

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

November 13, 2012

Adopted December 4, 2012

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, November 13, 2012, at 7:18 PM at the River House. The Interim Chairperson (Rob Smith) being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Rob Smith, TJ Tarbox, Charlotte Gelston, Todd Gelston, Peggy Carlson, Sue Merrow. Others present: Emmett Lyman, Paul Sienna, Laurie Sienna

2. Approval of Agenda

Add 8Mile RiverFest update under New Business.

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 10/2/12

4.a. Added logo stickers.

4.c. Fixed 1st sentence.

4.e. Added is to the end of the first sentence.

4.c. Changed Sprecker to Sprecher.

5. Changed Mr. Goyette to Ms. Goyette

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

4. Old Business

a. Signage

Mr. Smith noted that the new road signs have not been posted yet. Mr. Ventres has installed all required DEEP signs with the DEEP logo and necessary language regarding the grant monies and the protection status on Lord Wellington, Sabine (at both ends of the road going into Sabine), Urbanik and Harris properties. Dean signage must still be posted.

b. Subcommittee updates

Forestry – Mr. Gelston noted that on Rose Farm Homestead property, the logger initially paid \$300 for an estimated 20 cord of wood, but he will provide an additional \$150 due to the additional 10 cord of wood he will be removing, bringing the total to \$450 with 30 cord of wood removed. The logger aims to complete picking up the remaining cord wood soon. Some debris must be cleaned up, which the logger is aware must be completed. Mr. Gelston will determine if any of the debris is overly rotted and therefore does not have to be removed. There is quite a bit of wind damage due to the storms over the last year. Logger was not hired to clean up the wind damage. Property is now walkable with all the work the logger has done.

He has created a few trails that the CC can capitalize on. The CC can now begin to think about putting a trail on the property.

Mr. Gelston noted that the wood market is still marginal and so logging another property may need to wait until the market recovers a bit more. Mr. Smith noted that there may be a glut given the amount of wood harvested due to the last 2 hurricanes.

Shugue is the next property that would be inventoried for potential logging. There is very good veneer wood (cherry and oak) on Town Beach. Veneer wood is worth about 2-5 times regular wood market prices.

Trail guides - \$706 deposited and \$18 more to be deposited for a grand total of \$724 collected thus far. \$53 was collected at the 8Mile Riverfest.

Stewardship – Rose Farm Homestead is going to require some foot bridges to connect both sides of the property. Before trails can be completed, Mr. Tarbox noted that a bridge must be put into place. The property does not work well for horse riders as it contains a wide swampy area. The old bridge that was there is now gone, and the new bridge must be fairly long. The Town has access to the cemetery that abuts Ray of Light Farm. There is a town right of way to the cemetery through Ray of Light Farm. A bridge of crushed stone is out of the question due to the vast area and the water that is there. Mr. Smith would like to see if Ray of Light Farm would be amendable in creating an agreement around access to create a very large circular trail for horseback riders and hikers. IWWC permits would need to be received if a bridge were going to be built in the area.

80% of the Dean boundary has been marked; there are a few more areas that must be confirmed. Some spots are very difficult due to the amount of laurel that has grown up in the area. Mr. Ventres thinks he can get to those spots in a few weeks. Shugrue needs attention, and Mr. Ventres will turn his attention to that property in the next few months.

The Sprecher 25 acre donation to the town providing a connection between the EHLT Olde Field preserve and the Dean property has been accepted. There is another piece of business regarding the Sprecher and Harris property to be resolved. There is an easement that will be given to Mr. Sprecher to provide access across a corner of the Harris property he has used historically to log pieces of his property. This is almost finalized and is public knowledge.

c. IWWC and P&Z updates

IWWC – The Banner developers have not submitted a request for a diversion permit. The applicant has not reached out to any people who have been involved in the original proposal.

d. Patrell preserve trimming/mowing

Mr. Tarbox noted that Mr. Shea has mowed both the upper and lower meadows. Mr. Shea was not able to address the brush, so Mr. Smith will follow up with Mr. Ventres to get the overgrown brush addressed.

5. New Business

a. AG Committee update on Harris

Scot Mackinnon and Jess Stone could not make this meeting, so both will attend the December meeting and provide an update.

Mr. Tarbox and Ms. Carlson noted that the Ag Commission received a \$12,000 grant which will not cover the full work on the front field. During the discussion, Ms. Carlson noted the total grant was \$20,000, consisting of two parts. They will do part of it thoroughly and plant with rye grass. It will be cleared with mechanical help. The Ag Commission has responsibility

to clean up the barn debris. The barn debris will be addressed with a controlled burn. Mr. Gelston noted that after burning, there is still clean up that must be done. He suggested clearing the debris using an excavator and a dumpster. Mr. Smith will see if he can set up time for the CC to view the property, but as it is town open space, the public is allowed to be on the property.

After learning about time spent by town officials in marking out a potential trail on the Harris property, there was much discussion related to the job of the CC related to creating trails. The CC noted that they were very happy to hear that there is such strong interest in new trail creation. Mr. Gelston noted that since the CC is responsible for maintaining the open space, then the CC needs to be notified of any trails that are being created. Much discussion ensued about the miles of trails to be created, that the CC needs to prioritize properties that need trails and that parties interested in creating trails need to coordinate with the CC. At the recent Environmental Roundtable, there was discussion around how there is the potential for a spectacular trail from the Mt. Parnassus all the way down through to Whale Bone Creek.

b. FFA and Nichols property

Mr. Smith was hoping some FFA members would join tonight, but they could not attend. Hopefully they can join the December meeting. Mr. Smith needs to remark some of the red trail as the logging removed the markings. Another course must be done to educate the students as to adequate trail marking and spacing of markers.

c. 2012-2013 meeting schedule

Motion by Ms. Gelston to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Ms. Merrow and 5 approved and 1 disapproved. Motion carried.

d. EightMile Riverfest update

Ms. Merrow noted the Riverfest was held on Oct. 13, with almost 500 people attending again. A number of trail guides were sold. It was good that the CC was there. There were almost 20 different conservation activities/groups there. The band, EightMile River Band, was great and a terrific draw! This is the 4th consecutive biannual celebration held and attendance has held consistent with about 400 or 500 people each year. Congressman Courtney came and talked with all the groups. The Wild and Scenic was the first bill he introduced and moved it through Congress.

6. Next meeting – December 4, 2012 at The River House

7. Announcements and other discussion

Progress is being made on the Bogan property in Moodus. A work party was set, but due to the trees that fell on the new bridge at Sheepskin Hollow, it was postponed.

Mr. Smith continues to work on the linear trail that was discussed at previous meetings. He will provide an update at the next meeting.

Mr. Lyman noted that there seems to be a bottle-neck related to trail creation and suggested that perhaps trail construction would be a good Eagle Scout project candidate.

Mr. Tarbox noted that the Town Engineer has not come back with plans for the bridge on the Patrell property. He has been focused on replacing the bridge on Three Bridges Road, and he is

recommending a metal bridge. On Three Bridges Road, the installation of this bridge is not related to the CC at all. The bridge would be for only pedestrians, horses, etc., not for automobiles.

8. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary

- The Habitat, Fall 2012