

**TOWN OF HADDAM
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2022
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Submitted at the 30 March 2022 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

A	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: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 26 January 2022 agenda as submitted. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 27 October 2021 and 17 November 2021 minutes as submitted. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comments

There was no one from the public present.

6. Old Business

a) Higganum Center Trails/Walking Path

There was nothing new to report at this time.

b) Open Space

Mrs. Reynolds reported that the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) contacted the Haddam Land Trust (HLT) regarding the donation of a 50 acre parcel adjacent to Beaver Ledges. Mrs. Reynolds believes the transfer will take place within the month.

Mr. Worthley asked if the CRC, in general, were trying to dispose of these types of obligations or if this was just a one off situation. Mrs. Reynolds stated she didn't know. Mrs. Reynolds stated the HLT had previously approached the CRC about the parcel, but nothing came of it; but then Steve Gephard, CRC Trustee, contact Bill Cowan, HLT President, about the property. Mr. Worthley stated he is aware of another parcel that the CRC holds an easement on and hopes that easement will remain in place.

c) Budget

Mrs. Reynolds reported she had not heard anything or received any requests for the 2022-2023 budget. Mrs. Batzner stated she would send an email to Ann Harter, Finance Director.

d) POCD – Conservation Action Items – Discussion

Mrs. Reynolds reported that the POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) will be meeting on Thursday, 27 January 2022, 7:00 p.m., Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum.

e) Native Plant Ordinance – Review Draft Language

Mrs. Reynolds reported she has not done anything new regarding the ordinance; however, she had spoken to Bill Warner, Town Planner, regarding this matter at the last Wetlands Commission meeting. Mrs. Reynolds stated Mr. Warner was agreeable to the ordinance and recommended that P&Z have similar wording within their regulations.

f) Rockfall Grant – Update

Mr. Worthley reported he was going to apply for a grant to update the management plan for Swan Hill; however, a different opportunity came up to accomplish the same purpose and would be easier. Mr. Worthley stated a cohort of UConn graduates, called fellows, as a group need to engage under a program called National Needs Fellowship which has to do with forestry. One of the parts of their education is to serve a residency and to do some type of public service project such as management plans. Mr. Worthley stated a couple of graduates will update the Swan Hill management plan.

Mr. Worthley stated he would like to see if the HLT Board of Directors would like to participate in a research project on oak regeneration and Swan Hill would be an ideal place to do so. Mrs. Reynolds stated there is great oak mortality on site and that she didn't believe anyone would object to the proposal. Mr. Worthley will email the details to Mrs. Reynolds who in turn will pass the information along to the HLT Board of Directors.

7. New Business

a) CACIWC Membership

Mrs. Reynolds stated she would like the Commission to be members of CACIWC. Mrs. Batzner stated she would send an email to Mr. Warner.

b) Communications/Publications/Correspondence

No communications, publications, or correspondence had been received.

c) Battery Grid Parcel 05-64

Mrs. Reynolds reported she received an email from Mr. Warner regarding a company who would like to set up a battery grid on a 20 acre parcel that is right on the Haddam-Middletown line. Mrs. Reynolds stated a phone meeting will be held Tuesday, 1 February 2022. Unclear what the purpose is at this time. Mr. Worthley stated if it means clearing forest land to set up solar panels, he has issues with that. Mrs. Reynolds stated she does not know the purpose of the proposal; but as soon as she does, she will contact Mr. Worthley.

Mr. Worthley stated one thing being done through Eversource is some sort of way of assessing/make comparisons of retaining the forest v. clearing it away to set up solar panels. Mrs. Reynolds stated she assumes the parcel is forested as she doesn't believe there are any structures on it.

8. Land Use Dept. Report

Mrs. Batzner reported: **ZBA** – January meeting cancelled. **Wetlands – 968 Killingworth Road** – As directed, the silt fencing was installed and the stumps/brush removed; however, private individuals have deposited brush on the site. Owners are working with Richard Snarski, Certified Soil Scientist, on how best to address the work they would like to conduct on site. **Haddam Neck Fair Association** – Approved a restoration plan submitted by George Logan, Registered Soil Scientist for work conducted in the wetlands. **Forestry Regulations** – Commission motioned to forward the draft regulations to DEEP for their approval. **EDC** – Will be conducting a Town Hall Event Planning Meeting on Wednesday, 9 February 2022, 6:30 p.m., Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum. The hope is that at least a representative from all town commissions/boards/civic groups/churches will attend. **P&Z – 105 Bridge Road** - Approved 42 apartment units at their 20 January 2022 meeting. **PIC** – Meeting previously discussed under Item #6d. **ZEO Position** – Interviews to be conducted this week. **Building Inspector** – Bob Ruzzo was hired as the town's building inspector. Welcome, Bob!

Asian Jumping Worm – Mrs. Reynolds reported she is attending a virtual conference put on by UMASS pertaining to the jumping worm. This worm will wreck the forest floor, they concentrate on anything that is mercury or lead, and there is nothing that can be done about them. The worm does not survive the winter, but their cocoons do. Mr. Worthley stated that the Agricultural Experiment Station has a fact sheet that talks about mixing biochar in to reduce the worms. Mrs. Reynolds stated no one mentioned that. A brief discussion followed in regard to biochar.

Forest Carbon – Mr. Worthley reported he had attended a training session that was limited to forestry agency people. There will be four sessions and when completed, it will be packaged and made available to the public. Mr. Worthley stated the interesting thing mentioned about forest carbon is that the worms are eating it all and the only way to increase forest carbon is when it reaches the mineral stage and attaches onto something else chemically.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to adjourn. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 23 February 2022, at the
Community Center, 7 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum.**