

**East Haddam  
Conservation Commission**

April 2, 2013

Adopted May 7, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, April 2, 2013, at 7:15 PM at the River House. The Interim Chairperson (Rob Smith) being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Sue Merrow, Peg Carlson, TJ Tarbox, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Emmett Lyman. Others present: Jim Ventres, Scot Mackinnon, George Scrivener, George Scrivener Sr.

2. Approval of Agenda

Add to New Business section: Town Public meeting held on March 28

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 3/5/13

Updated Scrivener's last name and removed the hyphen from beef-alo within the minutes.

4.b added "for timber stand improvement"

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

4. Old Business

a. Budget

In a previous CC meeting, the budget was not brought forward as a motion but was discussed at length. Mr. Tarbox noted that going forward the CC should consider formally voting on the budget.

In the discussion with the Board of Finance, the budget for the Patrell bridge was moved to 2014/2015, as there was a thought that there may be monies that could be available to help (grants or the EHLT). Mr. Smith noted that there likely will not be any other monies so polled the CC to determine if there is interest in discussing with the Board of Finance to move this up into the current year. The bridge budget was included in the current year, but either the Board of Finance or Board of Selectmen postponed the monies into the next fiscal year. Bridge super structure would be the same as the Sheepskin Hollow bridge. Mr. Gelston suggested that the CC be very clear as to why the bridge is needed and what it gets the town ultimately. Mr. Smith will discuss it further and bring it up at the budget meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

b. Subcommittee updates

Forestry – Nothing new to report. Ms. Goyette noted that the Town Clerk's office is looking for the minutes for the February sub-committee meeting. Ms. Goyette will send Ms. Gelston the specifics to locate the minutes.

Stewardship – Nothing new to report. Because of the weather and other issues, no trail marking was done.

Education, Outreach and Promotion – Two trail guide donations were collected - \$14 and \$31. Over \$800 has been collected regarding the trail guide donations.

c. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Nothing to report.

P&Z – Nothing to report.

d. Update on potential open space

Zieller and Page properties vote is coming up on April 9. There was very little opposition to the open space discussed at the town meeting.

e. Potential grazing on Harris property

The Scrivener family and Scot Mackinnon attended to discuss grazing on another part of the Harris property that is outside the municipal area. The only areas cleared right now are within the municipal area. Outside of that is in different stages of forest regeneration. Any area that is leased for grazing would remove that property from public use as it would be fenced off. There was much discussion around contours of the land, fencing around wetlands and building up the soil again for grazing as it has been converting to forest land for the past 20 years. If grazing is agreed to, this is a multi-year commitment given the need to seed and establish grass that can handle large animals (3 years of seeding required). The family would like to apply for a grant for farmland restoration, but a long-term lease would need to be in place before that could happen. Mr. Gelston asked how water will be delivered to the animals if the leasing arrangement is agreed to. There is a well on the property that can be used. There are 2 questions – is the CC in agreement that this is a good thing? And if so, how long would a lease agreement be pursued for? This provides another opportunity to have another definition of working land for open space. There is a lease already on file with the town that can be used as an example and provide input for this lease if desired. Mr. Gelston suggested looking at a number of different lease options – like not charging for the first 3 years to allow for the necessary investment to be made by the farmers.

f. Dean Property Trail Marking

The Dean work party will be held on April 21, at 1pm. All are invited.

g. Rose Farm Trails

Nothing has been done on this yet. Further investigation must be done. Mr. Smith and Mr. Tarbox need to meet with the Ray of Light Farm people to discuss trail options. The trail work day will be moved to May.

5. New Business

a. Proposed management plan for Patrell Preserve

Mr. Smith discussed the proposed management plan. It was sent to everyone with the agenda for this meeting. The question is if there are any issues or concerns that the CC has. Mr. Smith

reviewed it and noted that it is in line with previous conversations around management of the property. If there is something that changes or the CC becomes uncomfortable with it, the plan is reviewed on an annual basis. The Lyme Land Trust created it and as they are looking to become a member of the Land Trust Alliance, all properties under fee simple arrangements must have a management plan on them. Creating this meets that requirement. Mr. Gelston indicated he felt the plan was great, but noted several items. Mowing should be done at least twice – August 1 and then again in the fall. This ensures that any brush growth will not grow back. Mr. Smith will discuss changing that within the plan. Mr. Gelston noted that a sickle bar is the best tool to use, however, Mr. Smith noted that the property has to be in good enough shape to use a sickle bar on it. There are a few changes that are needed to the plan and with those, it can be approved.

Motion by Mr. Tarbox to accept the management plan with the noted changes. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

b. Town Public meeting held on March 28

Mr. Tarbox raised the point that the Town Meeting on Open Space was held on March 28, which was Maundy Thursday and is considered a day of observation in several Christian traditions. Mr. Tarbox noted that he could not attend the public meeting given this conflict. Mr. Tarbox requested a strongly worded letter be sent to the Town outlining the concern. Mr. Lyman noted that Town officials try to be very sensitive of holidays and religious traditions, and none were aware it was a day of observation. By the time they became aware of the conflict, it was too late to change the meeting date. Mr. Gelston suggested that instead of a letter, the days of observation be noted on the Town calendar.

6. Next meeting – May 7, 2013 at The River House

7. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith referenced the Land Swap, and there is a bill before the legislature that called for repeal of the Land Swap legislation. There was quite a bit of testimony that was in favor of repeal. Mr. Smith suggested that the CC members read the articles around this. Mr. Smith asked if the CC would support writing a letter in support of repeal.

Motion by Mr. Tarbox to write a letter in support of repeal. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Merrow to adjourn at 8:56 pm, second by Ms. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette  
Recording Secretary

Attachments:  
Beefalo brochure