

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

May 5, 2015

Adopted June 2, 2015

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 5, 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, Peggy Carlson, Sue Merrow, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston.
Others present:

2. Approval of Agenda

Added under new business, "Trees".

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 4/7/15

5.a. Changed that Mr. Laubacher has received the maps of Nichols (without the red trail), he has not mapped it.

5.a. Changed property to boundary.

5.a. Changed the pricing from Ms. Gleeson to Ms. Gelston.

6.d. Added "No actions or motions made."

8. Changed as well as to and when describing the use of open space.

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee: Mr. Gelston noted the next Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee meeting is May 15, at 7pm, at the Gelston's residence. The next work party is this coming weekend, May 9, working on the Harris property. The orange trail needs a bridge to cross the stream; the measurement must be taken. The bridge will be a flat bottom bridge with handrails and be strong enough to support a horse. The white trail needs further blazing and some additional clearing. There is additional work that will need to be done related to the Harris property.

Outreach and Promotion: Ms. Gleeson provided an update on the maps. She asked the CC members to help work on the maps. She needs signoff on the maps and the content of the brochures. She provided the information to Mr. Smith and will get copies to Mr. Gelston. For MyTownTrails, she asked someone to complete the approved activities by this coming Saturday. She has sent all brochures to Ms. Zaid for a color check. Ms. Gleeson provided a spreadsheet outlining the trails that are going to have maps printed. The green marking shows ones that are completed and ready to go to the printer. The orange marking requires further

work to be completed prior to going to the printer. Ms. Gleeson and Ms. Gelston noted there are several different ways to display them. Ms. Gelston found a display that will hold 8 different brochures and can stand on a counter. Two of these displays back to back can hold 16 total maps. The idea is to have all the maps available at various locations around the town to enable wide distribution. Ms. Gelston suggested that the best places to provide maps would be Ballek's Garden Center and the Town Hall. She can research free-standing turning displays to determine how much they would cost. There are 24 total maps that should be displayed at a time. Ms. Gelston will ask Ballek's if they have floor space for a free-standing unit. Mr. Gelston suggested placing the maps within the local gas stations as well as the store at Hadlyme four corners. Mr. Smith noted that the CC may have to wait awhile to place maps there until the CC determines the cost. Mr. Smith noted that Gillette's Castle is also a good spot to display maps as well. Ms. Merrow suggested rolling out the map displays at different areas in phases. Ms. Carlson suggested placing signs at all the locations that previously had maps for the public to purchase for donation.

Volunteer Activism: There were new volunteers to help with the Harris property, which is exciting to note!

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWCC – Mr. Gelston noted that the bridge built on Sabine did not receive a permit even though it is stewarded by the CC; Mr. Gelston had to explain to the IWCC why that happened. Mr. Gelston noted the CC will be going back before the IWCC to request a permit as the bridge needs to be moved. The linear trail bridge on Boot Rock needs to also be discussed to receive a permit as well. Mr. Gelston will request the CC be on the agenda to discuss the bridges.

P&Z – Gelston House requested to expand its hours for music to 11pm. The Cameron Family Farm has run into several issues with the Department of Agriculture, as well as a number of issues with the State of Connecticut. The Farm has had to cease work. The Shagbark handicap bathroom is being installed. I-park received several large grants and is engaged in a large renovation. Small cabins are being built for artists-in-residence. There is a new landscaping business being proposed on Falls Road. The P&Z commission sent out a copy of a newspaper article around Deep River's expansion of sewers.

c. Update on open space purchases

All the recently voted on open spaces have been purchased. Mr. Smith noted the additional 120 or so acres that sits between Burnham Brook and the Hopyard has been purchased. Mr. Gelston noted that Governor Malloy removed all the open space monies from the State's budget, but Ms. Merrow noted half of the monies have been restored.

d. Linear Trail update

The \$10,000 grant has not been received yet, due to a very high number of stipulations that are associated with it. Mr. Smith is working to address the stipulations and receive the monies.

e. Trowbridge Road property discussion

There is no change on the Trowbridge property; no decisions have been made.

f. Scouting update

Mr. Smith noted that Griffin Shepherd's Eagle Scout Court of Honor on May 17 at the American Legion. Mr. Smith and Mr. Gelston and 2 others will attend; Ms. Goyette will RSVP on their behalf.

g. 2015-2016 Budget

The budget has been passed so the funds the CC requested were approved.

h. Disc Golf

Mr. Smith noted the Nichols walk through will be held mid-May. Mr. Smith suggested if Nichols is the choice they want to use, then the CC should allow Park and Rec to manage the stewardship as it makes no sense to have two organizations trying to steward the same parcel. Ms. Gelston noted Town Beach is a much better property to use for this endeavor. Mr. Gelston noted a number of people voted their confidence in the CC at the last open space referendum. In addition the CC is charged with management of town owned open space and the CC must show leadership as well as be aware and sensitive to the Disc Golf proposal. Mr. Gelston would like to see the Disc Golf folks evaluate both Nichols and Town Beach to make sure they choose an appropriate property. This will enable to CC to defend the decision and support multi-use of town owned open space. Ms. Merrow suggested the CC request a formal evaluation of other potentially suitable locations.

Motion by Ms. Merrow noting that in an effort to make this activity succeed and before the CC can sign off on any location for Disc Golf, the CC requests that other potentially suitable properties, such as Town Beach, be evaluated per an agreed upon list of criteria such as negative impact to the land like deep ruts and increased run off; must receive IWCC approval; amount of maintenance (high or low), parking, sanitary facilities (Disc Golf personnel need to contribute to list), seconded by Ms. Gelston; unanimously approved.

i. Agriculture agreement on Shugrue

Mr. Smith submitted the list of suggestions to Mr. Ventres and Mr. Walter for their review. The Town's attorney was already reviewing, and Mr. Smith believes the items the CC noted will be addressed.

5. New Business

a. New bills

A bill was erroneously presented to the CC, Ms. Goyette will let the Town Hall know the CC did not purchase the items within the bill.

b. Public Comment

No public attended.

c. Trees

Mr. Smith noted last year Mr. Mackinnon purchased American Chestnuts and Hazelnut trees. These are still available to the CC free, and it's an opportunity to plan fruit trees on open space. Harris, Patrell, Hatch - all these properties are options for planting these trees. The CC is excited about this opportunity; Mr. Smith will contact Mr. Mackinnon about the trees.

6. Next meeting – June 2, at The River House.

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7. Announcements and other discussion
None discussed.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn at 9:40pm, seconded by Ms. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- The Habitat, spring 2015, volume 27 number 2
- Spreadsheet on property and trail mapping needs