**East Haddam Open Space Committee**
**Land Use Office**

**Special Meeting Minutes**
**May 22, 2023**

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Open Space Committee was called to order by Mr. Brady at 7:31 PM at the Municipal Office Complex.

2. Attendance

**Members Present:** Will Brady (HDC), Mary Augustiny (IWWC), Harvey W. Thomas (BOF), , Thom Delventhal (CONS), Susan Kinsman (P&Z), Andrew Compagno (EHLT)
**Members Absent:** Tracey Ginder Delventhal (BOE), Theresa Govert (BOS), Travis Goodie (REC) Jessica Stone (EDC)
**Also Present:** James Ventres (Land Use Administrator)

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion by Mr. Thomas to accept the July 2023 minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Delventhal and unanimously approved.

4. Bills

No bills.

5. Discussion

A. Kronberg property Open Space Grant

Mr. Ventres provided an update that East Haddam received the Open Space grant. $243,100 has been awarded, which is 65% of the appraised value that was going to remain in open space, and there are 20 additional acres for the Middle School use in the future which brings the Town's share to $270,900. This needs to go to Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and back to Board of Selectmen before it goes out to for a referendum. The State recommended we close the property within 18-24 months.

Mr. Thomas noted that the budget vote failed, and the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen spoke about the failure a bit. The target date is to have a budget referendum on July 11th. To get all the necessary pieces together to put the vote for the open space also on July 11th, could take longer. As such, Mr. Thomas suggested the referendum on the Kronberg property and additional bond matter be treated separately from the budget referendum.

Discussion ensued about having the referendum sometime in the summer but not as part of the general election vote.

To meet the DEEP requirements, there is additional work needed to be done on several properties: Lord Wellington needs trails, and the sign on Zelsnicky was stolen again and needs to be replaced and the parking area for the Dean property needs additional work to make its boundaries clearer. Mr. Ventres has provided the information to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Ventres provided a copy of the package on the property and bond authorization talking points.

B. Bond Authorization

Mr. Ventres noted that the bond authorization is low now at $214,000. The last bond authorization was $5M and with everyone else's cooperation with the Town (Nature Conservancy, East Haddam Land Trust, and others), the original $5M was parlayed to $18M worth of funding secured in the past 20 years for open space.

There has not been any work to determine what a reasonable new bond authorization amount would be yet. The Board of Finance was favorably disposed to authorize a new amount for a referendum and were quite impressed with the ability to get $18M with the use of $5M original bonding.

The DEEP has also opened a new grant for the fall, and with the various kinds of funding available they are trying to offer 65% matching as long as the land qualifies. \

Discussion ensued related to the amount of funding that should be considered for the new round of open space bonding. Mr. Thomas is meeting with the Board of Selectmen this week and will discuss the possibility of a new bond and the amount that they think they would authorize for a town vote.

6. Adjournment

***Mr. Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Augustiny and unanimously approved.***

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary