

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

August 6, 2019

Adopted September 3, 2019

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2019, 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, Thom Delventhal, Todd Gelston, Sue Merrow, Gary Wilson, Marilyn Gleeson (arrived 8:02). Other present: Michele Kerr, Ethan Kerr, Nathaniel Kerr

2. Appointment of Alternates

Mr. Joe Zaid, alternate, has been appointed as a full voting member due to the absence of Ms. Gelston. Mr. Thom Delventhal, alternate, has been appointed as a full voting member due to the absence of Ms. Gleeson (until she arrived at 8:02).

3. Approval of Agenda

Added e. Stewardship Saturday to the agenda

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

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 7/2/19

5.b. Corrected the date of the P&Z Public Hearing to the 24th.

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

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee: Mr. Smith noted that they worked on the Rose Farm bridge in fits and starts, due to the hot weather. The bridge is at the point where all but 2 posts are installed, and the railings still need to be put on. Approximately 60 feet of the swamp walk has been completed, and the remaining 40 feet should be completed in the next work party. There is likely 6-9 hours worth of work left if a crew of 3 to 4 people join the next work party.

Outreach and Promotion: Ms. Merrow submitted the article to be posted in the Events magazine which should be published anytime.

Volunteer Activism: Nothing to report.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Mr. Gelston noted that there is nothing big to report on.

P&Z – Mr. Zaid noted the July 9th meeting was cancelled. The July 23rd meeting tabled the cemetery review – there is no more town-owned burial space available. There was a public hearing on the Plan of Conservation and Development in July. Mr. Gelston suggested that Mr. Zaid work with the P&Z to make the changes as simple as possible to understand at the Public Meeting. Mr. Zaid noted that not much has changed within the document, but Mr. Smith noted that the CC members put quite a bit of time and energy into the review.

c. ADA Path and plantings

Mr. Wilson has been working hard to keep all the plants alive and watered. He was at the ADA path yesterday and noticed the monarchs flying around the milkweed and the butterfly weed and noticed at least 6 caterpillars. Sue Pagnano, of the Master Gardener program, went and weeded as well and was going to water any wilted plants. Mr. Wilson has 25 white spruce trees to transplant once fall comes. Mr. Smith is hoping that Public Works will start work up there again. The split rail fence needs to be installed still, but due to the heat, that will wait for cooler weather.

d. Update on Eagle Scout project(s)

Ethan Kerr is part of the Madison Boy Scout Troop and is interested in conducting an Eagle Scout project. He joined the CC meeting to talk through his interest in doing a project on the old dump site on Route 149. He did some research and discovered that a gazebo would cost \$14,000, so did further research based on a recent vacation to Canada where he saw red Adirondack chairs on platforms. His thought was to build a platform and put Adirondack chairs there, in several spots like the old dump site, Harris, Davison, Hatch Lot, Sabine and other properties. He is looking at plastic chairs that are all season that look like wood, and he also has a cedar option. The LL Bean one is \$279, cedar is \$225. Whatever chairs are chosen would need to be somehow fastened to the platform. His plan is to put these in several sites or start with just a few. Mr. Smith noted that there is an option to get the EHLT as well as the Community Lions involved in the project. Mr. Gelston noted that the Davison property would be a great place for a project like this as it would touch on 3 different groups – the Scouts, the Community Lions and the CC. Mr. Wilson noted that the platforms would be preferable as it helps keep the overgrowth from growing up and around the chairs. The platform would be site-specific but should be put on concrete pedestals to allow water to drain off. Mr. Gelston suggested being able to pivot the chairs to allow them to move a bit on the platforms. Mr. Smith noted that some of the places on the properties are so far out that a platform may not be needed (like on the Harris vista). Mr. Kerr noted that he would ask his troop, but the local troop and his school also have approved this as a project for kids to get community service. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Kerr to go back and talk with other Eagle Scout candidates to get information on how much money can be easily raised and then use that to create a full proposal. Mr. Smith invited him to come back next month with a more fully defined proposal for the CC to review. The CC is very excited about his project and is looking forward to hearing more.

Mr. Smith provided an update on the Behilo project on Davison. All the work planned has been completed and there is a bit of money left over, so there are a few more things Mr. Behilo wants to do. Mr. Hedler, Public Works, volunteered some labor last week with the mini-excavator and cleaned up the stumps and brush. There is a bit more work that must be done later in the season. Ms. Merrow will check with the Community Lions at their next meeting to see if they have any feedback on the work.

e. Stewardship Saturday

Mr. Gelston noted that it is scheduled for September 28, with the rain date of Oct. 5. The Shugrue property will be the focus. Parking capacity needs to be determined; where the work will be done will dictate where people park. The plan is to mark the boundaries and mark trails. Mr. Smith will need to flag the trails prior to the work party. The advertisement and publicity plan needs to be created; given the experience from the spring event, road side signs are the best way to advertise the event. Mr. Gelston will post the signs advertising the event. In terms of the food and beverage plan, Ms. Merrow will not be able to attend, but will scout out the options and provide a report as to that. Mr. Gelston noted that he will ask Ms. Gelston to provide the brownies for dessert. Mr. Gelston will post the event in the East Haddam News and will also provide an article for publication. Mr. Gelston asked Mr. Smith to get the legal liability forms. Mr. Smith noted that there are sufficient tools available and will get 4 copies of the property map. Mr. Zaid will borrow the tables and chairs from the EHLT. Mr. Gelston will schedule the portable toilet.

6. New Business

a. New bills

\$629.68 Essex printing for the maps of various properties

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

\$1327.47 Shagbark bill for 2 gates, pressure treated lumber, other lumber for Rose Farm Bridge (paid out of fiscal year 2018/2019)

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

\$370.71 Shagbark bill for hardware, bolts, blades, etc.

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

\$533.34 Amazon bill for Rose Farm bridge bolts

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

Mr. Smith has a proposal from a welder for welding the Patrell bridge to the plates on both sides, for \$500. It must be done given that the CC does not want to have to move the bridge again. This is to finish the clean up from the September deluge.

Motion by Mr. Gelston to authorize Mr. Smith to use up to \$500 to weld the bridge as noted. Second by Mr. Zaid and unanimously approved.

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b. Final discussion on last year's budget

Mr. Smith does not have the budget figures but noted that the CC gave back less than \$200 from the approved budget last year. Mr. Gelston noted that the money is used well.

c. Public Comment

No comment from the attending public.

7. Next meeting – Sept. 3, at Meeting Room #1, Municipal Office Building.

8. Announcements and other discussion

There is an opening on the commission given Mr. Sienna's resignation. Mr. Smith has an interested person who will attend the next meeting to talk about joining as a member. Mr. Zaid noted that he is interested in moving from an alternate role to a full-time role.

Mr. Zaid noted that since there is money to take down the blighted trees in the budget, he wondered if there is any money for replanting. Mr. Smith noted that there is no proposal for replanting at this time.

Mr. Zaid also noted that if the CC identifies areas where there are rare pollinators on Town-owned open space, there should be a focus on protecting them. The only places that get mowed regularly do not have a large number of pollinator plants, but Mr. Smith noted that he stays close to that and has prevented mowings to protect pollinator plants.

Mr. Zaid noted that perhaps the CC would like to invest in its own chain saw. Mr. Smith noted that he has thought about doing just that to have on the mower to ensure that there is a chain saw available to use when mowing if needed.

Mr. Smith noted that the mower would not start recently; he took it to Gano's for service to get it fixed (a safety wire had slipped off that could not be seen).

Mr. Gelston noted that the back lot at Harris was intended to be a hay field but is now filled with pollinators and needs to be mowed in the fall to keep it from being overtaken by invasives.

Mr. Wilson was accepted into DEEP's Master Wildlife program.

Mr. Smith will discuss addressing the invasive plants on a number of properties at the next meeting.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary