signs.

c. Stewardship tracking spreadsheet

Ms. Gleeson suggested adding a new worksheet to create a list of the activities that are needed for each property. This will be discussed at the next Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee.

d. New bills

No new bills, but Mr. Smith provided an update on the budget. There is \$1600 left in the capital budget. In the operating budget, there is \$7430 left to spend before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Smith suggested getting 4 loads of gravel dumped on the Patrell parking lot, to address the garage drop off and to clean up the area where the old barn was. Mr. Smith will also order a removable bollard to keep cars from driving down onto Patrell as well. There is also the potential to hire a bull dozer operator to address work on Rose Farm. There is also work needed on Hatch Lot, Roaring Brook and other work on Rose Farm, so there are plenty of projects to use the money for. There is also a need to install a bollard on Hatch Lot as well.

e. Mr. Walter and Mr. Simmons

Mr. Walter was asked to join the meeting to talk through the different viewpoints that exist within and across different boards, Commissions and town residents. There has been a focus on honoring the rural character of the town, but the challenge is that one main advantage used to sell open space to the public is the explanation of the difference in the tax revenue spent for new houses and the amount of education costs. Birth rates are down to 50-60 children a year versus 100 children a year. In the next 10 years, there may only be 900 children in the school system versus 1400 children per year. The change in the rate of children in the school system changes the amount of savings offset by open space. Mr. Walter wants to shift the focus on why open space is needed to more of a tourist focus; there is a challenge in marketing the open space to ensure that the (Tax) Grand List values go up and property values rise as well. There is value once people discover beautiful properties and tying all the properties together adds even greater value. This year's budget has been contentious given the rise in taxes, which has caused parents to request no more open space be purchased. Mr. Simmons discussed his Outdoor Recreation proposal to begin to address the dearth of tourist assets in phases. For example, Mr. Simmons wants the EDC to be actively involved in Trails Day next year and is going to work with many of the state departments and agencies to begin to tie East Haddam into tourism and outdoor recreation. Mr. Simmons will be presenting to the next EDC meeting looking for their support and thoughts. Mr. Walter noted that there is already work underway to address signage and is looking forward to the CC adding signs for the open space as well. There needs to be coordinated signage and communication work to ensure that while signs are posted, it is easy to learn about areas to eat, walk, etc. Mr. Gelston noted that town owned open space has a tremendous potential to help the town. It will never be a tax burden in the long-term. It is a huge business asset to the town. People come to town to do

things like hike and ride horses, but they need a place to rest, eat, drink and sleep as well. There is no infrastructure in place to support that. The town needs to start small and do a very good job to begin to address the issues and things will begin to sell themselves. Mr. Gelston suggested that the EDC or the town to make a sign and highlight what's going on with the Trails Day this coming weekend. Open space also brings a quality of life to the town. Ms. Merrow noted that there is perceived competition between property growth and open space. Economic development and growth is very important, but the first rule of growth is to put it near existing infrastructure. It is doable to have growth and open space. Mr. Walter also noted that there is also a perception that any land that is out there for sale is not really worth building on it, so spending money on open space is buying land that hasn't been developed already must not really be worth it. The other perception is that the open space is so far out that it's not worth protecting as well. These arguments have to be addressed with good information and that intelligent growth can and does exist with open space. Mr. Walter asked the CC to continue to focus on advertising and educating the public on the importance of open space.

8. Next meeting – July 1, 2014, 7:30, at The River House

9. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith noted that this Thursday, the patches will be presented to the Environmental Club. Ms. Gleeson is planning on attending as well.

Mr. Smith noted that the CC has been invited to attend the ribbon cutting celebrating solar installation at Shagbark. Interested CC members are encouraged to attend on June 21.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn at 9:46 pm, second by Ms. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Press Release – Gardening Season Open at East Haddam's Center for Community Agriculture
- On Outdoor Recreation to Induce Economic Development, prepared by Peter Simmons
- Forestry and Stewardship updated work day schedule
- 24"x36" QLA Outdoor Plastic Rolling Sidewalk Curb Sign A Frame Sign with Quick Load Changeable Message Board and Letters, White
- Worksheet of additional open space property spreadsheet