East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026
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.
Mr. Sina welcomed guests and new members.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments
Members Present: Joe Sina, Cameron Beard, Barry Bernard, Pat Capel, Bernie Gillis, David Walls. Alan Ponanski arrived at 7:30.
Members Absent: John Olin, Susan Pagnano
Guests: Ralph Chapell
Alternate Appointments: Barry Bernard, Pat Capel, and David Walls were seated as alternates for the meeting.

3. **Approval of Agenda**
Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Walls/Gillis Passed Unanimously.

4. **Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes from March 3, 2026.**
Motion to approve the minutes.
Gillis/Bernard: Passed with one abstention

5. Presentations from the Public - none

6. Chair's Updates
- The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) $250 (one-time) donation was paid last month.
- Mr. Bernard's article on the Urbanik Preserve will be published in the next Events Magazine.
- The terms of Mr. Sina, Mr. Beard, Mr. Bernard, and Mr. Olin, are up for renewal for two years and will be recommended to the Board of Selectmen for renewal

as of July 1.

- Mr. Sina sent a memo to expand the number of people on the Commission to Linda Zimieneski who will inform First Selectman Todd Gelston. If the Commission members agree, the proposal must eventually be approved at a Town Meeting because the ordinance that created the Commission will need to be changed.
- Mr. Sina emailed an updated draft adding four more trails to the CT Trail Finder (www.cttrailfinder.com). Comments are welcome. There is an orange trail at the Rose Farm Preserve which is on the kiosk but not on the CT Trail Finder. That should be updated. Cameron Beard is the point person.

7. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates

i. Stewardship and Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis

A lot of trees were reported down on trails after a very snowy winter.
Patrell Preserve – a tree fell on the ADA trail and was removed.
Harris Trail: 3 trees on the orange trail fell and were removed.
Rose Farm: 3 trees
Roaring Brook: 3 trees
Sabine Reserve: 5 or 6 trees
Davidson: 1 tree
Nichols Field: 3 trees
Hayward property: 3 trees
Harris Preserve: a large tree fell on the Community Garden fence and was partially removed. The trail next to the fence needs to be relocated.
Mr. Gillis built another kiosk and installed one at the Gelston easement with the help of Mr. Sina and Mr. Bernard.
Mr. Beard spoke about applying for a Climate Smart Forestry Grant under a DEEP program that is available to municipalities. A visit to the Shugrue Farm Reserve is scheduled for April 16. Jim Ventres will be there with the State Forester. The grant could help restore some of the property to a healthy forest and address the problem of invasives.

ii. Outreach and Promotion – Mr. Sina

We will have an article on the Urbanik Preserve in Events Magazine. The DEEP newsletter mentioned that bears are coming

out of hibernation, and coyotes are denning. Mr. Sina has an article on coyotes that he will update for the East Haddam News.

iii. Climate Resilience– Mr. Olin - No update

b. Liaison Reports

i. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls
The East Haddam Fish and Game application to restore cold-water habitat to a section of the Eightmile River was approved by the IWWC. It has been sent to the Army Corps of Engineers for approval. No update on that yet.

ii. P & Z Updates – Mr. Gillis
At the next meeting, the Commission will discuss part of the proposed Green Trail along Town Street starting at Mt. Parnassus Road and extending to Rose Farm.

iii. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina
Jim Ventres says the Sprecher swap and Urban Farm could come up at a Town Meeting sometime in May.

iv. Eightmile Committee Updates – Mr. Beard
Pat Capel will finish chainsaw training this weekend and get his certification. Some vernal pool studies are in progress. The Land Trust will be using goats to eradicate invasives in part of the Miller Preserve.

v. Sustainability Committee– Mr. Ponanski
The discussion with the Sustainability Committee about cosponsoring events and working together was postponed to the May meeting. There will be a presentation of Doug Tallamy's "Homegrown National Park" on April 18 at 7pm at the Senior Center as part of the town's Earth Day Week (April 17-26). The Homegrown National Park initiative shows people how to improve their own yard habitat by planting native species, reducing lawns, putting up bird and bat houses, creating rain gardens, reducing outdoor lighting, etc. There will also be a town-wide cleanup and other events; check the East Haddam News for details.

Audience member Ralph Chapell warned about the "one bottle meth lab" which is a dangerous byproduct of methamphetamine manufacture. It looks like a white liquid in a plastic bottle and may be on the roadside. It should not be opened.

c. Reserve Monitor Discussion– Mr. Sina
Nothing to report.

8. New Business (b)
   a. New Bills
   The following bill was submitted and approved:
   $52.63 from Shagbark for a chisel chain and a saw chain file
   Motion to approve the bill as presented
   Beard/Bernard – Passed Unanimously.

   b. Discussion from Commission members
   Mr. Gillis said that he got some lumber from Shagbark to build a bog bridge at Nichols Field, which should be on the next bill.

9. **Public Comment** (can be submitted via email to ccchair@easthaddam.org)
   None.

10. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 5 May 2026, 7:00 PM, Meeting Room #1

11. **Adjournment**
   Motion to adjourn at 7:55 PM
   Beard/Gillis – Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha Hansen
Recording Secretary