

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT CONSERVATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

May 1, 2018

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at 7:36 PM at the Municipal Office Building. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Joe Zaid, Marilyn Gleeson, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston. Others present: Gary Wilson

2. Appointment of Alternates

Mr. Zaid will substitute for Mr. Sienna who could not make the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 4/3/18

3. Changed Sikolsky to Sakolsky

4.a. Changed its to EHLT in the 2nd paragraph

5.a. Changed peers to piers.

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee: Mr. Smith noted that all the trails at Harris and Chapal Farms have been cleared. Mr. Smith also worked with another EHLT member to clear the white trail section of the Goodwin Trail. Red trail on Rose Farm was cleared and mowed.

Mr. Smith noted that the ADA-compliant trail work, noted in the last meeting, is currently on hold as another grant request has been submitted through the Eightmile Wild and Scenic group. If the grant is won, that would contribute federal monies to complete the trail. As a note of reference to the last meeting, Mr. Smith had discussed with Mr. Hedler from East Haddam Public Works to use Public Works labor to build the trail. Mr. Smith noted the Town is not liable for the tree that fell on a woman's car at the Patrell property and caused \$7000 worth of damage. He will send her an email to outline the insurance will not reconsider based on her statements.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Gelston to take a look at the section of Petticoat Landing, from Shanighan Road to the power lines, for timber harvesting. There is quite a bit of harvestable timber within a 12 acre area.

Outreach and Promotion: Mr. Smith noted business cards have been made up based on a brainstorm of Ms. Merrow's. One side of the card has the EHLT information and on the other side is the CC information. The cards will be handed out at different locations to further publicize the trails in East Haddam.

At Celebrate East Haddam, the CC had a booth and handed out a number of maps to interested people. The event was very well attended by thousands of people given the weather being so lovely.

Volunteer Activism: Nothing to report.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Mr. Gelston did not attend the last meeting. The focus has been on Lake Hayward and Moodus Reservoir sea walls. There are 7 properties within Wildwood that are also being reviewed for upgrading.

P&Z – Mr. Zaid noted there are 2 Public Hearings in May. One will take place on May 8 covering the creation of a Tack Shop on Bashan Road and a number of events taking place at the Sanctuary on Bogel Road. The other will take place on May 22 to discuss private residence in-law apartment and the Staehlys desire to turn a barn into a wine tasting area.

Regarding the Plan of Conservation Commission (PoCD), there will be a survey sent out electronically or in some other manner at some future date. The CC still strongly recommends that any questions similar to the last 2 surveys be repeated verbatim to ensure the ability to judge how the Town residents' opinions have changed over the years. Ms. Gleeson provided a list of the Trail Data for inclusion PoCD, which was reviewed for horseback riding. Ms. Gleeson will update the document and provide to Mr. Zaid for presentation at the next P&Z. She will also get it posted on the CC website.

c. Banner Lodge open space update

Mr. Smith has not had any conversation with Mr. Ventres about this topic, but will consult with him prior to the June meeting and bring information to the CC.

d. 2018-2019 Budget discussion

May 8 is the 2018-2019 budget vote; the CC members are encouraged to go out and vote. There is a balance of \$2900 still to be spent for 2017-2018 with all capital to be spent. Capital will roll over into 2018-2019 budget.

5. New Business

a. New bills

\$18.99, Shagbark (there was plumbing supplies bought and posted to the CC account which Mr. Smith will take care of with the Town)

Motion by Mr. Gelston to accept and pay the bill as noted. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

b. East Haddam RTC work party

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Gelston where the RTC wants to hold a work party. The focus is to increase town awareness of the Town's open space and to encourage volunteer activism. Mr. Gelston discussed different event dates and thoughts from the group on when participation is most likely the highest. Mr. Gelston suggested May 19 or June 2 as possible dates, as well as September 29. Discussion ensued and Mr. Gelston determined June 2 is the best date. Hatch Lot would be an excellent property to hold the work party at, with the picnic up on the vista. Time will be 9 – 12 noon with lunch provided. The CC discussed specifics, including that volunteers will need to sign waivers to participate. Parking will be at the big parking lot and along Parker Road. Mr. Gelston will contact the East Haddam News to write an article about the event to help promote it. Rain date will be the following Saturday. The event will be reviewed at the June meeting.

c. Acquiring use counters

Mr. Smith suggested the CC get a few use counters which range from \$200 to \$500 to count people who use the trail. It is important to see what kind of use the trails are getting to answer questions around that topic. There was discussion around using trail cameras but discussion ensued around taking pictures of people without their knowledge is not good publicity.

d. Public Comment

Mr. Wilson asked several questions during the discussion about different topics to gain a better understanding. He attended to learn about what the CC is about. Mr. Smith provided information around how the East Haddam Conservation Commission is organized (separate from IWWC, which is different than other towns). He also reviewed how much acreage the Town owns and how land is acquired (easements or purchased pieces). He walked through the signage posted. He also walked through the East Haddam Land Trust and the CC, how they are different but how they work together to support and steward open space. Ms. Gleeson also provided information around how the CC works once open space has been purchased or been owned for a length of time with no trails or public access. One of the charges is to manage invasive plants which are a big issue. There is not enough steward volunteers to help address the invasives but the CC is investing in a honeysuckle popper which is very effective at removing barberry. Mr. Wilson suggested getting native plants from local nurseries and plant them around parking lots. He suggested picking ones that self-seed so that the birds can spread the seeds instead of the invasive seeds.

Ms. Gleeson has been working on an 11x17 map for inclusion in the PoCD to show all the properties with trails within the Town, which Mr. Smith showed to Mr. Wilson.

6. Next meeting – June 5, in Meeting Room #1, Municipal Office Building.

7. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith is going to ask Mr. Gates to survey and mark the boundaries of the old distillery that the Town owns on Route 149 (Falls Bashan).

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Mr. Zaid talked with the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) who are interested in joining the event sponsored by the RTC on June 2.

The maps within the kiosk at Patrell have faded greatly due to the sun exposure. A UV coating needs to be put on the Lexan to protect the maps from the exposure.

Mr. Smith will send a letter to the new Parks and Rec director to make sure she is aware that the CC is not stewarding the Nichols property.

Mr. Zaid will not be able to make the May 5 work party, and may not be able to attend June's meeting.

Mr. Smith talked about the CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies newsletter provided but there was not much of interest to the CC.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- East Haddam Trails Data