

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

November 14, 2017

Adopted December 5, 2017

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2017, at 7:51 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Marilyn Gleeson, Paul Sienna, Sue Merrow, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston

2. Approval of Agenda

As this is a Special meeting, the agenda stands as presented.

3. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 10/3/17

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee: Mr. Gelston noted that there is need for another stewardship meeting. The next meeting will be at the Gelston residence on Bogel Road at 7pm on Tuesday, 11/21.

The next work party is scheduled for the Saturday after Thanksgiving, 11/25, at Lena to clean up the downed trees. Mr. Gelston will let Sam Peckham know about the work party.

Outreach and Promotion: Ms. Merrow solicited the members to think about new ideas for the next issue of the Events magazine.

Volunteer Activism: Nothing to report.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Nothing to report.

P&Z – There is talk among the P&Z committee members that Mr. Zaid can no longer be the P&Z liaison to the Conservation Commission, as there is concern that he would hear private information that he could bring back to the CC.

c. Plan of Conservation and Development

The PoCD will be discussed at the Stewardship sub-committee next week and all CC members are asked to come prepared for the discussion.

Ms. Merrow asked the group to think about how to frame the discussion for the next meeting. Mr. Smith suggested keeping the same general focus, reiterating the goal to save as much contiguous pieces of land, especially on the east side. In addition, the CC could denote the

opportunity to turn old roads into walking trails. There are a number of roads that could be turned into excellent walking trails. Ms. Gleeson will contact Mr. Ventres to find out information on old roads – abandoned and discontinued roads. Mr. Smith also noted that including a map of the properties with the trails outlined would be a good addition to the PoCD.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Gleeson attended the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) recently and in conversation with a member, the member strongly suggested to include a map of all the properties in the PoCD to help with grant submissions. Mr. Smith also noted that the CC should include the Important Bird Areas (IBA) and the Eightmile River boundary. As a side note, Ms. Gleeson noted that several AMC members noted how amazed they were about the amount and number of the trails within East Haddam.

d. Recap of October stewardship event

Mr. Smith noted that unfortunately the event, which had been rescheduled due to inclement weather, had poor attendance. The weather was beautiful, and there were a number of other events going on in town. The good news is that Sam Peckham has officially volunteered to steward Lena.

5. New Business

a. New bills

\$138.24 from Tractor Supply for ramps to load the walk behind mower.

Motion by Ms. Mellow to pay the bill as presented. Second by Mr. Gelston and unanimously approved.

\$359.53 from Shagbark to purchase picnic tables, security chains

Motion by Ms. Gelston to pay the bill as presented. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

b. Public Comment

No public attended.

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

7. Announcements and other discussion

Ms. Mellow gave an update on the State budget and an update on funding to support the maintenance of State parks. “Passport to the Parks” is the program, and it’s created to provide stable funding for the parks. Mr. Smith noted these programs have been used extremely well out west. Mr. Smith provided an update on Banner Lodge. He outlined that at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting, there was a proposal to accept 150+ acres of easement property from Banner. There are 3 separate parcels. Mr. Smith suggested that the CC may want to walk the property. Mr. Gelston noted that it’s an important parcel to protect. It’s close to Davison as well. There is an issue related to parking, and an ability to park to get to these properties. Parking lots (several are needed given the disbursed parcels) must be written into the easement to allow them to be established, there must be a hiking connection between the parcels and there must be a legally binding agreement to allow town residents to use the private roads to get to the parking lots. Mr. Gelston suggested to Mr. Smith that

the 24 acre piece be gifted to the town instead of a Conservation Easement. The CC discussed 1) the need for a connection between the parcels (A and B) for hiking, 2) parking areas are needed on Parcel A and B, 3) town residents must have access to private roads to get to a parking area in parcel A and parcel B, and 4) that Parcel C would be best either given to the town as a fee simple property or as proposed as a conservation easement. Discussion will continue at the next meeting, as there are additional questions that Mr. Smith will try to get answers to.

DEEP Land Acquisition contact got back to Mr. Smith, who noted that all grant applications have been reviewed and projects chosen to receive funding; DEEP is waiting for approval from the Governor's office to provide any further information on who is receiving funding.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Ventres about Mr. Smith's continued leadership on the CC, given his election to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Dill was chairman of the IWWC when he was a Selectman, so that should not be an issue.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- P&Z Regs – 17.3.12.b
- Ackerly & Ward letter to Mr. Ventres
- The Habitat, Summer 2017, volume 29 number 3