East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 5, 2024
Municipal Office Building Room #1

1. Call to order – Called to order at 7:00 p.m.
   In attendance: Joe Sina, Bernie Gillis, Cameron Beard, Alan Ponanski, David Walls, Charlotte Gelston, Susan Pagnano, Barry Bernard, Joann Bernard, and Ruth Ziobron.

   Absent: John Olin and Gary Wilson.

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

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes February 6, 2024
   Motion to approve the meeting minutes changing the dates of the following:
   - Spring Fling is scheduled for March 17th.
   - The CLCC event will be held on March 23rd.

   Gillis/Pagnano Passed Unanimously

5. General announcements
   - Commission members discussed the potential use of QR codes for kiosks and trailheads. Emphasis would be on trails with good cell service.
   - Mr. Sina shared that he had attended the Board of Selectman meeting to review next year's budget. There is no increase.
   - Consider signage for larger preserves on State roads. Department of Transportation approval is necessary. Jim Ventres-Land Use Office will be contacted for signage on Town roads.
   - An article will be published about no ATVs on trails. Signage has been purchased. Vandalism and ATV problems are being handled by Jim Ventres-Land Use Administrator.
   - Robert Hagland is interested in planting apple trees in the spring.
   - Machimoodus is planning controlled burns. Date TBD.
   - Spring Fling is scheduled for March 17th.
   - The CLCC event will be held on March 23rd.

- There may be a work party at the Gelston Preserve to address issues with the red trail.

6. Presentations from the public- There was none.

7. Old business
   a. Subcommittee updates

i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis
- Detailed updates on trail maintenance activities, including marking new trails and addressing fallen trees,
- A new trail was blazed on the Lena Preserve.
- Vandalism and ATV problems are being handled by Jim Ventres-Land Use Administrator.
- A new kiosk was installed at Roaring Brook at the end of Florida Road.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Wilson-no updates.

iii. Climate Resilience –Mr. Olin relayed by Mr. Gillis
- There will be a kickoff meeting with CIRCA's consultant to discuss the lower Succor Brook study.

   b. Liaison Reports

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

ii. P&Z updates – Mr. Gillis
- Forestry operations will now fall under the Inland Wetland Commission's purview, transitioning from planning and zoning.

iii. Open Space updates-Mr. Sina
- Nothing new to report.

iv. Eightmile Committee updates – Mr. Beard
- Nothing new to report.

v. Sustainability-Mr. Sina

- Mr. Sina volunteered to be a liaison on the Sustainability Committee. The Sustainability Committee is officially a town advisory committee by agreement between the town and Sustainable CT. Currently, they are working on a campaign to provide energy assessments through a third party for heat pumps through Energize CT. The Sustainability Committee is planning their yearly repair café and working on informational public outreach regarding composting. The Sustainability Committee wants to partner with the Conservation Commission to analyze forest tree coverage. Mr. Sina noted plant and animal inventory was a part of the Conservation Commission's responsibilities.

- Forest management plans were discussed. Mr. Beard suggested adding Forest Management Plans to next month's agenda for further discussion.

c. Planting/existing garden updates – Mr. Wilson
    - Nothing new to report.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion –Ms. Gelston
    - Mrs. Gelston shared reserve monitor trail work.

8. New Business

a. New bills

Motion to approve the bill(s) as presented:
- Essex Printing invoice #35622 dated 3/2/2024 for $120.00.
- Essex Printing invoice #35614 dated 3/2/2024 for $234.26.
- Shagbark Lumber Statement dated 2/20/2025 for $276.07
- SmartSign Order #SMT-688204 dated 2/22/2024 for $325.01
- 2024 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference for $85.00

Gillis/Walls Passed unanimously

b. Discussion from Commission members
- Commission members proposed exploring the idea of adding messages about open space to town entry signs and considering the long-term sustainability of managing the town's expanding open space.
- Mr. Beard stated the increasing amount of open space managed by the Conservation Commission in acreage was straining the Commission's resources and volunteers. He stated Mr. Gillis managed well but questioned whether it was sustainable in the long term. He suggested future municipal budgets have a dedicated line item, whether under the Conservation Commission or another division for open space stewardship. This could involve hiring dedicated personnel to ensure trail maintenance and the implementation of management plans, which require more resources than volunteers alone can provide.
- Mr. Beard highlighted a project called CT Trail Finder, which catalogs various trails across the state. He stated it could benefit the Commission to explore getting trails listed on this platform.
- Public Works will be contacted to repair the pipe next to the dam at the Urbanik property.
- Mrs. Gelston resigned from her Commission seat. Commission members thanked her for her many years of service.

Motion to approve Barry Bernard's application as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission.

Ponanski/Walls Passed unanimously.

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

10. Next meeting: Tues. 02 April 2024 7:00 pm, Room #1

11. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:07 p.m.
Gillis/Beard Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary