

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT CONSERVATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission
May 13, 2014**

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 13, 2014, at 7:31 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Marilyn Gleeson, Paul Sienna, Peggy Carlson, Rob Smith. Others in attendance: Peter Simmons, Griffin Shepherd, Danielle Tierney

2. Approval of Agenda

Added Peter Simmons to Old Business and he will present 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 4/1/14

Added Rob Smith to the attendees.

4.a. Changed Boy to Cub in relation to Scouts. Added concrete to describe the forms Mr. Smith is getting and who to the sentence articulating the issue.

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry & Stewardship – Mr. Gelston noted that while weather and holiday schedule has made it tough to do work, much work has been completed on Hatch Lot. The blue trail has all been raked and marked. The red trail is now all marked courtesy of Mr. Sienna and his daughter. The gate needs to be addressed on the white trail entrance. Mr. Smith connected the red trail to the white trail as well. The parking lot has been staked out but needs to be finished. Mr. Smith noted that for Government Day, he and Mr. Ventres will bring a group of students out to GPS the area and complete the wetlands permit. Mr. Smith also verified with Mr. Ventres that members of the CC can borrow the GPS to get the trails fully mapped/marked. On Rose Farm, the survey has been completed so boundaries are fully marked and pinned. Boundaries need to be tagged now, and trails need to be laid out. On Davison, work planning can begin. The Cub Scouts were not able to attend another work day due to other commitments. Phase 1 is now extended through September due to the weather later 2013 and early 2014. EHLT has been presented with a backpack blower that the CC can use if not in use by the EHLT, which greatly simplifies the clearing the trails. The next sub-committee meeting is Friday, May 23, at 7pm, at the Gelston residence.

Volunteer Activism – Ms. Gleeson would like to purchase a sandwich board or two to begin advertising the work parties and other activities. Mr. Smith asked Ms. Gleeson to purchase

them, and Mr. Gelston suggested adding the CC logo on the sandwich boards to personalize them. Ms. Gelston will send an email to the CC members outlining the monies the CC can spend.

Outreach and Promotions – Mr. Smith received a call from 2 Boy Scout brothers who are looking for potential Eagle Scout projects. Mr. Smith noted that between the CC and the EHLT, there are a number of projects that they can engage in. Mr. Smith also discussed the reach out that Ms. Merrow received with interested residents on/near Acorn Drive. Mr. Gelston will reach out these new volunteers to discuss opportunities. Ms. Carlson provided \$44 to Ms. Gelston, which in conjunction with what Ms. Gelston collected resulted in \$94 total for this collection. So far \$1424 has been collected thus far for the trail guide. Mr. Gelston noted that an insert needs to be created, which Mr. Smith can do, outlining the Hatch Lot trails.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

P&Z - Cave Hill is creating campsites. Problems with Mitchell Road occurred with all the rain and flooding. Moodus Ice Cream is applying for a permit for a car show after the pharmacy closes. The Eatery at 32 Main is requesting a liquor permit, and the town is constructing a town landing at a boat launch.

IWWC – IWWC approved the 2 30K propane tank proposal from Dutch Oil. I-Park wants to put in a parking lot and bungalows at the corner Haywardville Road and Hopyard Road. Further discussion will be held around wetlands in the potential parking area.

c. Update on open space purchases

Mr. Smith noted things are moving along with the current potential open space purchases for last Sept/early October this year. Mr. Smith noted that the town has not been reimbursed by the State yet for the past 4 purchases, so there is now work being done to address that situation. The state budget was passed adding monies to the open space budget so there should be money available for purchases next year.

d. Linear Trail update

Mr. Smith noted that the trail is still underway, but the group is waiting for permission from Dick Goodwin's son to name it after Dick Goodwin. The trail is totally completed in the East Haddam area, but the bridge across the Eightmile is still outstanding, given the budget has not been approved for the full amount.

e. Peter Simmons – EDC staff person

Mr. Simmons provided a white paper outlining his development of a program to bring people into town. There is quite a bit of money spent related to outdoor recreation in the state, and East Haddam needs to be part of that spending action. He outlines the proposal that could bring quite a bit of activity to the area, and he is looking for feedback on the proposal. He outlined what he felt was needed to be able to provide a fulsome experience for those who do partake in outdoor recreation activities within the town. He highlighted that there are a number of businesses that are best kept secrets, and we need to make sure they do not remain that way. Ms. Gelston suggested adding in the amount of lodging that is available within the town. Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Simmons has had any conversation with Haddam folks on this proposal. Mr. Simmons has not but can have some conversation and connect it with the Swing Bridge festival that was so successful. Mr. and Mrs. Gelston referenced a recently taken train

trip to VA, and commented upon the amount of advertising by states (MA, VT, NY) to experience an outdoor recreation vacation. These campaigns were done at every station all the way down to Washington, D.C. Mr. Gelston also suggested that a good next step would be to get solid numbers around potential tourism. Mr. Smith suggested that there is potential to advertise about existing trails and open space at several areas (Gillette's Castle, Gelston House, the Ferry, Goodspeed Opera House, etc). Mr. Simmons noted that he has had conversations with the EDC about signage in town about open space, or even where to find food. The EDC meets the first Thursday of the month, at the Grange at 7pm.

5. New Business

a. Eagle Scout project

Griffin Shepherd provided his proposal for developing a campsite on the Hatch Lot. He walked the property and found a high level area that is not in danger of flooding, and allows for easy access to bringing materials to the site. It is between the blue and red trail, so hikers have the option to use it when it is not in use by the Scouts. Only smaller trees are proposed to be cleared, however, the CC will need to ensure there are no potential issues with larger trees. Mr. Smith noted this is a good site for any youth group. Mr. Smith suggested building 2 picnic tables. Given an approved motion from the CC, Mr. Shepherd will present to the Boy Scout committee for further approvals.

Motion by Ms. Gelston for Mr. Shepherd to move ahead with this Eagle Scout project concept, second by Ms. Carlson, unanimously approved.

6. Next meeting – June 3, 2014, 7:30, at The River House

7. Announcements and other discussion

There is a \$4900 bill for the Rose Farm survey bill that must be paid. One pin was discovered to be way out of line and thus replaced. 69.38 acres is the total acreage, and 2 extra pins that were not put into place will be put in place soon. Ms. Gelston will provide the bill for payment to the Selectmen's Office.

Motion by Mr. Gelston to pay the \$4900 survey bill for perimeter survey for Rose Farm property, second by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

Mr. Smith discussed the public concern that funding open space is done at the detriment of education. Mr. Thomas, a member of Board of Finance and P&Z member, pulled together a document outlining how much open space budgeting is as a total of the town's budget and compared with the funding of education. Mr. Smith mentions this to make sure the CC keeps this information in mind when talking with town residents about open space. Ms. Gleeson suggested that Ms. Merrow may want to write an article about these figures for Events magazine.

There may be two open vacancies on the CC that still needs to be filled. Mr. Gelston has a potential candidate and will reach out to that person to determine interest.

Ms. Gleeson asked if there are steward guidelines – there is in the files which Ms. Goyette can look for.

Mr. Smith noted that a Standard Operating Procedure will need to be created for the youth group camping area that must be provided to the First Selectmen's Office.

Mr. Smith sent a letter to the First Selectmen's office noting the liability for the well house on the Patrell property. The issue has now been resolved.

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, May 13, 2014

Mr. Gelston noted that Arthur Westover has discussed building a shooting range with Mr. Ventres, and based on that conversation, is not going to be building one.

Mr. Smith noted CT Botanical society has conducted a birding survey on Nichols.

Ms. Carlson noted two opinions related to open space within the local paper, which was exciting to know about.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn at 9:38 pm, second by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- On Outdoor Recreation to Induce Economic Development
- Hatch Lot Campsite Proposal and map (2 pages) [Eagle Scout proposal]
- 1 page sheet outlining comparison of BOE and open space expenses as a percentage of the town's total budget [prepared by Harvey Thomas]