

**East Haddam  
Conservation Commission**

April 7, 2015

Adopted May 5, 2015

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, April 07, 2015, at 7:30 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Marilyn Gleeson, Joe Zaid, Sue Merrow – departed 8:30, Paul Sienna, Peggy Carlson, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston – arrived 8:11pm. Others present: Michele Kerr – departed 9:12pm, Ethan Kerr – departed 9:12pm, Nathaniel Kerr – departed 9:12pm, Tim Laubacher – departed 8:00pm

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 3/19/15

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

4. Approval of Forestry and Stewardship Sub-Committee Minutes for 3/26/15

Motion by Ms. Merrow to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Mr. Sienna and unanimously approved.

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee: Mr. Gelston noted there is quite a bit of work that must be done. He would like to have the first work day of 2015 this coming Saturday, April 11, at 1pm at the Harris property. He would like to blaze the boundary of the Davison property. The second piece of work is to install a trail on Harris that is compatible with the community gardens already in place. There will be a pavilion built that can be used by people using the Comer parcel and farming the Harris property. The Harris trails must be tagged and the boundaries need to be tagged and marked. Ms. Merrow noted the Jezek parcel's white trail needs to be remarked; the first part is marked very well but when you turn left to head to the reservoir, there are no markings. The Hatch Lot parking lot also needs to be rimmed with dirt and have gravel spread on it as well. Mr. Gelston will discuss the needs for the Harris property, Hatch Lot and Patrell work with the Public Works department. After much discussion, the subcommittee decided to work on the Harris property first, before Davison. Outreach and Promotion: Tim Laubacher has been working with Tiffany Quinn to start mapping trails; he has received the GPS mapping on the Nichols property sans the Red Trail. He is an app developer and the webmaster of the trail website. He has developed an app that

provides people with trail mapping, which has a number of very helpful features. He started working with the town of Manchester and has expanded to a number of other towns. There is the ability to include a wide variety of information on trails like directions, description, trail information including way points, etc. Ms. Gleeson has already been working with Mr. Laubacher on the East Haddam maps. All the mapping done thus far is transferrable. To get the app, go to the MyTownTrails.com. He is working on getting the app in the app store. The cost to East Haddam is \$500 a year and includes the town being included in the app's inventory; the budget has been covered by Mr. Ventres and Parks and Rec this year. The budget for being included within this app may eventually be transferred to the CC. Eleven towns have signed up already. After Mr. Laubacher's presentation ended, the conversation shifted to the work Ms. Gleeson has done thus far on the trail maps. Ms. Gleeson provided a sample of a map printed on the paper that will be used for any maps printed. Ms. Gelston discussed the pricing for map printing. For the paper chosen for the regular maps, the cost is \$0.76 each per 100 count for machine folded. Mr. Smith asked Ms. Gelston to get a price for 1000 count. Ms. Gleeson also talked with Ms. Zaid about printing laminated maps for the kiosks as well. The costs for these maps are not too expensive.

Volunteer Activism: Ms. Merrow completed the Events magazine article and showcased Paul Sienna as a member of the CC.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – No update.

P&Z – On April 30, there is the final fire code inspection on the Shagbark violations. The fire marshal must review the handicap bathroom plans. Ms. Gleeson provided via email the EDC's revision of Chapter 8 Economic Strengths and Opportunities to the CC members.

c. Update on open space purchases

Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Ventres has notified the attorneys to begin the paperwork to acquire the 2 parcels recently approved by the Town. In addition to these new purchases, there is additional acreage being protected next to the Burnham Brook preserve.

d. Linear Trail update

The Eightmile Wild and Scenic committee received a \$10,000 grant that will be used to build the bridge. The grant is requiring a large amount of protections to be put in place, so Mr. Smith is working on addressing the needs. Mr. Smith and Mr. Zaid are working on measuring the materials needed, and Mr. Smith will then order the materials as they require quite a bit of lead time to receive.

e. Trowbridge Road property discussion

The decision on how to proceed is now with the Selectmen.

f. Scouting update

The Mosig brothers are already building their kiosks. Mr. Thomas Buhl is going to receive his Eagle Badge for his work on the Sabine property. There are plenty of other Eagle Scout projects for any other interested Boy Scouts.

g. 2015-2016 Budget

Budget has remained the same as what was discussed the last time.

h. Disc Golf

The Nichols property walk will commence soon now that the snow has melted to determine if it is a suitable as a Disc Golf course. Mr. Gelston suggested that the CC have a back pocket recommendation in case Nichols does not work. Town Beach would be a good property to recommend as a second parcel to look at, and Mr. Gelston suggested that Town Beach be walked after Nichols is walked. Mr. Smith will call Ms. Quinn and discuss.

6. New Business

a. New bills

No new bills to review.

b. Public Comment

Mr. Smith explained the difference between the CC, the Agriculture Committee and the EHLT. Ms. Kerr asked for clarity on how to become involved in the Stewardship work parties and provided Mr. Gelston her email address to be notified.

c. Agriculture agreement on Shugrue

Mr. Gelston noted the contract discusses 207 acres and another portion of 60 or so acres, such that it sounds like the farmer will be renting all the property. That has to be clarified as the CC wants to maintain the forest. The farmer just needs to rent what land is tillable. There are comments related to soil quality, but there are no metrics on how the soils will be maintained. How and when the soils will be maintained must be spelled out within the contract. The rental cost for the farmer is \$500 a year for 20 years. There is a need for a long-term commitment since the farmer must maintain the soil quality. Mr. Smith noted the lease really should be set for 10 years with an automatic extension if the conditions are met. Rental price seems very cheap. Mr. Smith will discuss the feedback with Mr. Ventres. The CC is ultimately responsible for the stewardship of the property.

d. Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Sienna to enter into executive session at 9:18pm, seconded by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

Motion by Mr. Gelston to exit executive session at 9:44pm, seconded by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

No actions or motions made.

7. Next meeting – May 5, at The River House.

8. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Gelston attended the Budget Public Hearing; 2 individuals stood up and talked about the importance of education and opposed open space. Mr. Gelston talked with one of the individuals, who related that he was speaking from information provided to him from other people and had not researched the facts to know that much of what he said is not true. Once Mr. Gelston explained the facts, the individual understood quite readily how open space keeps taxes low as well as provide numerous opportunities for individuals to get out into nature and be a positive thing for hiking tourists, etc. It is so important to continue to educate the public on the work the CC is doing related

to open space as it shows that the land is being actively used and encourages residents to explore these protected spaces.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Gleeson to adjourn at 9:45 pm, seconded by Mr. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette  
Recording Secretary