East Haddam Conservation Commission

August 3, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Approved September 7, 2021

1) Call to Order – Roll Call
   a) The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held at the Municipal Office Building on Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at 7:30 PM. The Chairperson being in the Chair.
   b) Roll Call at 7:35 PM. Bernie Gillis, Marilyn Gleeson, Gary Wilson and Thom Delventhal were present. John Olin, Charlotte Gelston and Susan Pagnano were absent.
   c) Guest: Eric Chamberland
2) Appointment of Alternates: No alternates were required to be appointed.
3) Approval of Agenda
   a) Approval of agenda as presented by Mr. Gillis; seconded by Mr. Wilson.
   b) Changes to the agenda was the removal of item 10, Executive Session and a correction to item 4 that the Minutes to be approved will be for 7/6/21.
   c) Motion to approve the amended agenda made by Mr. Gillis; seconded by Mr. Delventhal. Unanimously approved.
4) Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes for 7/6/2021.
   a) Motion to approve the 7/6/2021 minutes as presented by Mr. Gillis; seconded by Ms. Gelston.
   b) Changes/corrections to the minutes as follows:
      i) Section 5 a I 8: Correction to spelling: Wilk**in**son
      ii) Section 5 c vii: Correction to Dr. and Mrs. Mirer
   c) Motion to approve the 7/6/2021 minutes as amended by Mr. Gillis; seconded by Mr. Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.
5) Old Business
   a) Subcommittee updates
      i) Stewardship & Forestry Management
         (1) Mr. Gillis mentioned a tree was down on the ADA trail at Patrell. It had not totally fallen but he was able to clear it so people could pass through. It then did fall so he went back and was able to clear it totally.
         (2) Mr. Gillis received new maps of the Goodwin Trail from Eightmile and installed them at Patrell, Boot Rock and Eightmile Wildlife Area kiosks.
         (3) Mr. Gillis went to Sabine about 3 trees down on the red trail. The property needs a new sign because the one there has an old, incorrect map. Waiting for public works to do some work for a parking area so we can install a kiosk.
         (4) On July 25th, Mr. Gillis went to Hatch with Wendi MacNeil who put a group of high schoolers together. They spent 3 hours walking the trails; cleaned up some downed trees; cleared trails; a little more work needs to be done there but a great deal was accomplished with this group.
         (5) On July 26th, Mr. Gillis went to Shugrue with Mr. Olin and started building the bog bridge over the muddy areas. Mr. Ventres said IWWC OK'd moving forward with it. They went back a few days later to finish it. There are 2 sections of the bog bridge.
         (6) On July 30th, Mr. Gillis cleared trees down at Rose Farm that were reported by Mr. Chappell.
         (7) Mr. Gillis heard from Ms. Gelston that her neighbor wanted to mow portions of the Gelston CE. The neightbor brush mowed some of the trails (blue, red and part of green). Mr. Gillis inspected them and they were well done. Ms. Gelston wants a connection to Bogel but it is heavy with poison ivy. We can't run a trail through all that poison ivy. Consensus is that we have other priorities so we may have to table this for now.

(8) LeFebvre will be GPS'd next week with Ms. Gleeson and Mr. Gillis. A map for a kiosk will be created. If Mr. Delventhal is available he will join them on the GPS walk.
(9) Wendi MacNeil paints rocks and would like to set up rock gardens on some trails. "Take a rock; leave a rock." Mr. Gillis shared some examples and everyone was impressed.
(10) Mr. Gillis went to Urbanik. The group discussed the inside kiosk as that is where we would put the history of the property. We will replace the plexiglass with lexan. Ms. Gleeson shared what she found in doing her research, finding a blog from Julie Urbanik whose father sold the Urbanik property. Discussion ensued about Urbanik, sharing information with Mr. Chamberland.
(11) Ms. Gleeson shared that she attended the Eagle Scout ceremony for Aidan Behilo and presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation from EHCC. Mr. and Ms. Gelston also attended. She shared his project details with Mr. Chamberland.

ii) Outreach & Promotion
(1) The next EH News article for "Conservation Conversations" will be on Urbanik Reserve. It will be done by Ms. Gleeson
(2) Ms. Gleeson will be doing an article on the O'Connell Road Ext. property as well in EH News which will be timed to be just prior to the referendum.

b) Liaison Reports
i) IWWC updates
(1) Mr. Delventhal was not at this meeting as he had a conflict with another meeting, so no report was given.
ii) P&Z updates
(1) Banner Lodge/Black Birch is looking to convert the Club House to 20 units, 6 of which would be affordable housing. Will be continued in September
(2) A public hearing on seasonal conversion of homes and Moodus regulation changes will be held sometime in September.
(3) The building across from the Moodus market has submitted a subdivision proposal but not ready yet for P&Z review.
(4) P&Z moved forward the potential development of the 2.7 acres in EH Village. It agrees with the PoCD.
iii) Open Space updates
(1) The referendum for the O'Connell Road Ext. property will be in mid-September. It will be together with the Centerbridge referendum which was delayed because of the budget re-do.
(2) Mr. Gillis provided Mr. Chamberland with a brief overview of the Open Space property particulars.
iv) Eightmile Committee updates
(1) Mr. Gillis reported they are moving forward with RiverFest at Devil's Hopyard on October 16th. EHCC usually has a table at RiverFest and we will do so again. They are hoping to get Mohican Sun Museum to participate.
(2) The bridge repair on Rte. 82 is delayed. Probably due to the rain. Mitchell Farm has a music festival schedule that will be impacted.

c) Planting/existing garden updates
i) Mr. Wilson reported the 25 dogwoods at Harris doing well. One was stripped by caterpillars but should survive. They get watered about 2 time/week.
ii) Mr. Wilson removed 8 common milkweed from Harris to his home because the rabbits were eating them. He will maintain them until they can be moved to Patrell.
iii) Mr. Wilson bought more deer repellent and sprayed susceptible plants.

iv) Mr. Wilson reported the Black-eyed Susans and lower patch of Sunflowers and Jerusalem Artichokes had landscape fabric installed and were mulched. He also mulched all the plant groupings in the ADA garden. We should be able to remove the stakes next year and everything will look more natural. The one yard of landscape fabric remaining could be used for the milkweed when they get planted and maybe some other plants, if needed.
v) We shouldn't need to mulch the Azalea or Spicebush because they don't get a lot of competition and are doing well.
vi) Mr. Wilson cleaned up the trees at Lena and Hatch. The Hatch Mulberry were not in good shape so he pulled them out and is trying to bring them back at his home. One looks promising and although the others do not their roots are strong so they may survive.
vii) Mr. Wilson needs to get to Salmon River Overlook and assess the Red Mulberry and Chokecherry and pull invasives back from them.
viii) Mr. Wilson gave a talk at the Historical Society on planting a pollinator garden. About 12 people attended.
ix) We will probably need to get the 25 dogwoods in the ground in September; Urbanik is a good spot for half of them. The others might go along the trail to the summit at Hatch which has some wet area which is what they like.
x) Salmon River Overlook does get mowed. The fields get mowed by Public Works. There is no schedule for the mowing as it is done when they have time.
xi) The water tanks at Patrell are being utilized. We will need to drain and remove them and decide where to store them later in the year. A possible location is at the Public Works area off Mt. Parnassus.
xii) Mr. Wilson looked into additional mulch we need. He wondered about the chips at Harris.

6) New Business
   a) New Bills
      i) Shagbark-$13.99 for Deer repellent. Motion to pay by Mr. Delventhal; seconded by Mr. Gillis. Motion passed unanimously.
   b) Other: n/a
7) Public Comment-no comments were submitted by the public.
   a) Ms. Gleeson mentioned an email from someone, David Reik, who does blogs. He created some about some of our properties. He also creates interactive maps.
8) Next meeting: Tuesday, September 7, 2021.
9) Announcements and other discussion:
   a) Ms. Gleeson announced that she will be resigning from the Commission effective in November. The Commission needs to decide on a new Chair in the next few months. The Town will provide a Recording Secretary.
   b) Mr. Chamberland expressed an interest in joining the Conservation Commission. He was provided with information about joining and what's involved.
10) Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Delventhal; seconded by Mr. Wilson. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Marilyn Gleeson
Chair, East Haddam Conservation Commission