

**East Haddam  
Conservation Commission**

October 1, 2013

Adopted November 19, 2013

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, October 1, 2013, at 7:14 PM at the River House. The Chairperson being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, Marilyn Gleeson, Peggy Carlson, Todd Gelston, Charlotte Gelston, Paul Sienna, Sue Merrow. Others present: Scot Mackinnon, Noah Ventola (departed at 7:50pm), Linda Stuhlman (departed at 8:15pm)

2. Approval of Agenda

Added Woel Road, Harris property update and Hunting to the agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 9/10/13

7. updated the middle paragraph to make it more clear.

Motion by Ms. Gelston to approve the 9/10/13 Regular CC meeting as amended. Second by Ms. Gleeson and unanimously approved.

4. Approval of Sub-committee Minutes for 9/20/13

Updated "loppers" to "loppers" under tools section.

Motion by Ms. Merrow to approve the 9/20/13 Special meeting of the Forestry and Stewardship sub-committee as amended. Second by Mr. Gelston and unanimously approved.

5. Old Business

a. Subcommittee updates

Forestry & Stewardship – First work day was Saturday, Sept. 28, on the Pizzini property. About ½ of the boundary was marked, but more is needed. Mr. Gelston noted that the man hours will be revised to be more realistic given the amount of time the group worked on Pizzini. The next work party is Oct. 12, and will be focused on finishing marking the boundaries and blazing the trail. The next sub-committee meeting is Oct. 9, at 6:30pm at the Gelston residence. Mr. Sienna will contact Mr. Tarbox about the patches, and Mr. Gelston will contact John Gibson to see if he has a template for the patches.

Volunteer Activism – Ms. Gleeson noted that in the Events magazine, the email address for volunteers to reach is Mr. Sienna. Ms. Gleeson will hold off providing email requests for volunteers until after another successful work party.

Public Relations – Ms. Merrow submitted the latest Events magazine article. For future reference, it would be a good suggestion to have a powerpoint presentation outlining all the

great work of the CC. Ms. Carlson noted \$27 more dollars were collected for the trail guides. Ms. Gelston noted \$1116 has been reimbursed to date.

b. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – Nothing new to report.

P&Z – Mr. Gelston noted that there is a public hearing on Oct. 22 to discuss the proposed changes to the P&Z regulations. He asked all the CC members to attend.

c. Update on open space purchases – Roaring Brook property update

Roaring Brook preserve purchase was finalized 2 weeks ago.

d. CC Vision/Strategy

i. General Discussion: Goals and objectives

The whole effort to establish vision and strategy has taken off with sub-committees all underway. Ms. Merrow noted that there are current updates are being provided, and sub-committee meetings are being held on a regular basis. Mr. Smith will leave the topic on the agenda for the next few meetings in case there is additional discussion.

ii. Establish FY goals for Subcommittees

Discussed under item i.

6. New Business

a. Middle School Environmental Club

Mr. Ventola joined and explained his desire to work with the EHLT to create a program working with middle school students focused on the ecology of East Haddam. Mr. Ventola is a college student working on creating an educational experience to students within the area. The focus is for the students to build a trail, take a hike through it and then observe plants and animals seen along the way. There is already a trail at the Middle School that could be used. This could be leveraged by the science students who can use the trail to get to the local water course in the area for the Water Ecology work they are doing. An old logging trail has been identified, and requires some clearing by the kids. It will run off the cross-country trail, about 0.25-0.3 miles long, and would eventually create a loop and run parallel to the cross-country trail and then connect back into it.

Mr. Ventola presented to the EHLT, and Mr. Smith asked him to join the CC to present as the CC stewards the land. This could be a boon for both organizations as the EHLT has wanted to engage with students for some time now. Mr. Ventola would open the club to all 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The work would be extra-curricular in nature. Mr. Ventola provided the full program details as well. Mr. Ventola is in East Haddam for the full school year, and will be working on a number of projects during this tenure. The hope is to enlist a few volunteer teachers who can help keep the group engaged after his tenure is over. Mr. Smith noted the EHLT has quite interested, but the CC would need to provide permission as there is field work involved on town-owned open space. The necessary participation from the EHLT and the CC would ideally include members who would be involved in the work, but Mr. Ventola wants as much involvement as people feel inclined. Ms. Gleeson noted that this work would help engage a new generation in the work of the CC. Mr. Smith noted that from the EHLT membership, a Botanist is interested in being involved as well as other people with different disciplines.

Mr. Gelston noted that the CC would be glad to participate, but given the full agenda of the CC, the EHLT can be the lead partner with the CC providing support. Mr. Gelston also suggested that the CC could take the club on a hike through another property to show off other trails as well. Mr. Smith asked that Mr. Ventola provide regular updates as well. The CC expressed gratitude and excitement about this new opportunity!

b. Wocl Road

Wocl Road is off of Clark Hill Road. There is a single house, and the owner has paved a portion to his driveway (900 feet). Wocl Road was a discontinued road. There are 2 ways to become a road – 1) accept it at Town Meeting or 2) the Town has taken responsibility and actively maintained it such that it is passable. There are 2 ways to cease being a road: 1) Town vote to discontinue it or 2) stop taking responsibility for it over a period of time and thus it is abandoned. There is research being done to determine the status of Wocl Road. Even if a road is discontinued, no one loses their right of way. Mr. Sienna asked if the home owner is using the road as his right of way, and Mr. Smith noted that is true. Mr. Gelston asked the CC members to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting tomorrow night to hear about this.

c. Harris property update

Mr. Mackinnon provided an update on behalf of the Ag Commission on the Harris property. The barn was razed, a cover crop was planted and the fencing is set to be installed. Mr. Ventres then talked with Mr. Mackinnon and noted that there may need to be additional lands for ball parks. There is additional discussion about that on Oct. 7. The food processing building will be moved, but the Town will put out a number of test pits around to determine where the best place is for the building's septic field. Ms. Merrow asked if there is a strategic plan for the recreational needs in town. Mr. Gelston noted that there is always a need for additional athletic fields. They are expensive to build and maintain, but they are important to the town. Mr. Smith noted that when the Open Space commission was talking with Mr. Harris, there was specific discussion around using some of the land for athletic fields. Ms. Merrow noted that land was also purchased behind the Brownell homestead of 4-5 acres that was purchased for athletic fields as well and is adjacent to the old middle school. That land may be the best area given that it is close to the school and where the infrastructure is. There are 5 competitors for the Harris property – tillable soil, parking, athletic fields, processing plant and hiking trails – that all need to be weighed and properly assessed to determine how to handle the competitors. There are about 18 acres for municipal use. Mr. Smith asked the State Representative to transfer the state park land in front of the Harris property to either improve access or provide parking. Formal notification to the town is needed. The piece is an orphan piece of property. Mr. Gelston noted that it would be interesting to see where all the athletic fields are within town and what sports can be played there.

Ms. Stuhlman extended herself as a resource to help the CC to help get volunteers and “feet on the ground”. As the liaison for the Ag Commission, she introduced herself to the CC and offered her help as needed. The Ag Commission is looking to create a 5-year plan. She noted that since the Ag Commission and the CC are sister commissions, she would like to help bridge the gaps between the two. She provided the Ag Commission ordinance as well. Ms. Merrow noted that some streams need buffering, and Ms. Stuhlman may be a resource to help address those areas, as the CC addresses different properties.

d. Hunting

Melissa Ziobron brought to the Open Space Commission that some people are not aware that hunting is allowed on Town owned space. There is a hunting policy. Mr. Smith suggested adding the hunting policy as well as a list of preserves that allow hunting and how to get a permit. Properties include Nichols, Rose Farm, Pizzini, Boot Rock, Shugrue, Hatch Lot, Roaring Brook and Town Beach. The Land Use Officer is the person who manages the number of hunters per property and provides the permits. Mr. Smith will talk with Mr. Ventres about getting the information posted on the CC website.

7. Next meeting – Nov. 12, 2013 at The River House
8. Announcements and other discussion  
Ms. Goyette to follow up with Claire Maeder to determine who printed the signs.  
Hatch Lot has been mowed by Rick Shea, and he will mow as much as he can on Chapal Farm.
9. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn at 9:12 pm, second by Mr. Sienna, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette  
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Mr. Ventola email to Rob Smith
- Mr. Ventola's Community Service proposal
- Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc.
- Ordinance to Create an Agriculture Commission
- Instructions for marking preserve boundary lines
- Sketch A for boundary marking
- File: Trail Blaze –symbols.svg
- Guidelines for Trail Marking