East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
Municipal Office Building Room #1

1. Call to order – Called to order at 7:02 p.m.
   In attendance: Joe Sina, Gary Wilson, Bernie Gillis, Cameron Beard, Alan Ponanski (arrived 7:35 p.m.), David Walls, Charlotte Gelston, Susan Pagnano, Amalia Shaltiel, Tanya Bourgoin, and Ruth Ziobron.

   Absent: John Olin

2. Alternate appointments (if necessary)
3. Approval of agenda
   Motion to approve the agenda.
   Gillis/Pagnano Passed Unanimously

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes January 2, 2024
   Motion to approve the meeting minutes.
   Gillis/Wilson Passed Unanimously

5. General announcements
   - Received thank you from Connecticut Land Conservation Council for donation.
   - Spring Fling is scheduled for March 17th. Volunteers are welcome to help manage the table.
   - The CLCC event will be held April 23rd. Registration is not open yet; information was circulated about workshops and roundtables. Attendance for the event will be based on interest and registration costs.
   - Mr. Sina brought up the DEEP Urban Forestry Program grant program in case anyone has an interest.
   - Jim Ventres-Landuse Administrator is handling ATV activity on trails. The gate leading to the Davidson Trail was broken on the hinges.

6. Presentations from the public-There were none.
   a. Sustainability Committee 2024-25 Goals (Amalia Shaltiel)
      - Ms. Shaltiel reviewed an overview of the Sustainability Committee's goals in relation to the Conservation Commission.
      - A background on the Sustainable CT organization and its role in assisting towns with sustainability goals was discussed.
      - The Sustainability Committee has achieved bronze certification and is striving for silver certification with a submission deadline of April 10th.
      - There is an emphasis on documentation of town efforts, educational initiatives, and community engagement.

- Ms. Shaltiel proposed a closer collaboration between the Sustainability Committee and the Conservation Commission.
- She asked for a liaison to the Sustainability Committee from the Conservation Commission to facilitate information sharing and joint initiatives.
- Forest management plans for properties were discussed.
- The Sustainability Committee has documented the town's open space plan and conducted a natural resource and wildlife inventory, utilizing state inventories as a starting point. They are also keen on managing woodlands and urban forests, addressing invasive species, enhancing pollinator pathways, and improving outdoor access for all.
- Ms. Shaltiel offered assistance with fundraising efforts and coordinating volunteer activities to support conservation projects.

7. Old business
   a. Subcommittee updates

i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis
- Trail maintenance activities and issues were discussed.
- Vandalism and ATV problems are being handled by Jim Ventres-Land Use Administrator. Plans for potential solutions were discussed. A reminder was posted on the CC Facebook page.
- A proposal for a spring work party to address trail issues was discussed.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Wilson
- Blue bird article was published in the Events Magazine.
- A letter to the East Haddam News about no ATVs on trails and vandalism issues will be written for publication.

iii. Climate Resilience –Mr. Olin relayed by Mr. Gillis
- CIRCA's environmental engineering study for Succor Brook is underway, covering the stream from Porges Road to the Connecticut River. They plan to have a consultant ready for a kickoff meeting in March.

   b. Liaison Reports

i. IWWC Updates-Mr. Walls
- Nothing new to report.

ii. P&Z updates – Mr. Gillis
- Nothing new to report.

iii. Open Space updates-Mr. Sina
- Discussion mainly revolved around increasing voter turnout for the referendum vote. The Open Space Commission will provide past articles that they have published explaining the benefits of donating land to open space conservation, that we can update and publish in the future.

iv. Eightmile Committee updates – Mr. Beard
- Funding for invasive species at the Ayers property has been requested. There was some debate within the Eight Mile River board about its use leading to a presentation by conservation experts on the benefits of targeted herbicide application. The matter is still under discussion.

- Invasive species management strategies including the use of an aquatic machine and the potential use of goats for browsing were discussed. Commission members discussed the effectiveness of various methods including controlled burns and mechanical removal.

c. Planting/existing garden updates – Mr. Wilson
   - Mr. Wilson suggested that the Salmon River Outlook might be a suitable location for planting apple trees and will contact Robert Hagland. The commission agreed that it could be a beneficial initiative.
   - Mr. Wilson discussed efforts to collect cherry seeds, mentioning that he had harvested around 100 seeds near his property and had stored them in the refrigerator for about five months. He will now plant the seeds in wet peat moss to continue the germination process with plans to eventually transfer them to containers for growth.
   - Mr. Wilson highlighted the importance of finding a suitable location for the cherry trees, considering their eventual growth and need for protection from deer.
   - Securing a community garden plot for the cherry plants and organizing a watering schedule was discussed.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion –Ms. Gelston
   - Ms. Gelston provided updated trail conditions at the Gelston property reporting issues such as fallen trees and muddy spots.

8. New Business

   a. New bills

   Motion to approve the bill(s) as presented:
   - $272.25 Stem Embroidery for T-Shirts.

   Wilson/Walls Passed Unanimously

   b. Discussion from Commission members
   - Commission members discussed the creation of an open space map. Suggestions were made to make the map available digitally through QR codes and to explore options for displaying it at various locations in town. Commission members discussed the idea of adding signage promoting the town's open spaces and discussed the use of QR codes for trail maps.
   - 2024-2025 goals were reviewed.

9. Public Comment (can be sent via email to: ccchair@easthaddam.org) -There was none.

10. Next meeting: Tues. 05 March 2024 7:00 pm, Room #1

11. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:29 p.m.
Gillis/Beard Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary