

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

September 3, 2019

Adopted October 1, 2019

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at 7:33 PM at the Municipal Office Building. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Joe Zaid, Sue Merrow, Marilyn Gleeson, Thom Delventhal, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Gary Wilson. Other present: Michele Kerr (departed 8:09), Ethan Kerr (departed 8:09), Nathaniel Kerr (departed 8:09), Aidan Behilo (departed 7:54), Chris Behilo (departed 7:54)

2. Appointment of Alternates

Mr. Joe Zaid, alternate, has been appointed as a full voting member at this meeting due to the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Sienna.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Eagle Scout update will be provided first.

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

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 8/6/19

5b. Changed P&Z to CC related to the review conducted.

5c. changed as to and, as well as blue to white in regards to the spruce.

6a. Changed Mr. Gelston to Mr. Smith regarding the welder.

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

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee: Mr. Smith noted the work has continued on the Rose Farm bridge as the weather has permitted. On the bridge, some of the railings still need to be completed. Clean up is needed at the site. Public Works has not been able to address the new ADA path yet due to broken equipment. Mr. Smith did do some work with Mr. Wilson on Boot Rock as several politicians and wildlife preservation groups met there to publicize the new federal legislation (i.e., Restore Wildlife Act) to preserve wildlife habitat. Mr. Zaid suggested that an article be written for the Events magazine about this legislation.

Outreach and Promotion: The Events magazine has been published, and Ms. Merrow's article is published in it. A suggestion for the next article is to discuss the Rose Farm bridge.

Volunteer Activism: Nothing to report.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Mr. Gelston noted nothing major is going on related to IWWC in town. Mr. Smith noted that the owner west of Chapman pond would like to extend his dock; Mr. Gelston noted that does not come before the IWWC.

P&Z – August 13 meeting was cancelled. At the August 27 meeting, the date for the Public Meeting on Sept. 24, to discuss the East Haddam Free Library which the Town does not own and did not know that they did not own. The Plan of Conservation Commission passed at the recent Town Meeting.

c. ADA Path and plantings

Mr. Smith noted it is about 50% completed, but Mr. Hedler feels that the path could be completed if they had 2 good work days there. There are 3 layers to the path with screenings being on the top, which will be rolled with a slight cross-pitch so that water drains. They will use a paving box to make it very smooth. Once the shoulders are addressed, it will be 6 feet wide. Once that is completed, the plantings that Mr. Wilson has been taking care of can be planted. Mr. Smith is providing an update to the National Park Service on the delays in getting the path completed (i.e., the flooding last fall which required much additional work to get the property back into order).

Mr. Wilson has a number of plantings that must be installed: 25 white spruce, 16 shrubs and 31 perennials. Now is prime planting time, so time is of the essence to get those planted.

d. Update on Eagle Scout project(s)

Mr. Behilo provided an update on the Davison property project. There has been much work completed, and Mr. Hedler completed the work outlined for Public Works. At this point, 12 of 15 work processes have been completed for the project. The remaining work is the purchase and installation of picnic tables and benches. The plan to build the benches fell through due to the quality of the wood; Mr. Behilo would like to instead purchase the benches from Home Depot. He reviewed the benches with the CC; they are 2' high by 4' long and can be painted, a total of 4 benches would be purchased. He is looking to install 2 benches for the main view and 2 for the side view up at the vista. He would like to also purchase picnic tables from Shagbark for \$100. The wood and materials for the kiosk will be a mix of supplies from Home Depot and Shagbark along with shingles from a family member. The kiosk is a large project, and he would like to get help from people who have built them before.

Mr. Gelston suggested Mr. Behilo check out the person in Lyme who makes cedar benches, which may be rustic, instead of the Home Depot benches. He will report back to the CC on the cost of the benches. The CC is interested in contributing to purchasing benches especially if they are more aesthetically pleasing.

In terms of installing the benches to keep them from rotting too quickly, he is able to get shingles for free leaving a bit of funds available, so will look into installing benches on concrete.

Related to stealing the picnic table and benches, it is quite a bit of work to get the benches and picnic tables out of the property. Mr. Behilo did talk with Mr. Smith about putting rebar in to secure the benches and picnic tables.

Mr. Smith noted that the vista may need more work to clear out the view further.

Mr. Behilo would like to have the project completed by November. He has the plans for the kiosk already. In terms of thanking Mr. Hedler and East Haddam Public Works as well as the CC, Mr. Behilo will be machine etching a metal plaque to thank them. Mr. Gelston suggested hosting a ribbon cutting after the work is completed; Mr. Behilo would like to invite everyone to the site upon completion and get all signatures for his Eagle Scout project at that time. Mr. Behilo provided information to the EH Historical Society, to be fact-checked and approved prior to being posted.

Mr. Kerr provided an update on his project idea. He has found 2 Adirondack chairs that are linked together which are heavier than single chairs, and more bulky, making stealing them harder. The size of the chair is about 70 inches wide and is 32 inches deep. The CC really liked the double chairs. The material is made from poly wood which lasts longer than just real wood.

He also reviewed his thoughts about the deck, and Mr. Smith will provide a drawing for a platform idea. The chairs will need to be fastened.

His budget is about \$5000; with the platforms, that limits it to 5 sites. Without platforms, he feels that 8 – 10 sites would be doable. Mr. Kerr would like to put a platform and chair at the old dump site as one of the sites.

As an aside, Ms. Merrow asked if there is any thought about providing the site with a new name. Mr. Gelston will research to see if he can find the name of the family that used to own the farm there prior to it becoming a dump.

There was discussion about the color of the chairs – the thought is to have them be a fun color to stand out and be seen. He would like to get chairs installed later this fall, for sites that do not have platforms.

Mr. Smith asked for site suggestions: the old dump site, Hatch Lot, Harris, Roaring Brook, Sabine, Urbanik, and other sites will be suggested at the upcoming EHLT meeting that Mr. Kerr will attend soon.

Note: this Eagle Scout project will be a joint project with the EH Conservation Commission and the EH Land Trust.

Mr. Kerr will use GoFundMe pages and bake sales to raise the money.

The CC appreciated the update and asked Mr. Kerr to reach out once he has the schedule set.

e. Fall Stewardship Saturday

Mr. Gelston put an article out in the East Haddam News in the calendar. He will be posting the road side signs. Mr. Smith noted that around the cemetery on Ackley Cemetery Road, there is room for about 10 cars and trucks in total. Where the trails will be put in, Mr. Smith will have Public Works brush hog down the overgrowth; that area can also be used for parking as well. Mr. Gelston and Mr. Smith will determine the best place for the port-a-let. The CC members suggested posting signs at Cold Spring Farm, at the Moodus Plaza, at the sand pile at the corner of Early Road and Millington Road. Mr. Gelston will also look to post signs at Lake Hayward as well. He will look to see who monitors the signs in the areas from Ms. Z in the First Selectmen's office. Mr. Smith suggested that once Mr. Gelston finds out who the contact is related to the home owners association(s) who can send out an email to association members.

Ms. Merrow has conducted her research on places to eat. She has located Tim's Bistro in Colchester which has options for make your own deli sandwiches or choose from already

created wraps. She has already spoken to them about the CC event and the need to feed volunteers. Mr. Zaid will bring water, and Ms. Merrow will provide chips and soda as well. Ms. Merrow cannot be there but will provide information to the CC prior. Ms. Gelston will provide the brownies, but noted that the rain date will be a bit tough for her given her commitment to a drive at Machimoodus.

The focus of the work will be like the work completed at Roaring Brook – marking boundaries, trails, etc. The goal is to create a 2 mile loop eventually. Mr. Smith will bring tools as well.

In terms of the name of the parcel, the property has not been named but has been called Shugrue since the town started investigating purchasing the property. The name needs to be considered at some point; perhaps a naming contest would be a good way to get interest in the property.

6. New Business

a. New bills

\$50.74 Shagbark for stain

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

b. Addressing invasives on town-owned spaces

Mr. Smith noted that there are a number of town-owned properties infested with invasive species. There are a number of tools that the CC has to combat them – a honeysuckle popper, a torch, etc. This is a huge issue and many towns are focused on removing invasives and making pollinator trails. It is also part of the Sustainable CT programs. This has been discussed for several years. Towns doing this work set aside funds, received grants and have volunteers help address. There are federal grants available that the CC can look into but they are time-consuming and utilize contractors to work on the properties. The work that needs to be done is compounded by the trees that have died due to non-native insect species that must be taken down. The CC discussed the need to ensure that invasives do not spread by planting native species. The consensus is to keep addressing the invasives as each property is worked on.

c. Public Comment

No comment from the attending public.

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

8. Announcements and other discussion

There is a vacancy on the CC. Typically when there are alternates, the most senior alternate is recommended to be appointed to a permanent role. Mr. Zaid is the most senior alternate, and is interested in the regular position.

Motion by Ms. Gelston that the CC recommend the Selectmen appoint Mr. Zaid as a regular member of the CC. Second by Mr. Gelston. Motion was voted on by anonymous ballot and was carried with one abstention.

Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Bernie Gillis has applied to join the CC as a new alternate member. He has been on the P&Z for approximately 16 years, and has been a resident of East Haddam for 27 years. Discussion ensued.

Motion by Ms. Gleeson to recommend to the Selectmen that Mr. Gillis be recommended to the Board of Selectmen to be appointed to the CC as an alternate member. Second by Ms. Mellow and unanimously approved.

Mr. Gelston verbally submitted his resignation; Mr. Smith asked him to provide a written resignation effective October 6.

Mr. Smith provided an update on the welding that will be completed on the Patrell bridge. The contractor is looking to work on it sometime in October.

Mr. Smith noted that the total amount turned back in from the budget is approximately \$400. The biggest expense to date has been the cost to Public Works to work at Patrell (about \$1200 so far). Very little of the capital has been used, but there are parking lots to be put in at some properties.

The state now has posters at the start of all their parks and forests to highlight that there are a number of dead trees standing and could fall at any time. Mr. Smith will look at getting a number of signs printed for posting on town owned properties, stating the dead tree risk.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- Davison Property Development Project Update 9/3/19, Aidan Behilo