MINUTES
Conservation Commission Meeting
Town of East Haddam, March 1, 2022

1. Meeting called to order at 7:02
In attendance: Gary Wilson, Thom Delventhal, Charles Myers, John Olin, Bernie Gillis, Charlotte Gelston

2. Alternate Mr. Myers appointed in Ms. Pagnano's absence.

3. Motion to approve agenda: Mr. Delventhal; second: Mr. Myers. Unanimous approval.

4. Discussion of CC minutes from 2/1/22. Several small amendments noted by Mr. Olin, original producer of said minutes, who will make corrections.

Motion to approve 2/1/22 minutes as amended: Mr. Gillis; second: Mr. Delventhal. Unanimous approval.

5. Updates:

On **Feb. 4**, Mr. Gillis added maps to the kiosk at Davidson. On **Feb. 8**, Mr. Gillis spent some time determining where the CC's DR mower had been stored after last season — and found it (near the food bank)! On **Feb. 9**, Mr. Gillis, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Delventhal spent 2 hours working on the bridge at Roaring Brook. Shagbark had been out of the lumber needed to complete it, however, so on the **11**th, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Gillis returned and finished. On **Feb. 12**, Mr. Gillis spent 2 hours at the Gelston Easement clearing the blue trail. On **Feb. 14**, he did the same at Davidson. After a windstorm, Sabine Reserve monitor, Dave Carbo, had reported some downed trees on the red and white trails. Mr. Gillis spent 90 minutes clearing those on **Feb. 19**. On **Feb. 21**, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Wilson returned for the same amount of time to also clear the blue and orange trails at Sabine. On **Feb. 24**, Mr. Gillis installed a new sign and map holder at the Florida Rd. Parking area of Roaring Brook Preserve. The East Haddam Land Trust sponsored a walk of the Patrell Property on **Feb 26**. Mr's Olin and Gillis spent time clearing the trails there before the walk. Mr. Gillis also spent time researching local geological history in order to lead the walk. 10 people attended. Mr. Gillis noted that the Handicap sign needs to be re-installed at Patrell.

Mr. Wilson's update on promotion and outreach: An article about the Gelston Easement appeared in the Winter Events Magazine making an unbroken string of Event magazines going back a few years with articles written by the CC. Mr. Wilson asked members to consider what we might contribute to the Spring edition. Mr. Olin and Mr. Delventhal agreed to collaborate on something about Sabine Reserve and the Moodus Reservoir.

After consideration and research, Mr. Wilson determined that April 23rd would be ideal for a stewardship event at Patrell. Through discussion, the committee agreed that the event should take place from 10am to noon on that day. The CC would provide lunch for volunteers. Mr. Wilson will have a load of mulch delivered that will be used to stifle invasives in several areas. The Pollinator Garden will be weeded and the area below the pond will be prepared to have elderberry planted there in autumn. There was some discussion about the best way to get rid of invasives. Mr. Olin had seen something about burning the roots with a propane torch. Mr. Gillis said the CC has a torch, but Mr. Wilson didn't think that was practical. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Gillis talked about root pulling mechanical devices and between them will endeavor to ensure that there is one there on the 23rd. Mr. Delventhal will write two articles about the event to help raise awareness and increase volunteerism.

Motion to hold stewardship event at Patrell on April 23rd: Mr.Delventhal; second: Mrs. Gelston. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Olin's update on climate resilience: Last December, Gov. LaMont approved $5 million for CT Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation's *Resilient CT 2.0 Project*. On Feb. 23, EH First selectwoman, Irene Haines, Mr. Olin and Mr. Gillis attended a webinar by David Murphy, an environmental Engineer and the driver of *Resilient CT 2.0.* CIRCA will collaborate with Southeastern CT Council of Government(SCCOG) and River COG. Plans can be viewed on-line at River COG/plans. One of its objectives is to promote sound flood plans. Flood, heat and wind are top concerns of RC 2.0 and one of the outcomes will be a Climate Change Vulnerability Index for the state. The CCVI for East Haddam should be available in April. Mr. Murphy suggested beginning with small groups which might include the EH First Selectwoman as well as EH land-use administrator, Jim Ventres. Mr. Olin and First Selectwoman Haines met after the webinar to discuss goals for the East Haddam Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Olin also discussed these issues with Pete Govert, President of the East Haddam Land Trust and will reach out to Katie Lund, CIRCA Director of Engagement, in planning a meeting to pursue Mr. Murphy's suggestions. Such a meeting might take place on March 8. attendees of the meeting will look at a hazard management plan that is developed in concert with FEMA. A map of 2021 flood concerns is already available at the River COG site as well as part of East Haddam's plan of Conservation and Development. In discussion arising from Mr. Olin's update, Mr. Gillis stated that East Haddam is already employing rain gardens and detention basins.

Mr. Delventhal's updated the Commission on IWWC: Several private residents presented plans for renovations, improvements or additions. None impact the CC. The IWWC is an extremely thoughtful, thorough and efficient body. All applications were processed with attention to detail but very quickly. Of interest, perhaps, is the application by Consumer Reports to add a track on their property for the testing of autonomous vehicles. A field walk is being scheduled and the process for approval may extend over the next couple months.

Mr. Gillis' update on P & Z: Nothing of interest except, perhaps, that the Planning and Zoning Commission is considering new regulations for campgrounds.

Mr. Delventhal's update on the Open Space Committee: The whole meeting was in executive session so no details can be discussed publicly at this time. However, a new property with exciting possibilities has come up. More to come.

Mr. Gillis' update on the Eightmile Committee: Once again the move to the offices on Burnham Brook Preserve has been delayed.

Mr. Wilson's update on planting and existing gardens: Mr. Wilson has ordered the plants previously agreed to by the CC. There are 25 bayberry and 25 elderberry. The seedlings will be planted in containers at the CC plot at the Community Garden at Harris where they can be watered easily and grow over the summer. These will be transplanted in the autumn. The bayberry will go in at the Hatch Reserve where the autumn olive (invasives) are along the trail to the vista. The elderberry will go below the pond at Patrell.

Mrs. Gelston's update on Reserve Monitors: After the recent windstorm Mrs. Gelston had an opportunity to utilize her newly created monitor network. She sent out an email asking monitors for reports and learned of issues at Sabine, Chapal, Patrell and Dean. Responding to the first three required enough time that Mr. Gillis has not yet had time to get to Dean.

6. a. Mr. Wilson presented a bill (for the bayberry and elderberry bushes plus shipping) of $187.80

Motion to pay the above bill: Mrs. Gelston; second: Mr. Olin. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Wilson presented a bill (for two signs—the main blue signs with icons—2 signs per property, for Roaring Brook Preserve) for $430.

Motion to pay the above bill: Mrs. Gelston; second: Mr. Myers. Unanimous approval.

b. Mr. Wilson advocated that the CC join the group Wild Things. The group is connected to Conn College. Mr. Olin advocated that the CC also join the Moodus Reservoir Preservation Group. He will be attending their regular meeting on Tuesday March 8th and will report what he learns at the next CC meeting.

7. Mr. Wilson was alerted by DEEP that a controlled burn would take place in the town. It is hoped that that will rejuvenate the native grasses and encourage the return of a scrub oak and pitch pine habitat on the overlook where it is to take place.

Mr. Wilson read an email from Tanya Bourgoin who represents The Friends of Machimoodus State Park. She invited the CC to participate in their “Spring Fling” event on March 20th. Mr. Olin volunteered to man a table there.

Mr. Olin announced that when he met with First Selectwoman Irene Haines, she encouraged him to develop a plan to add storage, power and water to the community garden at Harris Property. There was believed to be a hand-dug well outside the western enclosure of the garden. Indeed, the well exists and has been located.

Motion to adjourn: Mr. Delventhal; second: Mr. Gillis

adjourned 8:32

Minutes drafted by Mr. Delvental.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Wilson, Chair
East Haddam Conservation Commission