East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

MINUTES

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, Feb 1, 2022

1. Call to order - roll call
   a) The regular meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was convened in the Municipal Office Building Room #1 on Tuesday, Feb 1, 2022, at 7:10 pm. The Chairperson was in the Chair.
   b) Roll call at 7:10 pm -Gary Wilson, John Olin, Charlotte Gelson, Bernie Gillis, Susan Pagnano, Tyler Meek. Thom Delventhal arrived a few minutes late. Charlie Myers was absent.
   c) Alternate appointments (Tyler Meek appointed briefly, but Mr. Delventhal arrived before #2 began): None
2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:
   a) Approval of agenda: Mr Wilson stated that Mr. Olin would take a few extra minutes in Subcommittee Updates. Agenda approved as presented by Ms. Pagnano and seconded by Mr Gillis.
   b) Approval of Conservation Commission minutes Jan 4, 2021: Mr Wilson made a few corrections to #5, Old Business, noting that we should be consistent in use of members' surnames; Mr. Delventhal volunteered to do minutes at next meeting; Minutes amended and approved by motion of Mr Delventhal seconded by Mrs Gelston. All in favor. Brief discussion of Roberts Rules.
3. Old business
   a. Subcommittee updates
      i. Stewardship & Forestry Management
      a) Mr. Gillis reported that on January 6 he and Mr Olin worked on bridge in Roaring Brook Reserve; on 10th he and Mr. Olin roughed blue trail on Gelston Easement. On 13th, Mr Olin and he worked at Gelston property.
      b) On 14th Mr Gillis went to Lefevbre Reserve after Mr Ventres received a complaint of stubs on trail. A gentlemen fell but was unhurt. We must take care to cut stubs low.
      c) On 19th Mr Gillis and Mr Wilson went to Urbanik Reserve and placed in the kiosk a history brochure which Ms Gleeson prepared; and cleared some trees.
      d) On 21st, Mr Gillis went to Chapal Farm/ Boot Rock to clean up garbage at parking lot off Rt 82.
      e) On 26th Mr Gillis went to Gelston property with Cameron Beard and collected data for mapping. Mr Wilson asked about parking area at Gelston Easement. Mr Gillis answered that would be in Spring as a work party to place stone. Sign with map-holder is waiting on weather. Mrs Gelston spoke about the use of trails by neighborhood horseback riders and the absence of space for horse trailer parking. Mr Gillis said there were no plans for that at present (I believe meaning trailer parking). Parking would be for 2 or 3 cars.

      ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Wilson

a) Mr. Olin's article *Adapting to Change* published Jan 13 in EG News: No emails to the chair nor letters to editor as a result of the article. Mr Wilson stated, "people are more accepting of this now." An article has been submitted to Quarterly Events Magazine on Gelston Easement.

b) Stewardship Event in April. Planning might include work group in swampy area below Patrell pond for clearing Burning Bush and planting Elderberry in the Fall. Mr Delventhal expressed an interest in doing an article about CC properties. Mr Wilson will send Mr Delventhal record of what plantings have been written about.

Mr Gillis spoke about Eight Mile River promotional literature: Wander Our Watershed. Mr Wilson said our articles could incorporate a contact for the commission. Mr Gillis spoke about the Getaway business venture in East Haddam and the importance of getting information about our trail system to them, which apparently hasn't been done. He has spoken with the manager there (Allison Neeven). He displayed Ms. Gleeson's "River Fest" map, and said they could use something similar. Mr Wilson suggested we have maps available at Getaway. Mr Gillis noted that they would have a need for more general town information. 40,000 visitors a year are expected. Mr Wilson will reach out to them.

iii. Adapting to Change - Mr Olin

a) Mr Olin said that he would address Mr. Delventhal's call at the last meeting for a decision on whether the proposed subcommittee would be ongoing. Mr Olin gave an overview of the past three months of the process. He had handed out a sheet, Actions for Rural Climate Resilience, and went over the 10 actions with reference to what might apply to the town and various partners we might work with. Mr Wilson mentioned the decline of brook trout in the 8 Mile River, and asked about the role of the Sustainability Committee being set up by the First Selectwoman. Mr Olin emphasized #1 and #9 on the sheet, pertaining to natural resource inventories, climate change, and open space planning.

b) Mr Olin explained the purposes of the Sustainability Committee and Sustainable CT which would certify the town if it reaches certain goals. Mr Delventhal asked for more clarity on the difference between the Sustainability Committees' purview and the proposed subcommittee, and what Mr Olin was asking for. Mr Olin explained that the subcommittee would focus on what the municipality could do regarding the actions he had presented, and that it was up to the Conservation Commissioners to decide if they wished to do this. He also addressed Mr Meek's question at an earlier meeting about how the goals of the subcommittee would serve the Commission's goals in the POCD.

c) Mr Wilson asked that at the next meeting Mr Olin present several concrete items to tackle. Mr Olin responded that he would do that, and he asked for a vote on whether the group wanted to pursue this as an official subcommittee. Mr Gillis responded affirmatively. Mr Wilson asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Pagnano provided the motion to approve. Mr Delventhal seconded. All were in favor. None opposed. (Video minute 51.42) Mr Gillis clarified that Mr. Olin would be the head of the new subcommittee, as he is the head of the stewardship subcommittee. He asked the name of the subcommittee and Mr Olin replied, Climate Resilience. Mr. Wilson said he liked that. Mr Gillis iterated what Mr. Olin specifically might bring to the commission; educational materials as listed on the Actions sheet, and Mr Wilson added concrete actions and role of informing the public: things that they could do. Mr Gillis emphasized the educational component, and wished Mr Olin "good luck!"

b) Liaison Reports

ii. IWWC updates – Mr. Delventhal reported the meeting was cancelled

iii. P&Z updates – Mr Gillis reported the P&Z denied application for retail marijuana due to traffic and lack of parking space.

iv. Open Space updates – Mr Delventhal had no report

v. Eight Mile Committee updates – Mr Gillis reported on the committee's progress for moving to the Burnham Brook building to be used as a home base. The 8 Mile Committee supports the acquisition of the Hedlund Road property which is of geologic importance.

vi. Mr Olin will be liaison to Moodus Reservoir Preservation Group. Jan. meeting cancelled.

c) Planting/existing garden updates – Mr. Wilson spoke about planting seedlings at two properties: at Patrell cut Burning Bush and replace below ADA trail with Elderberry seedings which in the Spring would be put in the Community Garden and maintained over summer. Help is needed for watering plants twice a week. Mr Olin and Ms Pagnano said they are willing to help. Mr Wilson proposes purchasing 25 Elderberries (6-12 inches in size) at $1.62 apiece for 25 plants. Other place is Hatch Lot where Autumn Olive is prevalent. A stewardship project could be set up to cut down and replace with Northern Bayberry. Birds pick the female berries. The whole idea is to have a certain number of plants for good pollination to combat invasive species which don't support an insect population robust enough to feed young birds. Mr Wilson described this as a win-win situation vis-a-vis rooting out invasive species and helping wildlife. He recommended the larger size Bayberry for a total cost, including shipping, of between $ 160- $170. There was a motion for approval of 50 plants. Mr Delventhal so moved the motion, and Mr Olin seconded. Mr Wilson stated that we will never beat the invasive plants, but every year he wishes to plant 25 to 50 various native plants in our reserves/preserve. .Ms Pagnano offered to water plants. Mr Wilson will order plants.

4. New Business

a) New Bills: Laminated poster for Urbanik kiosk $25. Motion to approve by Ms Pagnano, seconded by Mr Delventhal. All in favor. Shagbark bill for $111.7 for 5# and 4# common nails and 4 4x4x10s. Mr Gillis said this was for post for rails on bridge, and nails for decking at Roaring Brook Reserve. Motion by Ms. Pagnano, seconded by Mr. Delventhal. All in favor. None opposed.

b) Mrs Gelston spoke about trail monitors and had put together a list of names and contacts of people she'd contacted. See the complete list appended to the minutes. The names on the list came from CC participation by the Lions Club set up by Sue Merrow, Mrs Gelson said in reply to Mr. Gillis' inquiry. Mr Wilson reported that he'd been in touch with Stu Palmer and Arnie Davis on this subject. Mrs Gelston presented Mr Wilson with papers referring to the distinction between preserve and reserve, and job descriptions for trail monitors. Mr Wilson announced that Mrs. Gelston has agreed to be the trail monitor coordinator. Mr Wilson said there are 14 people on the list, and that Joe Sina expressed his willingness to be a monitor. He further stated that this is a great way to get people involved in other activities such as stewardship projects. No one had volunteered to be a trail monitor for the Sabine Reserve, so Mr Delventhal offered to be one for that reserve. He also said he would be in contact with the monitors for Lefebvre and help there. Mrs Gelston said she'd received one report. There was general discussion about monitor duties and reporting.

c) Conferences, memberships: Mr Wilson said the membership funds will be kept at $300 per year. Mr Wilson would like CC to join Native Plant Trust ($150) per year) in Mass.; Another option is a national group, The Wild Ones, with a CT branch at Ct College Arboretum (($90 per yr.). Mr Gillis asked about CLCC (CT Land Conservation Council). We do not pay dues to it. Mr Wilson notes that the Chair of CC has a mailbox and we received something to CLCC. We gave them $300 in 2017. Mr Wilson will look into that. Mr Gillis spoke to sending members to conferences. Mr Wilson spoke about Coverts 3 day residence conference (state, forestry management). Our conference budget is $500. Mr Olin spoke about conferences on rural impact of climate change. Mr Olin reported on a request for membership information at the last meeting. Ms. Gleeson told Mr Olin that the CC is member of EH Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Eight Mile River group. Mr Wilson said he would reach out to these local conservation organizations. Mr Gillis said Dave Gumbart is the contact for the Nature Conservancy. Mr Gillis is a town representative to the Eight Mile.

d) Goals for 2022: Mr Wilson displayed several copies of DEEP's Wildlife Magazine that commissioners can share and enjoy. Mr Wilson presented members with a sheet which outlined the responsibilities of the CC. and contained a list of bullet points for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Major Service Level Goals. He noted that we'd already spoken about many of them, and that there can be further discussion of them at next meeting. He mentioned that he spoke with Mr Ventres about the matter in the last bullet point, our need for building and storage space, and was told that the CC could have a small building behind the Grange. A lock, and electric will be provided. The building can be used for storing equipment and perhaps building kiosks. Mr Wilson spoke about evaluating the need for additional equipment, i.e. a chipper. We might provide a service to the town after Christmas, he said; also for chipping invasive plants such as Burning Bush. Mr. Olin suggested that we consider the goal of creating a natural resources inventory including climate vulnerabilities, perhaps a single sheet detailing what can be found at our dozen or so reserves and the preserve. Mr Wilson noted that his sheet includes inventory of of plants and wildlife. Mrs Gelston referred to an old inventory and gave the chair a copy. Mrs Gelston gave Mr. Olin a copy of one of her inventories.

5. Public Comment. None except Mr Wilson received a message from Mr Harry Moroto who was concerned about residents spraying for mosquitoes. Mr Olin offered to follow up on this, and, at Mr Wilson's suggestion, offered to do an article on the topic.

6. Next meeting: Tue. Mar 1, 7:00 pm, Room #1

7. Announcements and other discussion: M Wilson announced that Tyler Meeks will be moving out of state, and expressed the Commission's thanks for his participation and offered best wishes.

8. Adjournment at 8:50 pm on motion by Mr. Gillis, seconded by Ms. Pagnano.

Minutes drafted by John Olin

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Wilson, Chair

East Haddam Conservation Commission