

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

August 6, 2013

Adopted September 10, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2013, at 7:30 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Sue Merrow, Peggy Carlson, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston. Others present: Marilyn Gleeson, Paul Sienna, Emmett Lyman

2. Approval of Agenda

Changed next meeting from August 6 to Sept. 10.

Added: Discussion of FFA questions and question around picnic table at Nichols

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 7/9/13

4B. added "had" to the IWWC update.

7 Added "s" to the end of "piece" under the last paragraph.

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

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry – nothing new to report.

Education, Outreach and Promotion – nothing new to report.

Stewardship – Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Gelston donated sign material to add to the back of the metal signs to post on properties. The signs just need to be put together and then posted.

Mr. Smith will meet with the Director of Public Works to discuss posting the signs and parking area improvements.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Not much to report.

P&Z – Not much to report.

c. Update on open space purchases – Pages/Zeiller

Pages is now the Hatch Lot, and there is planned trail work to be done this fall. Trails have been flagged, and the road needs to be mowed to make it easy for people to get to the viewing area. Zeiller, now the Roaring Brook Preserve, has not been closed on yet. On a side note, the East Haddam Land Trust is going to close on the Bogan property soon.

d. Recruiting new members

Records indicate that there are still 2 openings, both alternate positions. Additional members and volunteers are needed still. Regular members are Rob Smith, Sue Merrow, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Marilyn Gleeson, and Paul Sienna. Peggy Carlson is an alternate. The commission is a 9-member board and needs additional people who can participate.

e. CC Vision/Strategy

i. General Discussion: Goals and objectives

Ms. Merrow reviewed the process that was used at the last meeting to create the list of priorities. At the last meeting, the CC members reviewed the broad categories and weighted them. The area that got the most weighting was Stewardship and Preserve Management which included management plans for open space, completing a timber stand improvement, etc. Commission Administration came in 2nd in terms of voting. Administration and Trail improvements were very close in terms of voting, and Ms. Merrow noted they were both 2nd. Volunteer activism came in 3rd. Public relations came after that.

The next steps include recruiting people who can determine tangible work plans and create sub-committees to support each.

Mr. Gelston noted that the Forestry and Stewardship be combined into one sub-committee. There is overlap between trail improvements and public relations. The trail guide is the “harvest” of the work within the other areas. Mr. Gelston noted that trail improvements need to be managed by an expert, and he suggested that it be its own sub-committee. Mr. Gelston suggested that the Trail Improvement sub-committee can get direction from the Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee who can set direction and strategy on executing on trail improvement, which the Trail Improvement sub-committee can then implement. To implement that, the Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee would be re-launched and then a member of that would be on the Trail Improvement sub-committee. Stewardship and Forestry Management sub-committee has 3 main goals

1. Recruit new members
2. Create more management plan
3. Delegate and get trails blazed and marked

Mr. Sienna suggested starting on/near a property that already has quite a bit of hiking activity. The sub-committee needs to meet and discuss. The existing Stewardship and Forestry Management is Mr. Gelston and Ms. Merrow, and Mr. Sienna and Mr. Smith were both recruited to join.

Volunteer Activism sub-committee – Ms. Gleeson noted she is interested in being part of this sub-committee. Ms. Gleeson will create a rudimentary plan on what the activities would be and start to recruit people to help.

Ms. Carlson is interested in the Trails Improvement sub-committee. Ms. Gelston is interested in helping with the trail guides going forward. She will create a bulleted list of what is needed to get the trail guide update moving again. Ms. Maeder had noted that she would continue to be involved with redoing the trail guide as needed. Mr. Smith suggested that there may be State programs that provide trail grant monies for nice maps with GPSed trails.

The CC as a whole will take on the work of the Commission Administration. Public Relations is the last sub-committee that must be addressed and includes crafting a plan for communicating the plans and work done. Mr. Sienna suggested that the Public

Relations piece can be part of Commission Administration, and the CC must get more work accomplished before starting up the sub-committee.

The Stewardship and Forestry management subcommittee will meet and draft a plan to review at the Sept meeting for approval or revision by the CC. The meeting will be at Mr. Gelston's house on August 16th at 7:30pm. Ms. Goyette will join to act as Recording Secretary and will post the meeting notice with the Town Hall.

Mr. Smith will try to find out more information on hiring the Yale School of Forestry students to create management plans on several properties.

ii. Establish FY goals for Subcommittees

The first steps of all the sub-committees are to pull together their goals and steps to get started. Each group needs to create a work plan and outline deliverables with the steps that must be taken to get to tangible work. Another ask of the CC members is to find additional volunteers. Mr. Sienna noted that the CC needs to determine which properties will be worked on.

5. New Business

a. Recommendation for re-appointment

i. Rob Smith - He would like to stay for another term.

ii. Todd Gelston – He would like to stay for another term.

iii. Sue Merrow - She would like to stay.

iv. Peggy Carlson – She would like to stay as an alternate.

Motion by Ms. Gelston that the 4 above noted members be re-appointed to the CC to serve the next 2 year term, second by Mr. Sienna, unanimously approved.

b. Change in commissioner(s) status – Alternate to Regular

Mr. Smith welcomed Mr. Sienna and Ms. Gleeson as new regular members of the CC! Mr. Smith needs to receive a formal letter of resignation from Ms. Matthew, so the CC cannot move Ms. Gelston from an alternate to regular member.

Mr. Gelston will confirm the number of members and what the number of regular and alternate members is.

c. Nichols Trail picnic table

Mr. Smith was approached by Craig Mansfield to move the Nichols picnic table to the Farmers Market as it has not had much use. Mr. Gelston suggested polling people who use the trail to see if they are using the table. PepsiCo donated the table for use on the trail. The Farmers Market goes through October. Mr. Gelston will ask the Transfer Station crew if there is any use. If it is not, the CC will leave it up to Mr. Smith and Mr. Gelston to decide.

d. FFA

Mr. Smith read a letter from Ms. Matthewson, noting that the recent grant submission is related to marketing and public relations. In particular, the FFA wants to mail a trail guide to each home within East Haddam with a letter from the FFA with additional information around

the Nichols property. Marketing the trail system and obtaining data around the number of people who use it is the grantor's request. Mr. Gelston suggested that if this is done, new updated trail guides must be sent out. Mr. Gelston noted feedback received – that photos should be in color. That is something to consider for the next version of the trail guide. Ms. Merrow suggested letting the FFA know that the CC really likes the ideas and is already in discussion around creating a newly updated version of the trail guide. Mr. Sienna suggested using the technology for the iPhone or Android that can be scanned to record the number of folks who walk trails. He will find out the information on that technology and provide it to Mr. Smith. Ms. Merrow asked Mr. Smith to ask if there is time built in such that the trail guide can be revised. Ms. Goyette will check with Ms. Maeder to determine if she received all the print-ready files from the printers, as they are now out of business. Ms. Gleeson suggested creating a trail guide app as well. Mr. Smith will also mention the app idea to the FFA. Mr. Gelston noted that the trail guide revision will take some time, whether it is electronic or paper version. He suggested sending out information on the Nichols trails only.

Motion by Mr. Gelston to provide Mr. Smith the authority to work with Cheryl Matthewson on the FFA trail grant project discussing and possibly utilizing the trail guide, second by Ms. Gleeson, unanimously approved.

6. Next meeting – Sept 10, 2013 at The River House

7. Announcements and other discussion

Mr. Smith noted that the \$10,000 request for the bridge was removed, but the \$5,000 was left in the budget for parking improvements and such.

Mr. Smith will see if Ms. Matthew can join the next meeting.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Merrow to adjourn at 9:25 pm, second by Mr. Gelston, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Vision/Strategy discussion – tally of votes