

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

December 6, 2016
Adopted January 3, 2017

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2016, at 7:31 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Joe Zaid, Peggy Carlson, Marilyn Gleeson, Rob Smith, Charlotte Gelston, Sue Merrow

2. Approval of Agenda

Next meeting was listed erroneously, it should be Jan 3, 2017.

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

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 11/1/16

4.b. changed expansion to handicap trail and added Boot Rock proposed parking area

4.e. changed the to next year's and changed the to this year's general

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

4. Approval of Forestry and Stewardship Sub-Committee Minutes for 11/28/16

3a added to replace cable fence related to the bollard

3a changed red to rail

3a changed boundary to boundaries

3a added of leaves related to the Sabine bridge and clarified a spur trail

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

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee: The Thanksgiving Holiday resulted in the work party cancellation. The next work party is this coming weekend. Mr. Smith provided a letter to Ms. Lunt as to what the CC would like Public Works to do; she indicated all communication with Public Works must go through the Selectmen's Office first.

Outreach and Promotion: Events magazine highlighted Rose Farm preserve. Ms. Merrow will write about Sabine for the next edition.

Volunteer Activism: Mr. Smith mentioned there is a new volunteer who Mr. Sienna has talked with. She is interested in helping on work parties. As Mr. Gelston was unable to make the meeting, Ms. Gelston took down the phone number and email for Mr. Gelston to reach out to the new volunteer to provide information around work parties and needs.

- b. IWWC and P&Z updates
 - IWWC – Tabled as Mr. Gelston was not present.
 - P&Z – Ms. Gleeson noted a final decision on Banner has not been reached. There was a good conversation about the old Middle School transition. There will be 126 parking spaces for Town Office users. The project will involve 12 months of construction, and result in 2000 sq feet of meeting spaces with 1000 feet of hallways. Total useable space is 10,000 sq feet. The Powerhouse Road court case property, next to the Salmon River Bridge, is going into foreclosure. The AP Gates Road piece of land that has been marked as open space as part of the Gates-Warner subdivision mapping but is now owned by Bob Casner has been raised again; the P&Z will likely decide on the issue at a future meeting.
 - c. ATV ordinance
 - Tabled for now.
 - d. Making Patrell and the Eightmile Bridge access ADA compliant
 - Mr. Smith noted the grant application is due next Friday to apply for the ADA grant. Mr. Smith will include within the grant that the Town will handle the maintenance work.
 - e. Important Bird Area (IBA) preserve/reserve inclusion
 - Mr. Smith noted the EHLT submitted the grant to have all Land Trust and East Haddam open space parcels included as IBAs with the larger IBA.
 - f. Rose Farm bridge cost and plan
 - Mr. Smith noted the smaller bridge estimate is between \$5000 - \$6000, but he has not had a chance to discuss options with Ray of Light due to their activities.
 - g. Patrell IWWC site walk
 - Mr. Smith noted the site walk was held; there were very few questions so he anticipates approval at the next IWWC meeting.
6. New Business
- a. New bills
 - No bills to review and approve.
 - b. Petticoat Landing site walk
 - Mr. Smith, Mr. Sienna and Mr. Gelston attended and found gates have been installed at each end of Shanighan Road and at access roads into the electric utility's ROW, to block vehicular traffic. Horses can still get through the south gate. The gates have not stopped the ATV traffic. The general opinion is that to remove all the stone is pretty impractical due to the sheer volume. There is the option to smooth out the steep drop offs but will likely create mountain climbing ATV obstacles. There is no signage stating "no vehicles of any kind". There is a liability issue there that must be addressed. This topic will be further discussed at the next meeting.
 - c. Letter of support for Appalachian Mountain Club primitive campsite on TNC's Chapman's Pond

Mr. Smith was contacted by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) regarding a campsite on the east side, on the old road that comes from the corner of River Road down to where the button factory was. TNC has given them permission already. There will be several platforms and an outhouse installed. The AMC is looking for a letter of support from the East Haddam Conservation Commission, which the CC discussed and agreed to provide. Mr. Smith will write the letter and provide.

d. Comer State Park re-dedication

Mr. Smith discussed the re-dedication of the State Park. The State Parks have no people to take care of the property so the Town may need to maintain. There was a fire tower there that was torn down during the 1970s. There are specimen trees planted there. The idea is to clean up the area and turn it into a park-like setting. Someone from the Smithsonian, Mystic Aquarium and the Canadian government will be in attendance. The Comer family that resides in the Artic will be in attendance as well. The Town has committed to doing much of the work; there will be some Scouts involved as well. Mr. Smith suggested that perhaps the Forestry and Stewardship Sub-committee will conduct a work party or two at the State Park.

e. Public Comment

No public attended.

7. Next meeting – January 3, at The River House.

8. Announcements and other discussion

Ms. Goyette will use bullets to denote the different property work within the sub-committee updates. Mr. Smith received information on the Urbanik Pond Dam as some repairs are needed. The proposed maintenance would be about \$100,000. The CC would not fund, so either a grant would be needed or the Town would need to fund/address the work. The information has been provided at this time for review and discussion purposes, but the dam does need to be addressed at some point in the future.

Mr. Smith received an email from Min Huang regarding the approval of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant focused on protecting critical migratory bird habitat in CT. The Town was a supporter of the grant. There is potential for getting additional monies to support land conservation.

Mr. Smith also discussed the CC supporting the constitutional amendment to stop the ability to swap town owned open space. As managers of open space, this change would limit the ability to do any swap without a public hearing and a 2/3 vote by the legislature. It puts some constraints and restrictions on open space. Mr. Smith noted the attachment provided can be signed and compiled with the rest of the names to support this change.

Motion by Ms. Gelston to sign the letter in support of this legislation. Second by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

Mr. Smith reviewed the budget, there is \$13,331 left to cover the projects that need to be done. The maps do not need reprinting until the spring.

9. Adjournment

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, December 6, 2016

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- November 14, 2016 letter from Mr. Smith to Beth Lunt, Director of Public Works
- Email about CT Coastal Initiative II NAWCA grant
- Letter requesting support for Resolution Act 16-1 in the 2017 legislative session
- Urbanik Pond Dam East Haddam (#4143)
- The Habitat Fall 2016, volume 28 number 4