

East Haddam Conservation Commission

March 2, 2010
Adopted April 6, 2010

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, at 7:02 PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, Peggy Carlson, Nancy Mackinnon, Pat Thomas, TJ Tarbox, Sue Merrow, Todd Gelston and Paul Stuhlman. Others present: Michael Harris arrived 7:20, left 7:40, Scot Mackinnon arrived 8:35.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Mackinnon to approve the agenda. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 2/02/10

3. Approval of minutes, second is by Ms. Carlson.

5. c. first sentence was clarified.

Motion by Ms. Merrow to approve the minutes as amended. Second by Ms. Mackinnon and unanimously approved. Ms. Mackinnon, Mr. Stuhlman and Mr. Tarbox abstained.

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates:

i. Forest Management – T Gelston

The forestry presentation to the Selectmen went very well with the materials being very well received. There were a number of CC members in attendance who provided great comments that supported the proposal.

In pursuit of the plan provided to the Selectmen, the subcommittee interviewed two foresters and will choose one after discussing the candidates with the CC at next month's meeting.

As a result of the Selectmen's meeting, Rose Farm Homestead property's (aka Valenti property) down and cord wood cleanup has been approved. The subcommittee will review the process and develop a contract for the Selectmen to approve following the standard procedures.

ii. Boundary Marking – TJ Tarbox

Mr. Tarbox noted that the Rose Farm Homestead property boundary is a bit concerning. There is a gentleman who is handling the boundary marking for a community service property. One side remains to be marked.

Mr. Tarbox also reconnected with the father and son who attended the CC meeting a few months ago. They will be attending an upcoming stewardship event.

Mr. Tarbox will remind Mr. Thumm of the need to cut up the downed trees on the Urbanik property and move it to Miller's Pond.

Regarding signage, Mr. Tarbox received a quote of \$42.50 per sign with 3 needed for Rose Farm Homestead, Pizinni 1 and 2 properties and discussed payment with the Town's Finance Director. Monies need to be moved around within the budget to get the signage paid for, which Ms. Matthew will address.

The Eagle Scout has finished his trail marking, published the sign and finished the bridge across the waterway on one of the trails. Mr. Tarbox has written a letter to the Scout Master to close out the project.

iii. Community Outreach – P Stuhlman

Mr. Stuhlman asked for future meeting time to discuss steward promotion and ways to incorporate the badges he has stored in his basement.

Mr. Stuhlman noted that he has been very interested in connecting with the Scout troops in town. He solicited the CC's opinion regarding getting the Scout troops more involved. Mr. Tarbox has been in discussion with the local Boy Scout troop to determine their interest in being more involved. Mr. Tarbox suggested that once the CC has a project that needs community involvement, then the Boy Scouts can be involved. Mr. Stuhlman will call the local Boy and Girl Scout leaders to establish contact with them. During those conversations, he will also talk about how there are several town-owned properties that would offer a great place to hold a fun activity.

iv. School Program – P. Thomas

Ms. Thomas has not heard anything else on the school reachout.

Ms. Thomas found out further information about the Wildlife Habitat program in Colchester. There is quite a bit of information available and is quite an involved process. If there is any interest, please let Ms. Thomas know. She will provide the information to the Green Committee as it falls a bit outside the CC's purview.

Colchester is holding an Introduction to Stewardship seminar for any interested parties. The date is March 24 from 6-9pm at the Colchester Town Hall.

v. Prioritization – C Matthew

Ms. Matthew and the Recording Secretary will work on planning this Friday, 3/5.

vi. Plant and Bird Inventory – P Carlson and N MacKinnon

Ms. Mackinnon has reconfirmed with the CT Botanical Society for the May 1st inventory event on the Patrell property. They will perform the inventory looking for recreational opportunities as well as geology features and how they help determine what flora is within an area, which in turn determines the fauna within it.

Ms. Merrow noted that there is a state National Diversity Database that denotes where endangered species are located. She suggested reaching out to determine if it is possible to determine if there are any endangered species within it.

b. 2010/2011 budget discussion – C Matthew

Ms. Matthew highlighted 5 points on the goals and objectives:

1. \$1500 for forester
2. \$800 for signage and public usage needs

3. \$275 for clerical and \$500 for printing new Trail Guide
4. \$275 clerical and consulting for webpage posting of CC activities
5. \$200 for environmental education program

Total now being requested is about \$5000. Last year the budget was \$1518.

c. Plan of Conservation and Development review

The primary reason P&Z held the meeting was to enable the various committees to learn about what other committees are working on and make connections. Ms. Matthew thought it was a wonderful start with representation from the East Haddam Land Trust, Economic Development, CC, P&Z, and Inland Wetlands.

The CC received clarification on the update of the GIS system and maps. Mr. Ventres has requested the CC provide updates to him regarding trails, natural resource inventory, etc. such that maps can be updated to include the updated information about what is located on a given property.

There was also conversation related to abandoned roads. There is knowledge around current abandoned roads within the community and quite a bit of interest in turning these roads into recreational avenues. Ms. Merrow noted that there are two ways that roads become town roads. First is by common long-term use and responsibility. Second is by accepting roads via town meeting and meeting certain requirements. There are two ways that roads are no longer town roads. First is to no longer maintain these roads; by common law, if they are not maintained for a certain number of years, these are then known as abandoned roads. Second are discontinued roads which require a town meeting. Property owners always maintain their access but property owners on either side have their property meet in the middle of the discontinued road. There was discussion around how to maintain the abandoned roads as public walking trails without incurring the possibility of needing to improve it over time.

d. IWWC ordinance change

Ms. Matthew and Mr. Ventres exchanged emails regarding the ordinance change. Mr. Dill was copied on the exchange. Ms. Matthew conveyed the input questions raised at the last meeting regarding conflict of interest for the member who sits on both committees. Mr. Ventres noted the state statute did not specify that the CC have a seat, but the Town decided to add that a number of years ago. There did not appear to be any reason why the conflict of interest would be greater than any other commission member would encounter. There is no indication that the Town will be moving to remove the CC member seat.

e. Proposed 25-lot subdivision

The Inland Wetlands meeting has not been held due to some issues with the proposal. Ms. Matthew will solicit the CC members to determine a good time for an informational meeting to review the proposal.

5. New Business

a. Trail guide update project

There is interest in updating the trail guide. Ms. Matthew has reached out to Mr. Stuhlman and Ms. Thomas who are interested in working on the project. Ms. Klein, a former member, is also interested in helping with the project. The subcommittee will assess the need for updating the

book and determine if trails need to be re-delineated. State park and East Haddam Land Trust parcel information may be included as well.

b. New town website

Ms. Matthew will provide further information next month.

c. Events Magazine submission

Ms. Matthew suggested that the CC think about writing a small article on the importance and need for stewardship to be within the Events magazine. She offered to take the lead in writing it. Safe trails (not having horses on trails that ATVs are used on), recreational activities, run off avoidance, etc., are some ideas of things to think about when writing stewardship. Ideas also include looking out for encroachments, knowing where boundaries are and watching out for invasive species. Ms. Matthew will draft an article and send it around for the CC to review.

6. Confirmation of next Regular meeting: April 6, 2010, at 7:00pm at The River House

7. Other discussion

Lynn Wilkinson has resigned due to her work schedule and has offered to work with Ms. Carlson and Ms. Mackinnon on their inventory subcommittee.

There are two people who live near Ms. Matthew who are interested in working on a horse trail guide. Ms. Carlson is interested in helping with the horse trail guide as well.

Earth Charter of the Lower Valley – there is an event on Saturday, 3/6/2010, with James Howard Kunstler as the guest speaker who's speaking on The Long Emergency.

"A Chemical Reaction" movie is being shown at Trinity College at 1pm on Sunday, March 7, which tells the story of a small community that banned the use of lawn chemicals and pesticides.

Chemlawn sued, and the town won enabling the community to ban lawn chemicals.

Ms. Matthew noted that there is now an open seat on the CC that could be included. Mr. Mackinnon noted that he would be happy to serve on the CC, unless there is an issue with family members sitting on the same committee. Ms. Matthew will check with the town to make sure that there is no issue.

Mr. Tarbox noted that East Haddam is listed as 22 out of 23 in terms of culture and leisure activities in *Connecticut Magazine*. There are quite a number of opportunities within the town which raises some questions with Mr. Tarbox. East Haddam is rated 13 out of 23 overall.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Carlson to adjourn, second by Mr. Gelston, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- AT&T Proposed Wireless Telecommunication Tower Facilities in East Haddam – letter from Jim Ventres to Attorney Christopher B. Fisher
- Email from Katherine Kosiba regarding Community Wildlife