

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

March 5, 2019

Adopted April 2, 2019

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 7:30 PM at the Municipal Office Building. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Sue Merrow, Marilyn Gleeson, Paul Sienna, Joe Zaid, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston. Others present: Aidan Behilo – departed 8:54, Ellen Behilo – departed 8:54, John Fournier – departed 8:55

2. Appointment of Alternates

No alternates needed, as all regular members were in attendance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Added Stewardship meeting minutes as new 5.

Added East Haddam Youth and Family Services under New Business as new item.

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

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 2/5/19

6a. changed is to are and removed also

6a. changed projects to pictures

8. Changed Gardner to Gardener in 2 places

8. Changed as to at in second paragraph

Under attachments added (on file)

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

5. Approval of the Stewardship Committee 2/19/2019

Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Ms. Merrow and unanimously approved. Only Mr. Gelston, Ms. Merrow and Mr. Sienna voted as they were the only attendees.

6. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee: In planning for the April 13 Stewardship event, Mr. Gelston noted Roaring Brook is the primary focus and Hatch Lot is the secondary focus if there is a very large turnout. Mr. Gelston outlined the support needed on boundary marking, marking and clearing trails and painting trail markers. Mr. Gelston

outlined the thoughts around attendees from various groups and committees. The last event attracted between 20-25 participants. Lunch would be purchased from a local deli and will be made to order based on what people would like. There was much discussion related to the food options and the discussion outlined that the CC trusts the sub-committee to make good decisions around the food. Mr. Smith noted that the food will be covered under the CC budget. Mr. Gelston reviewed the action items outlined in the event planning minutes and who is assigned to each item. He also outlined that there is no rain date given that people have their time already booked. Mr. Gelston noted that more help is needed from other volunteers to join the sub-committee and help finalize the plan.

Mr. Smith noted that the town has put the gravel down on the road to the Second Burial Ground on Ray of Light property. The town has also put some gravel down on the trail near the parking lot. In terms of the bridge, additional work was done. Several dead trees were removed that were threatening to fall on the bridge. The weather has not been cooperating with snow and rain, which has made it hard to do any additional work.

Outreach and Promotion: It is too late to put the event into the Events magazine, but it needs to be in the East Haddam News, the Town website, the town's social media site and road side signs. Mr. Gelston will address getting the word out about the event.

Ms. Merrow noted that she received a request to speak on invasive species at the East Hampton Rotary club, Ms. Merrow suggested Mr. Wilson to speak at the event. Ms. Merrow asked for topics for the next Events magazine. Mr. Behilo's project will be showcased in the fall Events magazine. The connection with East Haddam Youth and Family Services or the bridge at Rose Farm are both good suggestions. The article is due April 5, so the CC members can send additional suggestions to Ms. Merrow. The summer edition can highlight the stewardship event.

Volunteer Activism: Covered under other topics.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Mr. Gelston did not attend the last meeting but he noted that things are quiet on the wetlands front. Ms. Gleeson noted that Mr. Brownell raised for discussion some work that his family wants to do on property that his children inherited a conservation easement on, located on Bashan Lake. There was discussion on the plan at the meeting.

P&Z – Mr. Zaid noted the last meeting was cancelled, but the first meeting of the month was moved to allow for a Plan of Conservation and Development event, which he was unable to attend.

c. Budget discussion

Mr. Smith noted there were no cuts to the CC budget. As much of the work the CC does really does not fall under capital, the capital budget was moved into a non-lapsing account, which is more fitting with the accounting methods used by the town. The operating monies are still handled as they have been in the past. The budget includes the additional \$5K requested to support the CC if Public Works cannot support the CC's work and the CC must hire a contractor to handle the work.

7. New Business

a. Aiden Behilo Eagle Scout Project Proposal update

Mr. Behilo joined the meeting to provide an update. He had introduced the topic at a prior meeting, but the CC asked for further information. He has received approval from the Boy Scouts. He provided an additional handout with more defined plans. He also talked with Jane Anderson, who spent quite a bit of time with Ms. Davison, and kept notes, which Mr. Behilo is looking to get further details on. He also spoke with Mr. Hedler to discuss his role and work; in one day, he (Mr. Hedler) will address the drainage and clear the vista, as well as lay down the gravel. The hope is to complete the work during April break, barring bad weather. He also noted that Staehly Farm has a mill and he will work with them to see if they can mill out the existing downed cedar that is onsite for benches.

Mr. Smith will send the digital plans of the blueprints he provided hard copy.

Mr. Smith also noted that any gravel needed will be donated by CC, so there is no need to purchase additional gravel.

Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Zaid has built several of the kiosks, so he can help Mr. Behilo with that if needed. Mr. Behilo will purchase conservation mix grass seed.

Mr. Zaid asked if the CC will be contributing any funds to the project.

Mr. Smith signed the relevant documents for Mr. Behilo. Mr. Behilo will keep the CC up to date as to his progress; the next step is fundraising.

b. East Haddam Youth and Family Services

Ms. Merrow introduced John Fournier, East Haddam Youth and Family Services. She and Mr. Fournier had met in January and talked about the healthy resources available with the CC trails. Mr. Fournier noted that for part of his work he heads the East Haddam Local Prevention Council, focused on tackling substance abuse problems. They are looking to see why people are using substances and trying to create tactics to provide other options. They have launched a “Choose Wellness” campaign, which includes things like healthy coping mechanisms for stress. Along that line, given the huge amount of green space within East Haddam, there is a natural connection to both the CC and the EHLT to start to encourage people and families to use the trails. It’s a double benefit – people get out on the trails and also engage in family bonding. Given all the maps that have been created, it would be very helpful to have a pinpoint map showing the town with the various properties shown as a pinpoint that people can click on to see the map. Mr. Fournier noted that he would like this to go further with guided hikes and supporting Stewardship days. Mr. Fournier contacted the CC to start the conversation and begin the partnership between the 2 organizations.

Ms. Gleeson noted that she was the creator of the maps and already has a large map of the properties in town; she and Mr. Fournier will set up a time to meet in the next few days to discuss further.

Ms. Gelston suggested additional ideas to Mr. Fournier, and they will connect as well to exchange further information.

Mr. Smith noted that we are coming up to perfect hiking season in April and May, so now is the time to get plans created for upcoming hikes. He also noted that there are a number of events coming up through the Land Trust which may interest people as well.

c. New bills

\$68.65 and \$60.98 Shagbark – screws, lumber, bolts all for bridge building

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

d. Public Comment

No comments from the public who joined.

8. Next meeting – April 2, in Meeting Room #1, Municipal Office Building.

9. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Zaid noted that his wife is no longer at the printing company. Mr. Smith asked him to thank her for her printing support over the years, and noted that the CC will need to find a new printer.

Mr. Smith asked Ms. Gleeson if there was a need to print maps; she indicated there are no additional maps needed at this time. More and more people are using their phones than paper copies.

Ms. Gelston will take over filling up the map holders from Ms. Gleeson.

The trail counters are not posted yet, so there is not information yet on the amount of people who are on the trails.

There will be new maps created for Roaring Brook and a few other properties.

Ms. Merrow noted that she has a neighbor in the Master Gardener program and is looking for 30 hours of volunteer work. Mr. Smith noted there are a number of projects that could use support. Mr. Smith will suggest to Mr. Wilson at the next meeting the need to plant natives along the ADA trail on Patrell.

Mr. Zaid noted that the locks on Petticoat Landing are being cut; there are several locks but the EHCC are the ones being cut by Eversource contractors. At least 4 locks have been cut and replaced.

Mr. Smith will write a letter to Eversource to outline the issue.

Mr. Zaid suggested adding a catchy name to the April stewardship event.

Mr. Zaid asked if there was a possibility to issue sugar maple tapping permits; Mr. Smith noted that one of the Hatch Lot neighbors requested the ability to tap Hatch Lot trees and he provided permission. Going forward, Mr. Smith will investigate how to do that for the future sap season.

Mr. Smith noted that any property purchased with a state grant eliminates the opportunity to have a campground.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Davison Property Development Continued Eagle Scout Project, Troop 22, Aidan Behilo