

**East Haddam  
Conservation Commission**

May 6, 2008

Adopted June 3, 2008

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at 7:06PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, Kathy Klein, Peggy Carlson, Paul Stuhlman, TJ Tarbox – departed at 8:10pm. Others present: Emmett Lyman.

2. Approval of Agenda

Order of business was changed to accommodate Mr. Tarbox who is recusing himself from the Hanks subdivision discussion.

Motion by Mr. Tarbox to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 4/1/08

Motion by Mr. Stuhlman to approve the minutes. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved. Mr. Tarbox recused himself from the vote due to the Hanks' subdivision information.

4. Old Business

a. Plans for Patrell walk on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Mrs. Mackinnon suggested that a workgroup meeting be held the week after Memorial Day to plan for the trail walk. Signs and directions must be provided to participants since it's not a well-known property. As Mr. Stuhlman is stewarding the walk, he will call Barbara and Rob Smith of EHLT to discuss partnering with them on both the hike and the boundary marking. Mr. Stuhlman will talk with Mrs. Mackinnon as well to get her feedback and update the group via email with his findings. Mrs. Klein will help Mr. Stuhlman with the logistics of the hike. A couple of things are required: A hike leader, large-scale publicity (announce it at the East Haddam Environmental Roundtable, post it in front of the Grange Hall), whether pets can be allowed (Mr. Stuhlman will discuss with Rob Smith who knows the property, post flyers in schools and churches). The public should be made aware that the hike is free, family-oriented, guided and has a short duration (Rob Smith is the best person to determine hike duration). The hike is scheduled for 11am and the CC stewardship portion will begin at 9am. The CC stewardship entails learning about marking the trail. Related to trail marking, the Patrell property has a special situation with a private property owner within the parcel. There's only one area of concern, where the paved area of the trail goes near the private property, which can be solved by painting footprints on the paved trail to show people where the trail proceeds. As long as the boundaries are marked clearly between the Patrell and the private property, the property owner is willing to allow people to traverse her property if needed. To

clearly mark boundaries, a A2 survey map and a topographical map are needed. Mr. Tarbox will work on getting these items for the CC stewardship work party.

b. Procedures for marking boundaries on open space

There is no record in CC archives on instructions on marking boundaries. Rob Smith has shared the EHLT authorized instructions for marking boundaries. Mrs. Matthew inquired as to their origin; they are from the State of Connecticut. Mrs. Matthew did a number of searches to find specific boundary marking procedures but was unsuccessful. As a commission, guidelines and procedures are needed on the proper way to mark boundaries. Mrs. Matthew will provide the EHLT guidelines to the group. Paint, galvanized nails and plastic tape (to get a line of sight) are needed for any boundary marking work party, Mr. Tarbox will get the supplies.

Mr. Tarbox moved to accept the guidelines outlined by the EHLT. Mr. Stuhlman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

c. Review of Hanks subdivision application

Mr. Tarbox recused himself from the discussion and departed the meeting. Most of the CC members were unable to conduct their research/review of the materials provided. Mrs. Matthew has a summary and will provide that material to Mrs. Klein. Mrs. Matthew provided an update on the subdivision application. There was a change in the subdivision plan which conformed more to the guidelines for wetlands. There was some additional testimony from Jody Chase and another expert concerning vernal pools. The testimony was controversial and the neighborhood expert has different findings. The hearing has been scheduled to continue on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Matthew will send an email around to the CC regarding the next meeting; it would be advantageous for the CC members to attend. Mrs. Matthew has learned more about the Environmental Review Team (ERT) and proposed that the CC request an ERT for this subdivision given the controversy surrounding the expert testimony. An ERT would be an unbiased third-party that could review the plan. Due to the timeframes of the Inland/Wetlands committee, the CC would need to move quickly to request an ERT if the commission wants to offer Inland/Wetlands information. However, it was noted that Penny Sharpe has been hired by the town to provide comment and expert testimony on the subdivision and therefore is an unbiased third-party. Mr. Lyman suggested talking to Mr. Ventres to determine the best route to use an ERT for this subdivision plan and if there's still time to get an ERT requested and conducted. Mrs. Matthew will also discuss with Mr. Dill, the chairman of Inlands/Wetlands, the use of an ERT. Mrs. Matthew will also discuss the timing of an ERT with the UCONN Extension center in Haddam and their focus, i.e., is it for Inland/Wetlands only or for P&Z as well?

Mr. Stuhlman made a motion for Mrs. Matthew to contact the UCONN Extension center to more fully understand the scope of the ERT and timing and if an ERT can operate within the established timeframe outlined by P&Z, then Mrs. Matthew will reach out to Inland/Wetlands Commission to let them know that the CC is recommending it. Ms. Carlson seconded and was unanimously approved.

5. Confirmation of next meeting: June 3, 2008, at the River House at 7:00pm.

6. Other discussion

Mrs. Klein asked about the Photo Contest that was discussed at previous meetings and asked to discuss it again at a future meeting.

Regarding the Nichols Road town-owned property, the gate to the old town dump off of Trowbridge Road is still open. There are two gates: an old wire cable and an aluminum gate that requires a lock. During the property marking work party, the CC discovered that the gate was open and requested that it be closed. At this date, the gate is still open. The committee requested that Mr. Lyman discuss the matter at the upcoming Selectmen meeting to get the matter resolved.

Mr. Tarbox visited several residents to ask that they act as property stewards for the Urbanik property; they have agreed.

Mr. Tarbox has also created a list of needed items that the Land Use office or the CC needs to purchase. These items will be reviewed and discussed at a future meeting.

The Salmon River Watershed Conservation Compact Ceremony will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am; all are invited to attend.

The timing of the CC meetings will be discussed at a future meeting as several members requested moving the meeting to begin at 7:30pm.

Each group invited to the May 10<sup>th</sup> East Haddam Roundtable has been asked to provide a small presentation on their group's activities to determine if there's overlap and where support is needed. The meeting is really an interface opportunity for a number of groups in town to get to know each other. All CC members are attending except for Mrs. Mackinnon.

Mrs. Matthew provided an Open Space Committee meeting which reviewed the criteria for open space. Shortly following that meeting, the EHLT hosted a talk with a conservation-oriented attorney who provided some very important comments that Mrs. Mackinnon requested Mrs. Matthew provide to the CC. He spoke about not only choosing properties that are large parcels connected with other green spaces but also focused on highlighting and preserving natural characteristics. He also noted that sometimes the best people to approach the land owners are those groups not associated with the town who gets involved in the acquisition process. Mrs. Mackinnon suggested the CC help look at the town's natural resources that could be preserved and get involved in approaching the land owners to collaborate with them on a process of protecting natural resources.

Regarding Mr. Stuhlman's appointment to Inland/Wetlands, the decision has been tabled pending further investigation by town officials.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Stuhlman to adjourn, second by Mrs. Klein, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins  
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Salmon River Watershed Conservation Compact Ceremony
- The Habitat, Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc.