

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

April 5, 2011

Adopted May 3, 2011

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2011, at 7:15 PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, TJ Tarbox, Scot Mackinnon, Nancy Mackinnon, Sue Merrow, Todd Gelston, Clair Maeder. Others present: Rob Smith, Dylan Mackinnon, Emmett Lyman

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 03/03/11

Moved Clair Maeder to the regular attendees as she is now a regular member.

Changed the reference to Ms. Carlson being asked to be the Treasurer, not to just help out in the financial aspects.

Changed Thursday, April 5, 2011 to Tuesday.

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

4. 2010-2011 goals and objectives: review of progress made and plans for final quarter.

As we are in the last quarter of the fiscal year, Ms. Matthew asked the group to review the goals and objectives and provide an overview of progress and plans made against them.

Boundaries and Trails – Mr. Tarbox noted that the subcommittee is looking to finish the Wolf Tree Preserve boundary markings. The three signs have been amended for all Chapal Farm properties. Lord Wellington is the next site for boundary markings and then the committee will move onto the High School property. Boundary markings for Town Beach, Nichols, Chapal Farm: Pizzini, and Chapal Farm: Boot Rock have all been completed.

Plant and Bird Inventory – One more walk through of the Chapal Farm: Patrell property will be completed. Nine blue bird houses have been built by the local Cub Scouts and will be posted on Chapal Farm: Patrell property. The Cub Scouts will also be conducting a beetle detective hunt and would like a signoff from the CC to get their merit badges.

Forest Management – Three properties have been assessed, and Nichols has been selected to be logged next. A letter will be provided to the neighbors to inform them of the upcoming logging. About 60 acres will be harvested when the work is complete. One of the stipulations with the logger is that trails must be maintained. In addition, Mr. Smith noted that it might be a good idea to post signs that logging will be completed or that logging will be occurring so that hikers will not be surprised. The committee hoped that the Rose Farm Homestead cord wood collection would be finished but due to the tough winter, further time is needed for the forester to get the rest of the

wood. Optimistic date for completion is June 30. The invasive species eradication plan has not been completed yet for Nichols. The strategy is to remove the invasive species at the same time as the logging is completed.

Trail Guide – Additional properties have been added, and a plan has been created to place the trail guide online with maps. Canoe and kayak launches have been added as well. The center map is the one last major piece that is missing at this point.

Ms. Matthew noted that there has been quite a bit of work completed this year and commends the CC for their activity and input.

a) Selecting a logo.

Mr. Mackinnon suggested an Eastern Box Turtle as it's an indicator species that effectively notes if the environment is in good working order or not by its existence. Ms. Maeder provided several options – frogs, ferns, trees, hiker, etc. There are several options of potential logos. Once the image is selected, then the CC must figure out how to get the image produced. Ms. Maeder noted that we need a decision on the logo soon to include within the trail guide. Discussion ensued. For the next meeting, all suggestions will be voted upon, with one chosen. That will be used in the trail guide and an artist's rendition will be chosen. Ms. Hawkins will collect and provide the drawings for the next meeting.

5. Organizing for stewardship: leadership, strategy and review of existing policy and procedures
Town open space has grown substantially in the past few years. EDC is now focusing on encouraging people to come and enjoy the open space. There is quite a bit of interest in making sure that people can access trails and enjoy the parcels. Ms. Matthew pulled together the existing policies and procedures that are already in place to discuss if any changes are needed. In 2008, the CC undertook reviewing stewardship policies and procedures. Ms. Hawkins read the policies and procedures adopted August 5, 2008. Ms. Matthew noted that the procedures for marking boundaries were also voted upon. Ms. Matthew noted the CC will need standard procedures for trail blazing so that all members are using the same guidelines for marking trails. Ms. Matthew noted that Mr. Smith is a wonderful resource who used to do this for a living, and there are also a number of CC members who have quite a bit of experience around marking trails.

Ms. Matthew also noted that getting more people involved in the stewardship of properties is an important goal.

Mr. Lyman indicated Mr. Walter is eager for the town to provide assistance to the CC as needed.

Mr. Walter would like Ms. Matthew to let him know if Public Works and other town services or personnel can help steward the properties as he recognizes that there is quite a bit of work that must be done regarding stewardship.

Ms. Merrow suggested putting together language regarding easements. Easement language needs to be in the files to make sure that the property owner and the CC are both clear as to what is expected.

Ms. Merrow suggested adding verbiage to the policies and procedures, and Ms. Matthew asked her to create verbiage regarding easements.

Discussion ensued.

In summary, the important items for continued focus are boundary marking, trails, signage, parking, management plan and assigning stewards to maintain property (a stewardship structure must be built before stewards are assigned). Mr. Smith noted that Nichols is an excellent property to start with.

Mr. Gelston suggested creating two lists – one that denotes urgent tasks that must be addressed and one that denotes long-term tasks.

Mr. Tarbox noted that he has received confirmation from Pepsi Co that the Town of East Haddam is a recipient of their volunteer program, held on May 14th. Mr. Tarbox asked the CC to mark their

calendars and make every effort to attend the volunteer event. Mr. Tarbox will supervise workers from Pepsi Co. Mr. Tarbox will work with Mr. Smith to ensure that a systematic plan is created to ensure the Nichols property trails are handled very well. Upwards of 10 people from Pepsi Co are coming, and Mr. Tarbox would like to have other town volunteers to attend as well.

At the next meeting, the focus will be on the May 14th Stewardship event and logo discussions. The work to address the Sabine will be tabled for now.

6. Land use updates: IWWC and P&Z

Mr. Gelston attended the IWWC and spoke in favor of stream crossing regulations. Mr. Gelston also introduced Ms. Maeder. Mr. Gelston noted that things went well, and the IWWC was glad to have a rep there.

Mr. Mackinnon attended two walks. One is a subdivision and must cross the wetlands. There are other ways to get access to the back lot without requiring crossing a wetland area. Ms. Matthew noted that the Woodstock Conservation Commission put together a checklist for site walks and provided a copy to Mr. Mackinnon for consideration.

7. Next meeting – Special Meeting, Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:15 in the River House

8. Other discussion

Ms. Merrow noted that there is a bill in the State legislature to protect municipalities in the event of someone getting hurt on recreational lands.

Mr. Mackinnon attended the case law for land use conference and provided copies to the CC (see attachment). Ms. Matthew asked the CC members to read the article in *The Habitat* that Mark Branse wrote.

Town Clean up day is this Saturday. Mr. Ventres is trying to get a crew out at Chapal Farm: Boot Rock to clear out the debris.

Ms. Mackinnon noted that she is really bothered by the potential land trade that is under discussion in Haddam. Mr. Gelston suggested that all members of the CC write their state senators on this matter.

Ms. Mackinnon made a motion to empower the chairwoman of the CC to write a letter of opposition to President of the Senate and local representatives and senators. Ms. Maeder seconded, unanimously approved.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Mackinnon to adjourn, second by Ms. Mackinnon, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins-Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- The Habitat, Winter 2010, Volume 22, number 4
- Public Hearing Procedures – Mark Branse

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, April 5, 2011

- “Lawsuit-protection bill backed at public hearing” article from the newspaper.
- State of Connecticut, Connecticut Historical Commission – information on Chapal Farm