East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Municipal Office Building, Room #1

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Bernie Gillis.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments

Members Present: Joe Sina via YouTube, Bernie Gillis, Barry Bernard, Alan Ponanski, and Cameron Beard.
Members Absent: John Olin, David Walls, and Susan Pagnano.
Guests:

Alternate Appointments:

3. Approval of Agenda
Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Bernard/Ponanski – Passed Unanimously.

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes from August 5, 2025
Motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Beard/Bernard – Passed Unanimously.

5. Chair's Updates
The chair provided updates, noting that QR codes have been posted on all kiosks and properties, and all membership terms have been renewed. A report was received about a possible one-year-old bear cub seen near Mount Parnassus by Millington Green.

6. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates
i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis
Mr. Gillis reported trail maintenance work included weed whacking, mowing, and

removing a downed tree. QR codes replaced a map holder at one site. A large tree needing removal was noted but not urgent. A box turtle was found and documented. Signposts and trail signs were adjusted or flagged due to bees. Brush was cleared in several areas. Hunting signs still need to be posted.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Sina
Mr. Sina noted that recent articles had been published on Monarchs in the East Haddam News and Hatch in Events Magazine. He is evaluating various trail apps during outdoor activities and plans to write a comparison of them. Others were encouraged to share content ideas. Riverfest will be discussed later in the meeting.

iii. Climate Resilience – Mr. Olin
There was no report.

b. Liaison Reports
i. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls
There was no report.

ii. P&Z Updates – Mr. Gillis
There was no report.

iii. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina
Open space updates included a proposed land exchange involving conservation easements and a trail connection, set to go to a special town meeting in October. A second property near Roaring Brook and Sheepskin Hollow was recommended for purchase despite already having a conservation easement. Potential for future bridge and trail connections was discussed.

iv. Eightmile Committee Updates – Mr. Beard
Mr. Gillis reported that Riverfest is scheduled for October 18 from 1–4 PM, and the commission will need to staff a table or tent. Goodwin Trail is being added to the Connecticut Trail Finder. The East Haddam Land Trust has a bike event on October 12th.

v. Sustainability Committee – Mr. Ponanski
Mr. Ponanski reported the Sustainability Committee is close to achieving gold certification due to strong collaboration among town organizations. They are also supporting a monthly market and working on a community-wide online calendar to centralize event information.

c. Planting/Existing Garden Updates – Mr. Sina
Gary has been working on plantings and invasive removal at Patrell and Salmon River Overlook. Mugwort and tree of heaven continue to be issues, with ongoing but limited control efforts. The group plans to transplant trees from the community garden to Hatch on September 27th and will discontinue the garden afterward. Tarps from the site will be

reused at Salmon River to suppress invasives near the gazebo, though long-term maintenance remains a concern.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion – Mr. Sina
Reserve monitors are needed.

7. New Business

a. New Bills
The following bill(s) were submitted and reviewed:
$7.29 to Shagbark for supplies.

Motion to approve the bill(s)
Ponanski/Beard – Passed Unanimously.

b. Discussion from Commission Members
There was no discussion.

8. Public Comment
No public comments were received via email or in person.

9. Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 7:00 PM in Room #1.

10. Adjournment
Motion to adjourn at 7:55 PM.
Beard/Ponanski – Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary