

**TOWN OF HADDAM
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM
WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Submitted at the 29 March 2017 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

A	Walter Bragoni, Vice Chairman
A	Ian Gibson
X	Mardi Hanson-d'Alessandro
X	Gail Reynolds, Chairman
X	Tom Worthley
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Reynolds, chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Mardi Hanson moved to approve the 22 February 2017 agenda as submitted. Tom Worthley second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Tom Worthley moved to approve the 25 January 2017 minutes as submitted. Mardi Hanson second. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Old Business

a. Open Space

Mrs. Reynolds reported Liz Glidden, town planner, has requested funding in the 2017-2018 budget to finish the mapping of the easements.

Mrs. Reynolds also reported Mrs. Glidden had her baby. It's a boy! Congratulations!

Mrs. Batzner reported a conservation easement on the former Wytas property (subdivision) has been waived as the new owners have purchased both lots and have been before Planning and Zoning (P&Z) requesting the two lots be merged as one and the easement waived. Mr. Worthley asked who owned the easement, because if another entity owned it other than the town, they would need to have their approval. The waiver will need to be noted on the easement mapping.

b. Budget

Beaver Ledges – Mrs. Reynolds reported she did speak to the Haddam Land Trust in regard to the Commission's willingness to help with some funding for a specific project at Beaver Ledges. Land Trust members were very receptive; however, there is no specific project at this time. The Land Trust is to consider the matter and report back to the Commission no later than May.

c. Plan of Conservation of Development (POCD) – Public Forum - Update

Mr. Worthley reported the POCD public workshop (12/01/2016) was well attended and held similar to a charrette; and the results from the workshop were to be presented at a follow up meeting. Mrs. Reynolds reported she attended the follow up POCD meeting (01/24/2017) and committee members were tasked with bringing back to the commissions the Action Steps from the 2007 POCD for review (discussed at the 01/25/2017 Conservation Commission meeting).

The Commission reviewed/discussed the Action Steps (sent via email by Mrs. Reynolds) as follows:

1) Maintain the Woodland and Rural Characteristics of Haddam's Natural Landscape (page 130) - (Items 1-6 are on-going; no specific projects). Spoke about identifying area(s) for industrial zoning (look at where abutting towns have industrial zones to possibly place two like zones side by side), mapping agricultural soils and making them priority areas, look beyond town boundaries in terms of regional conservation, and discussed P&Z making time to do some planning and not the town planner. Where there is not a clear action item, is there some way to outline the threats to items that are trying to be maintained and come up with a strategy to address those threats.

2) Protect the Prime Features of Haddam's Natural Landscape (page 130) – Mrs. Reynolds stated she would like to add "agriculture" to Item 8; however, after a brief discussion, the wording "other crops and livestock (large and small)" to be suggested. Mr. Worthley asked if it's identified what are prime features. Mrs. Reynolds stated there is a section, but it's termed differently. Mr. Worthley suggested the terminology be matching. Item 7 – Discussed including wording in regard to stream monitoring for water quality, zoning regulations to prevent channelization of streams, and storm water runoff to promote infiltration rather than direct discharge into local waterways should be considered, and suggested incentives for low impact design and education for rain gardens and riparian buffers be offered.

3) Enhance the Visual Appearance and Vitality of Haddam's Multiple Village Centers (page 131) – Ms. Hanson addressed the following: Item 1 - Infrastructure is mentioned, but is not in place. Mrs. Reynolds stated it alludes to where it may be. Item 3 – Felt this is a critical item and would like to see it reinforced. Item 5 – Item should be on-going rather than a 1-3 year project.

4) Maintain and Enhance the Contributions of Historic Resources to Haddam's Community Character – Item 1 – Ms. Hanson asked if this action is empowering the Historical Society even more or if this is their job. Mrs. Reynolds stated it would be the Historical Society's job. Mr. Worthley suggested whoever prepares the final document that they acknowledge that some entities listed in here may not have authority or official standing, but may be targeted as prospective volunteers or advisory.

5) Spur Additional Economic Development Opportunities Through Infrastructure Enhancement and Other Methods (page 132) – Ms. Hanson thought these items should be on-going.

6) Coordinate Open Space, Parks, etc. (page 134) – Mrs. Reynolds suggested wording to promote funding at the state level and the local level (tax levy) as well as the conservation easements (evaluate the process of granting them, marking them, and enforcing them). Mr. Worthley stated in recent years concrete monumentation for wetlands is requested, but unclear how well they're enforced. Discussion followed in regard to the open space easements.

7) Provide Enhanced Infrastructure in the Center of Town to Spur Additional Economic Development Opportunities (page 136) – Ms. Hanson stated the infrastructure has to get going and all these

items should be on-going. Mrs. Reynolds stated she believes the POCD Committee is looking at the items to determine if they're valid, not how they're prioritized.

Mr. Worthley asked if it would make any sense to propose that the Conservation Commission be reconstituted as a Conservation Commission and Open Space Board/Committee that's given a degree of authority for the monitoring and management of easements as well as a budget to do so. Mrs. Reynolds stated she had spoken to both Liz Glidden, Town Planner, and Paul DeStefano, former First Selectman, some time ago about this; and that it would be a way to get more people interested in the Commission. Mrs. Reynolds also stated she believes professionals should be brought in to mark the easements. Mr. Worthley agreed stating it could be a first step; and afterwards a natural resource inventory(ies) be conducted, decide what the benefits of these resources are from the inventory(ies), and continue with the planning process. Mrs. Reynolds stated it was a good idea. Mrs. Reynolds also stated the Commission needs to think about the Conservation easements granted to the town and determine all the work that needs to be done with those – finish mapping them in order to have a complete overview.

Mr. Worthley talked about the ash trees – looking at the open space, seeing what the ash resource is, is there anything worth recovering, any steps worth taking, and can ash logs be sold to pay for taking trees down in another location. Mr. Worthley also stated even though that's a job for a professional, someone needs to have the authority to get something like that going. A brief discussion followed in regard to it being easy to see the ash trees in town.

The next POCD meeting will be held on Thursday, 13 April 2017, 6:30 p.m., Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum and a public workshop on Thursday, 8 June 2017, 6:30 p.m., Haddam Vol. Fire Station #1, Community Road, 439 Saybrook Road, Higganum.

7. New Business

a. Communications/Publications/Correspondence

The Commission reviewed a letter from the Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut, Inc., dated 20 February 2017, pertaining to the Emerald Ash Borer. The letter indicates that although the insect has not yet been found in all towns within the state, it will be within the next few years; and dealing with ash trees killed by the insect is rapidly becoming a serious public safety issue.

8. Land Use Dept. Report

Mrs. Batzner gave a brief reported on the commissions she takes minutes for.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Tom Worthley moved to adjourn. Mardi Hanson second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 29 March 2017.