

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

May 4, 2010

Adopted June 1, 2010

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at 7:12 PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, Peggy Carlson, Todd Gelston, TJ Tarbox, Pat Thomas and Nancy Mackinnon – arrived 7:45. Others present: Scot Mackinnon.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the agenda as modified. Second by Ms. Thomas and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 4/6/10 and 4/27/10

4/6/10 changes

Section 4. - Mt. Parnassus was spelled correctly. Harris property sentence regarding the fire tower was clarified. Added acre to the last sentence of the first paragraph. Cleaned up the last sentence of the 2nd paragraph.

Section 5. a. Changed sends to spends.

Section 5. b. i. removed the d off of tune.

Section 5. b. v. changed with to which in reference to the easements on the Gelston property.

4/27/10 changes

Changed the date to read the correct date.

Rationale had an e added to it.

Motion by Mr. Tarbox to approve the 4/6/10 minutes as amended. Second by Ms. Thomas and unanimously approved.

Motion by Ms. Carlson to approve the 4/27/10 minutes as amended. Second by Ms. Thomas and unanimously approved.

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates:

i. Forest Management – T Gelston

Primary forester hired and is on the job already. She will be doing the inventory and the presentation to the town. Rose Farm Homestead has been walked with Mr. Tarbox and the forester. A report has already been generated; the forester estimated over 40 cord of wood can be harvested. A list of loggers will be contacted for the Rose Farm Homestead. A firewood contract is being drafted currently; it will be passed through the selectmen, town attorney and insurance carrier for review. A different forester

from Connwood will be managing the timber harvesting. Based on a recommendation from Mr. Ventres, the Town Beach will be the next property to be reviewed for timber harvesting.

Field notes were provided and filed in the Rose Farm Homestead property file.

- ii. Boundary Marking – TJ Tarbox
No updates to be provided at this meeting.
- iii. Community Outreach – P Stuhlman
Tabled to the next meeting.
- iv. School Program – P Thomas
Ms. Thomas has a copy of the grant written which covers a number of outdoor activities with students. The activities run the gamut from creating hiking trails to water and soil studies. Most of the grant money would be spent on material. If the grant does not get awarded, the teachers will not have the tools they need, but still can do some work on the properties. The teachers would like to assume regular monitoring of the properties over the long term regardless of the grant status to ensure activities are included within the future years' curriculum. The teachers would like to start the program in the fall. Ms. Thomas will stay connected with the activities. Ms. Thomas may call a subcommittee meeting with the teachers, Mr. Tarbox and/or Mr. Mackinnon to plan the work.
Ms. Thomas attended the Environmental Stewardship in Colchester recently. A fulsome listing of stewardship websites was provided. Colchester is doing a tremendous amount of work within the school system. Ms. Matthew will scan the document and provide to the CC for reference.
- v. Trail Guide Project – P Thomas, H Thomas, K Klein
Mr. Ventres and Mr. Thomas are very interested in helping with the new trail guide. Ms. Klein also noted her interest in helping. Mr. Ventres provided pictures and information that can be included within the trail guide or online for reference. There is no plan created yet but the effort is currently getting organized. Ms. Thomas will be discussing further with Mr. Ventres.
- vi. Prioritization – C Matthew, S Hawkins
Ms. Matthew highlighted the categories that are on the Prioritization list. Several members raised questions around who owns the school properties – the town or the Board of Ed. Ms. Matthew will follow up with Mr. Gibson regarding the East Haddam Middle School land and whether any of the property is owned by the town or by the Board of Education.
The goal of the inventory is to fill in all the boxes on the spreadsheet; much of which will be based on the result of CC labor.
Updates include:
Rose Farm Homestead – boundaries, signage, public access and parking – all yes.
There is an old town road which may be on the property that must be researched.
Sabine – boundaries, signage – yes
Urbanik – trails – yes

Lyons 1 – boundaries are complete

vii. Plant and Bird Inventory – P Carlson & N Mackinnon

The plant and bird inventory happened on May 1, 2010 on the Patrell property. There were 19 people in attendance with 16 from the CT Botanical Society. Ms. Carlson provided a report of the birds identified on the property which will be filed within the Patrell property file. The plant inventory is currently in progress and will be filed within the Patrell property file once completed.

Ms. Matthew asked Ms. Carlson and Ms. Mackinnon to send a copy to Linda Bireley for the Lyme records as well.

viii. Horse Trail Mapping – B LaChance, C Maeder-Plas

Tabled to the next meeting as Mr. LaChance was not able to attend the meeting. Ms. Carlson will reach out to Mr. LaChance to discuss further.

b. Protocol for naming open space

At the last meeting, the CC noted that open space property has no protocol for being named. There were a number of ideas suggested for naming properties at the previous meeting.

Ms. Hawkins was requested to conduct a research check on any municipal guidelines for naming public places, schools, and town-owned property.

Ms. Mackinnon noted that a property name could be viewed as a public relations tool to intrigue people. It is the CC's job to promote people thinking about open space and why we are trying to preserve it. Ms. Mackinnon suggested that one or two features (geologic, historic, natural, etc.) that give the property some type of meaning could be used to name it. Mr. Mackinnon noted that within a grouping of properties, there could be one name for the whole property with different sub-property names.

Mr. Gelston suggested writing down a full list of property attributes and using that list to pick the name.

Mr. Tarbox suggested checking with the Open Space Committee to determine if there is any steward relationships that a name could help preserve.

Ms. Thomas suggested having some type of designation around where the property is located.

Ms. Mackinnon noted the name could be "XYZ property, accessible from the ABC road".

Ms. Matthew proposed naming the Lyons property at the next meeting to allow signage to move forward. The CC asked that the historical, geological and biological attributes be identified. The CC asked for a property hike of Lyons 1, on Saturday, May 22, 2010, at 2pm. All interested parties are to meet across from the entrance to Hopyard Road on the grassy area. Mr. Tarbox will get a map of the property from Mr. Ventres.

c. 2010-2011 Budget update

Ms. Matthew met with the Finance Administrator who noted that while the CC budget was retained, some monies for clerical support (web page and consulting support) were cut back a little from the requested amount. The Board of Finance is creating a financial mechanism so that the CC can place monies into the budget and get monies out as needed.

5. New Business

a. Recommendation for appointment to open alternate seat

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Ms. Matthew noted that Mr. Mackinnon has offered to join the CC to fill the open alternate position. Mr. Tarbox asked what other committees Mr. Mackinnon sits upon – he does not sit on any other committees, is unaffiliated and is not involved in any politics at this time.

Mr. Tarbox moved to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Mr. Mackinnon fill the open alternate position. Seconded by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

Ms. Matthew will send a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding Mr. Mackinnon's recommendation.

b. Volunteer program

A father and son team has expressed interest in volunteering. Ms. Matthew noted that it may make more sense to have an official organization of volunteers to more effectively utilize volunteer help. Ms. Matthew asked if there were any interest in organizing a volunteer corps to note projects and let volunteers know. Mr. Mackinnon offered to undertake the task and will work with Mr. Tarbox. One of Mr. Mackinnon's sons has expressed an interest in helping as well. Mr. Gelston suggested creating a manpower grid to find out what each volunteer is interested in doing such that the volunteer coordinator can determine who would be best suited for certain activities. Ms. Matthew noted the first step would be to provide Mr. Mackinnon with a list of previous volunteers as well as the volunteer protocol that was previously created.

6. Confirmation of next Regular meeting: June 1, 2010, at 7:00pm at The River House

7. Other discussion

Mr. Mackinnon asked for an update on old abandoned roads. Ms. Matthew will invite Mr. Ventres to discuss old, abandoned roads at an upcoming meeting with the intent of getting a clear presentation of the issue such that the CC can make an informed decision and potentially make a recommendation.

At the next meeting, the CC will review accomplishments and think through the next year's priorities.

Ms. Carlson, who was on the Agriculture Commission Study Committee, attended the Middlesex Revitalization Commission to hear the speaker from the Department of Agriculture. There are three different kinds of grant monies for agricultural projects available to towns and individuals.

Mr. Mackinnon volunteered to sit upon the Agriculture Commission.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Gelston to adjourn, second by Ms. Mackinnon, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Letter of support to East Haddam First Selectman for the East Haddam Land Trust grant for the 45-acre Moodus River property.

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- Letter of support to Department of Environmental Protection for the East Haddam Land Trust grant for the 45-acre Moodus River property.
- Forestry Management Sub-Committee Report
- Forester Lisa Niccolai Field Notes – stored within the Rose Farm Homestead file
- Patrell Property Flora & Fauna Inventory – stored within the Patrell Property file