

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

June 7, 2016

Adopted July 5, 2016

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, at 7:33 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Marilyn Gleeson, Rob Smith, Peggy Carlson, Sue Merrow, Joe Zaid, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston – arrived 8:04pm, Bob Casner – arrived 9:00pm, departed 9:20pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Changed the next meeting from June 7 to July 5.

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 5/11/16

Under roll call, changed Joe's last name from Sienna to Zaid.

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee: Mr. Gelston noted the Dean property was the focus of the last work party. It turned out to be a 2 day job, but the orange trail has been reconfigured to hopefully discourage people from walking off the trail. He noted there is additional work to realign other sections of the orange trail and relocate the trail around the crushed stone pile. This coming Saturday is the next work party, and is focused on Patrell. The next areas of focus are Harris and Sabine. There are still the downed trees at Davison that must be addressed.

Outreach and Promotion: Nothing to report.

Volunteer Activism: Nothing to report.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Mr. Gelston noted there is not much under discussion.

P&Z – Ms. Gleeson noted the regulations on the heliport were approved.

c. Youth group permit and process

Mr. Smith talked with Linda Z. in the Town Hall, and there was no new information to report on it as of yet.

d. Update on Sprecher property swap

Mr. Smith noted the tax liens are not yet resolved, but town officials are investigating other options to get the swap completed.

e. Dean parking lot location

Mr. Smith noted both parking lots are now installed. There are 2 signs that will be installed by Mr. Zaid before this coming weekend. Mr. Smith, Mr. Gelston, Mr. Zaid, and Mr. Sienna have remarked the orange trail to move people away from the active agriculture land, to help prevent people from wandering off the trail. A number of additional blazes have been added.

f. 2016-2017 budget

Mr. Smith noted that 87% of the 2016 budget has been used, but noted there are additional bills to be processed that will result in most, if not all, of the budget being spent. Mr. Smith noted the balance for the capital budget is currently unknown, as there are a number of items in question that must be resolved.

g. Map reprinting needs

Ms. Gleeson noted the maps are in the process of being reprinted. She does not have an exact date as to when it will be completed. The cost will be close to \$3500. New maps are needed for Hidden Valley, Davison, and Duncan. Mr. Casner provided an update on the EDC funding of the mapping printing. He noted the EDC reviewed it's budget and determined there is about \$500 left. At the next EDC meeting on 6/16, there will be a vote on providing \$500 to fund the printing of maps.

h. Guggenheim request to garden on the town's open space

Mr. Smith has heard nothing back from the Town. This item will be removed from the agenda going forward.

5. New Business

a. New bills

Bill for \$425 for gravel for the Harris property.

Motion by Ms. Merrow to pay the bill. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

The bill for the gravel to improve Parker Road parking lots will be provided shortly.

Motion by Ms. Gelston authorizing Mr. Smith to pay the bill once it has been received. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

b. 6/13 Town Employees' Health Fair

Mr. Smith was approached by Finance Director to participate in the upcoming Town Employees' Health Fair to provide information on the work the CC is doing on the town-owned open space. The CC has the chance to showcase the trails and all the good work that's been done on open space, which helps prod people to get out into nature and enjoy the natural resources within the town. Mr. Smith would like to have some of the CC members join to provide information. He will provide additional information to the CC members once he receives it.

c. ATV ordinance

Mr. Smith discussed the ATV ordinance that was highlighted in last month's "The Habitat". He suggested to the CC the Town may need an ordinance related to addressing ATV, dirt bikes and snowmobile usage on town-owned open space. The first offense fine would be \$1000+. Mr. Smith recommends that at some point, the CC have a discussion with the Resident State Trooper and Board of Selectmen to determine how to move the ordinance along to be a town regulation. Mr. Gelston noted that if this ordinance moves forward, there needs to be a very specific campaign to ensure that those who own ATVs understand the focus is on town-owned open space that already bans ATV traffic.

d. Linear Trail dedication

Mr. Smith provided invitations to the CC members regarding the upcoming Linear Trail on June 18th with a rain date of June 25th.

The next work party scheduled for Saturday, June 11, will be at Patrell. The Town has placed all the rocks as requested. The area has been cleaned up and now must be raked. Mr. Smith is going to ask the Town to mow the field as there is likely to be a large number of cars attending the dedication. Mr. Zaid will have the roof on the kiosk prior to the work party, but it will need to be stained. The work will involve landscape raking, bridge work and painting the kiosk. There is also a tree down across the paved road trail that must be removed.

e. Public Comment

No public attended.

6. Next meeting – July 5, at The River House.

7. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith discussed that Mr. Walter may be officially resigning, effective July 1. The State Statutes dictates the process for picking a successor.

Mr. Smith noted there are a number of opportunities for forest land preservation related to water protection and Long Island Sound.

Mr. Smith noted the New England Forestry Foundation is looking for acquiring easements (preferably donations). There are 15 or 16 year tax benefits for donated easements nowadays. Typically they require public access, but it can be very limited.

Ms. Merrow noted the Lions are engaged in stewarding Davison. There is only a hard-copy stewardship form currently, and Ms. Merrow requested an online form be created to allow for stewardship reports to be submitted easily. Ms. Gleeson will research the ability to create an online form. Ms. Merrow also has been working with the Leos related to potentially building benches or picnic tables.

Eightmile Riverfest is scheduled for this year, on October 15. Ms. Merrow will let them know the CC would like to be included in the event. At the last event, the CC booth was heavily attended.

Barbara Pokorny submitted for several properties to be evaluated for bird habitat and possible management of the properties to either increase or change birds that frequent the property, with Audubon Connecticut. The Lena and Rose Farm properties were evaluated last week and several bird species were sighted that were not expected. They were most impressed with Rose Farm, as mid-story and understory tree reproduction is the best they have ever seen.

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, June 7, 2016

Mr. Gelston noted it would be very beneficial to provide weekly updates to The East Haddam News to provide the townspeople with information on town-owned open space. Ms. Merrow and Mr. Smith will work together to get some stories written to include in the weekly newspaper.

The next Events magazine deadline is June 24, and Ms. Merrow will contribute an article related to the Goodwin Trail dedication.

Mr. Smith noted that Franklin Academy received granite stone from Ralph Parady and brought it up to the vista at Hatch Lot. Franklin Academy built benches as part of their community service project. Ms. Gleeson will reach out to Tiffany Quinn regarding the annual fee for the My Town Trails website to ensure the maps remain available.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- Richard H. Goodwin Trail dedication invitation