

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

May 7, 2013

Adopted June 4, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2013, at 7:16 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, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Claire Maeder, Peggy Carlson, Cynthia Matthew, Emmett Lyman. Others present: Paul Sienna

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Carlson to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Ms. Merrow and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 4/2/13

Spelled Emmett Lyman's name correctly.

5b – changed April to March for the Town Meeting.

4a – added Patrell in reference to the bridge

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

4. Old Business

a. Budget

Budget was approved by Board of Selectmen/Finance with additional \$10,000 added back to capital budget. Town meeting is tomorrow night (5/8) with vote on May 21.

b. Subcommittee updates

Forestry – Nothing new to report. Waiting for wood market to recover; it is slowly rebounding. Next properties are being considered. Town Beach is high quality timber land, while Shugrue is being considered for timber stand improvement at the very least.

Stewardship – There are several things to note related to stewardship. Mr. Smith and Mr. Ventres marked another trail at Harris with several 6th graders. More trail work is needed to tie into the Dean piece. Mr. Ventres is finding lease agreements to review regarding the long term lease potential for the Scribener family to lease part of the Harris property for beefalo grazing. Mr. Smith also marked out the section for the NEWT trail (Niantic, Eightmile Watershed trail) from East Haddam to Salem for the DEEP to review and approve. Once approval received, it can be marked. Sometime by this fall there will be a trail running from East Lyme to East Haddam.

Education, Outreach and Promotion – Trail guide monies were collected again, with an additional deposit for \$64 to be made tomorrow with grand total to date of \$875. One of the

boxes was moved from the Town Office to Grand View Campground on North Moodus Road. The article for the Events magazine will be published in the Summer addition.

- c. IWWC and P&Z updates
IWWC – Nothing to report.
P&Z – Nothing to report. Nothing from the Banner development.
- d. Update on open space purchases
Mr. Ventres noted the Zeiller family asked that the survey be redone to ensure the wetlands area are part of the Town-owned space. The Town is looking to close on Pages within a month. There other properties that are being considered as well for purchase.
- e. Dean property Trail Marking
Mr. Smith noted that there was a trail marking party on Dean to mark the long trail (~3 miles); there were 8 or 9 people who helped. Most of it is on old woods roads or ATV trails, so it is suitable for horses.
- f. Stewardship: Rose Farm trails, signage
Rose Farm trails have not been established. Mr. Smith and Mr. Ventres will visit the property and work with Ray of Light to address access through a wet area.

5. New Business

- a. FFA/Nichols Property Update
Red trail reflagged by Mr. Smith, and FFA has already worked on it several times. The hurricane and heavy wet snow required clean up and trail redirection, which has been done. The whole north section near the lake is hard to put a trail through, but the FFA will be working on it and blazing it as Mr. Smith has marked it. Benches were placed out there, and a sign will be placed on Trowbridge. The students created a Facebook page related to the Nichols trail work. Most of the trails are in fine shape; there are a few areas that need some grading. Mr. Smith noted that the trails will likely be popular.
- b. Recruiting new members
There has been correspondence back and forth with the Selectmen's office related to the need for new members. Mr. Tarbox has resigned, and Ms. Maeder is not seeking reappointment. Ms. Matthew has been on a leave of absence from the CC due to illness; and noted that given the recruiting campaign, it makes sense for her to step down when her term is up in June. Ms. Matthew asked Mr. Lyman and the other Selectmen to actively remind people and mention the CC's work and mission. Mr. Lyman noted that this is all occurring already, and noted that his view is that the CC is quickly becoming an important body supporting the Town. Mr. Lyman noted that the Selectmen will continue to spread the word about what the CC does and what it is involved in. Ms. Matthew noted that she talked with Mark Walter who noted that creating a "Friends of the East Haddam Conservation Commission" to help do the work might be a good idea, much like what the Land Trust does. Mr. Lyman noted that it would be great to have a Stewardship sub-committee who can help review the trails and properties on a regular basis. Mr. Smith noted that stewardship programs work well; the issue is always getting people involved, but once they are involved, it works very well. Mr. Lyman volunteered for the Rose Farm property. There may be a connection to the Moodus

Sportsmen's Club as well to help steward properties. Also, Mr. Smith noted that it may be a good idea to involve those who live near/next to the property. Mr. Sienna noted that if there were a sign on the hiking trails with a number to call to volunteer for stewardship – that may help drive involvement. Mr. Sienna is very interested in the Conservation Commission and will submit an application for consideration to the Selectmen's Office. Ms. Merrow asked for some brainstorm time to be set aside to think about other interested people in town who may want to steward properties.

There are 9 seats on the CC, with 6 regular and 3 alternates. Mr. Gelston noted that it is very important to get people involved, but given that free time is very limited, all volunteer time needs to be used timely and with a clear plan for action. The CC's job is management of the Town-owned open space, but the CC needs to come up with a plan for action. The CC needs to spend a meeting or much of a meeting outlining a work plan to detail out which properties need parking, trails, etc. and then advertise the work parties to get things put in place. The plan needs to be made for several years and then needs to be communicated, via Events, EHLT, communications with neighbors, etc. Mr. Sienna noted that he initially got involved because his son was involved and he had to be present for his son. From there, his interest grew. Ms. Merrow noted that there are a high number of Boy Scouts and a number who are looking to become Eagle Scouts. Mr. Smith also noted that there are a number of civic organizations who may be interested in being involved. There also needs to be an outline of all the properties that will not have trails on them and the reasons why. Ms. Goyette and Mr. Smith will work on that as well as update the property spreadsheet. Ms. Merrow suggested that the CC think about and set a boundary of what the CC needs to look like in 2 years. This will help the CC formulate a strong and doable plan.

6. Next meeting – June 4, 2013 at The River House
7. Announcements and other discussion
8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Merrow to adjourn at 8:40 pm, second by Ms. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:
Beefalo brochure