

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

September 2, 2010

Adopted October 5, 2010

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, September 02, 2010, at 7:06 PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, TJ Tarbox, Peg Carlson, Sue Merrow, Todd Gelston and Paul Stuhlman. Others present: Claire Maeder, Rob Smith.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes for 6/1/10

Added of to iv. School Program.

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

4. Old Business

a. Updates:

i. Forest Management – T Gelston

The cord wood contract is now with the town attorney; the subcommittee is waiting for his feedback. Ms. Matthew noted she met with the town Finance Director who articulated that there is a special revenue fund that can be used for the purposes specified by the CC. The monies from the cord wood contract can be put into that fund. There is a special template that must be completed to define how the fund will be used; it must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Finance prior to any monies being used.

ii. Boundary Markings – TJ Tarbox

Mr. Tarbox enlisted the support of the Sienna family to help mark the Town Beach property boundaries. Both the northern boundary and Mott Lane boundary are marked. The western boundary has some encroachment that Mr. Ventres must address. The boundary alongside the Moodus Sportsmen's Club must be established still. Mr. Tarbox would like to put up signs around the Sportsmen's Club denoting where the boundary is, once located.

There has been quite a bit of work on the Shoe Rock property. The property has been mowed, and there is now parking. The sign has been posted, and the steel pipes have been removed. A chain has been installed to keep vehicles out. There is a downed tree on the access road to the river that must be addressed. Mr. Tarbox asked Mr. Walter if the town crew can go and cut it up so that access can be restored.

Ms. Matthew met with Mr. Walter previously who indicated the town Public Works is available to support the CC in its stewardship. Therefore Ms. Matthew asked Mr. Tarbox to discuss the request with Mr. Walter first, prior to reaching out directly to the Public Works department.

On Shoe Rock, there was a question on the western boundary which Mr. Tarbox has resolved.

The sign has been posted on the Pizzini property, off the road and posted in the wall. Mr. Tarbox asked the Forestry Intern to walk through Pizzini to get an overview of how the property could be stewarded.

The Heritage Brook property boundaries were investigated; several pins were located but not all have been found. The remaining pins must be found which will require another visit to locate them. The public can walk this property, and there is parking in the cul-de-sac. The access to the property is steep though, and must be cleaned up before the public can walk the property.

iii. Community Outreach – P Stuhlman

Mr. Stuhlman has connected with a contact at Franklin Academy, and there may be a possibility of putting together a program with them. Ms. Merrow mentioned that Mr. Govert, our Selectman, teaches there, and Mr. Stuhlman will contact him to discuss further.

iv. School Program – P Thomas

Tabled to the next meeting.

v. Trail Guide Program – P Thomas, H Thomas, K Klein

Tabled to the next meeting.

vi. Prioritization – C Matthew

Ms. Hawkins, the Recording Secretary, visited the Town Office and updated the inventory list with the missing maps and lots.

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

Ms. Carlson will follow up with the CT Botanical Society to get the rest of the details of the Plant and Bird Inventory. It has not been provided yet. The next property has not been determined yet for an inventory.

viii. Horse Trail Mapping – P Carlson

There has been some discussion around the Horse Trail guide, but not much occurred over the summer.

ix. Trail Guide – C Matthew

There is quite a bit of interest around getting an updated trail guide within the Town Office. Ms. Matthew is interested in getting the trail guide updated. Some preliminaries have been done to date on these.

5. New Business

a. Reappointments – TJ, Todd, Nancy & Cynthia

Mr. Tarbox, Mr. Gelston, Ms. Mackinnon and Ms. Matthew's tenure has expired. All reaffirmed that they are still interested. At the next meeting, the CC will ask Ms. Mackinnon if she is still interested in being a member of the CC. Ms. Matthew will provide the recommendation to the Selectmen for consideration.

Motion by Ms. Merrow to recommend to the Selectmen that Mr. Tarbox, Mr. Gelston and Ms. Matthew be reappointed to a two-year term of the CC. Second by Mr. Stuhlman and unanimously approved.

b. Subcommittee workgroups: Objectives for the coming fiscal year

Ms. Carlson remains interested in the Plant and Bird Inventory committee.

Mr. Gelston noted that one of the most important goals is to increase public interest. He noted horse trails and trail marking is very important as it encourages public participation. Ms. Matthew and Ms. Maeder are both interested in being involved in updating the trail guide. Mr. Tarbox noted that his involvement is to determine where trails can be created. Mr. Stuhlman mentioned that there should be some type of prioritization completed to highlight the high-appeal properties such that the CC can focus upon.

Mr. Stuhlman asked that at a future meeting there be discussion related to further public involvement and outreach.

Ms. Hawkins will add a column on the spreadsheet to note which properties have high appeal.

Mr. Smith suggested reach out to the Economic Development Commission to see if they can pay for the trail guide so the CC can use its budget for stewardship. Mr. Smith noted that the CC can also apply for a grant from the DEP.

Ms. Matthew asked the group to think about what they would like to commit to and what definable action steps people can take between now and next summer to meet objectives. The group broke up into small groups and provided their input on what they are interested in:

- Boundary Marking – TJ Tarbox; finish Heritage Brook, Lord Wellington, and one other property yet to be determined
- Trails – TJ Tarbox; begin trail marking on Heritage Brook, Lord Wellington, and the yet to be determined property
- Plant and Inventory committee – P Carlson and N Mackinnon; continue the Patrell inventory and potentially add another property to be reviewed
- Forest Management – T Gelston, S Merrow, TJ Tarbox; complete cleanup of Rose Farm Homestead and removal of damaged/dangerous trees, also they want to pick a parcel and harvest for timber value if possible, continue to assess other properties for timber value, invasive species and trail feasibility using the harvesting to create logging roads for trails
- Community outreach – P Stuhlman; try to identify two groups within community (Franklin Academy and another group) to determine if there is some desire to partner with the CC in some capacity and turn that into an action plan, raise collective awareness around the importance of open space among EH residents (possibly using the Events magazine as the outreach method)
- Trail guide – C Matthew, C Maeder; quick-hit trail guide creation and add one or two of the properties with maps to the guide, develop a longer-term plan for going online with maps and property information

6. Confirmation of next Regular meeting: October 5, 2010 at the River House

7. Other discussion

Mr. Gelston recommended that further discussion be held in the future to name parcels.

Mr. Stuhlman mentioned the COVERTS program which covered how to manage personal forestry space. The program is a 4-day program to teach stewardship and forest management. Mr. Stuhlman suggested that the CC think about getting involved in the COVERTS program.

Ms. Matthew brought forward a bill for the signs on Shoe Rock and Pizzini. Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the bill payment. Second by Mr. Stuhlman, unanimously approved.

Mr. Smith noted that a thank you event will be held by the Environmental Roundtable and East Haddam Land Trust to honor those who have donated properties. It is not intended for developers, but for people who have donated to protect their land. It will be held at the Moodus Sportsmen Club, but date has not been firmed up yet.

Ms. Matthew noted that Mr. Mackinnon has been formally appointed to the CC.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Merrow to adjourn, second by Mr. Stuhlman, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins
Recording Secretary