Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2025
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Municipal Office Building, Room #1

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chair Joe Sina.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments

Members Present: Joe Sina, Bernie Gillis, Barry Bernard, Alan Ponanski.
Members Absent: Susan Pagnano, Cameron Beard, Pat Capel, David Walls, John Olin.
Guests: Ralph Chappell, Rob Smith

Alternate Appointments: None needed.

3. Approval of Agenda
Motion to approve the agenda.
Ponansky/Bernard – Passed Unanimously.

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes from November 4, 2025
Motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Ponansky/Bernard – Passed Unanimously.

5. Presentation from Public
Mr. Chappell stated that a Land Trust proposal to use pesticides to control invasives on their Ayer's property was not approved. As an alternative they are exploring the use of goats which would be penned in moveable enclosures surrounding an area to be cleared. The pros and cons are being discussed with a couple who could supply the goats, but pricing has not yet been discussed.

6. Chair's Updates
The letter in support of the Land Trust grant request for funding for a trail on the Golet property to connect the walking track with the recently constructed viewing

platform, which was approved last meeting has been finalized and sent to the Land Trust.
The Commission has been approached by the UConn CT Trails Program about putting our maps on CT Trail Finder. Mr. Sina, Mr. Gillis, and Mr. Beard will meet by zoom with the group to discuss details, and report at the next meeting.

7. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates
i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis
Mr. Gillis reported trail maintenance work including removing a substantial number of downed trees. He also began the cleanup of old playground mats from Nichols and of the shed at Winterbrook which need to be torn down. Work parties will be needed to complete the work at both sites.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Sina
An article comparing various hiking apps is scheduled to appear in the E. Haddam News on December 11. An article has been drafted by Mr. Gillis about the use of an ox to help in working on the preserves, and is being reviewed. A suggestion was also made for members to write short pieces about their favorite trails for future issues of the paper or Events magazine.

iii. Climate Resilience – Mr. Olin
Mr. Olin reported by email that the first presentation of Lifeforms went well with about 20 students participating in November. Their drawings will be shown at the January PTA meeting and further digitalized for a show in June, which the public may attend. The Resilience project is proceeding with collaborations between Goodspeed, EH Redevelopment Agency, and CIRCA. The EH News has published a piece on this in its latest issue.

b. Liaison Reports
i. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls
Mr. Walls reported via email on a field walk, at which engineering plans and projected impacts were discussed regarding the conduit reconstruction work on Beebe and AP Gates roads. Easements around wetlands are involved, which are being handled according to IWWC regulations. The report was made just for CC awareness. Further information will be presented at future meetings.

ii. P&Z Updates – Mr. Gillis
Mr. Gillis reported that the drawdown of the reservoir is occurring, the purpose of which is to allow homeowners to repair waterside structures. A question was raised

as to whether this might also be an opportune time to take steps to control invasives, but no one at the meeting had any information on this.
He also reported that P&Z had approved the construction of a 150 foot cellular communication tower at the fire house on Town Street.

iii. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina
A Town meeting is being scheduled to vote on purchasing the Urban Farm Nature Preserve and approving a land swap with Mr. Sprecher. The timing is expected to be the end of December 2025 or January 2026.
A question arose concerning plans for the property around the golf course which is under easement, what the Economic Development Committee is considering, and whether the Conservation Commission should have any role. It was requested that the Chair invite Mr. Ventres to a future meeting to give an overview of future plans for Open Space in E. Haddam.

iv. Eightmile Committee Updates – Mr. Beard
Mr. Gillis reported for Mr. Beard that part of the Goodwin trail in the Nehantic Forest will be re-routed to avoid an area that is becoming washed out. He also reported that the Burnham Brook ADA trail work has been completed and will be available after hunting season.

v. Sustainability Committee –Mr. Ponanski
The town has achieved Gold Certification and the Sustainability Committee is now setting goals for 2026. They are thinking of highlighting different areas where residents can contribute to sustainability on a monthly basis.

c. Planting/Existing Garden Updates – Mr. Sina
No new work given the season.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion – Mr. Sina
No news to report

8. New Business

a. New Bills
The following bill(s) were submitted and reviewed:
$14.99 to Shagbark for supplies.

Motion to approve the bill(s)
Gillis/Ponanski – Passed Unanimously.

b. Discussion from Commission Members
None

9. Public Comment
Mr. Smith reported that he had been contacted concerning whether or not horses were permitted on specific trails. He found that the brochures online did not always indicate all activities that were allowed. The Commission is aware that some of our maps/brochures need updating, and that we need to be more consistent in the wording. The issue at the present time is that the mapping software previously used in conjunction with the Land Trust has been changed. We will need to further discuss a path forward.

10. Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 7:00 PM in Room #1.

11. Adjournment
Motion to adjourn at 8:04 PM.
Bernard/Gillis – Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph Sina
Chair