

**TOWN OF HADDAM
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2023
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Amended at the 29 March 2023 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 7:08 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 22 February 2023 agenda as submitted. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the 26 October 2022 minutes: page 2, c) Budget, last paragraph, second line – change “Commission” to “Commissioner” and page 2, 7. New Business, a) Communications/Publications/Correspondence, third line – change “ciwg.uconn.edu/2022-symposium” to “cipwg.uconn.edu/2022-symposium”.

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 26 October 2022 minutes as amended. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 30 November 2022 and 25 January 2023 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.

b) Open Space

Tighe and Bond Easement Project - Mrs. Reynolds reported that Tighe and Bond was hired to create the easement layers and they were supposed to produce a layer for her, but has not yet seen or heard about it. Mrs. Reynolds will contact Bill Warner. Mr. Reynolds noted that Mike Karam had indicated that the project is complete and it is not. Only the first part has been completed.

Haddam Land Trust (HLT) Update – Mrs. Reynolds reported on the following parcels: **Chamberlain Hill Road Parcel** – The proposal fell through as one of the family members objected to the proposal. **Tylerville Parcel** – HLT will need to wait until the end of April for the parcel will be theirs free and clear. There is an additional parcel next to state garage that has not had taxes paid on it for some time. Would be a good addition to the one recently purchased. Unclear at this time, if HLT will attempt to purchase. **Candlewood Hill Road Parcel** – The HLT has been contacted regarding the purchase of a parcel on Candlewood Hill Road that would provide access to their Boynton Preserve property; however, HLT currently has a legal right-of-way to the Preserve. Mrs. Reynolds noted that easements are not ownership and property owners do not want people walking on their property.

c) Budget

Mrs. Reynolds reported that Mr. Warner put in for \$1,000 for the Commission for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Mr. Worthley suggested some of the funding be used for attending the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) Conference. Mrs. Reynolds stated it's a possibility. Mr. Worthley noted this will be the first time the conference will be in-person since 2019. Mr. Worthley stated several of the new forestry people are presenting on forestry and climate, etc. Mrs. Reynolds stated the Botanical Society will be doing a presentation on conserving of flora on trap rock ridges. Mr. Worthley also stated he thought the Master Woodland Manager Program will have an exhibit as well.

The Commission reviewed their current Fiscal Year's budget and in particular their line item for the Salmon River Watershed. It appeared that the dues have not been paid. Mrs. Reynolds will speak to Pat Young, Salmon River Watershed, regarding this.

d) POCD – Conservation Action Items - Discussion

Mrs. Reynolds reported the last meeting of the PIC was cancelled.

e) Native Plant Ordinance – Review Draft Language – Update

Mrs. Reynolds reported she has been working on the draft document, however, she had found another template through the group called Wild Ones that promote gardening and landscaping with native plants and would like to incorporate some of their language into the draft ordinance.

f) Swan Hill – Management Plan – Student Fellow - Update

Mr. Worthley reported he had finished editing the part the students wrote and was going to add some technical portions, which hadn't been done yet; however, he was glad he hadn't. In following up on the funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other agencies, Mr. Worthley stated he had attended an NRCS technical committee meeting held today where NRCS provided additional information as to how it will work and that there will be significant funding for management. Mr. Worthley explained if a plan is climate oriented and in some way is serving an underserved community, it will be beneficial. Mrs. Reynolds asked if removing dead oaks could be a part of climate change. Mr. Worthley stated that would be eligible for forest improvement funding and that the project may be able to be described as an enhancement of sequestering carbon. Mrs. Reynolds asked about promoting young oak forests. Mr. Worthley stated if already involved, they do have funding set aside in their Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) that they are devoting to perpetuating oak communities. Mr. Worthley will find out what the structure of that is and add it to the plan as a recommendation. Noted that the increase in funding begins in 2024 and proposals are continuous. Discussion followed about plans not needing to be for a commercial operation, taking the trees down for safety purposes, and young growth being combined with older growth forests.

Mrs. Reynolds spoke in regard to a proposal concerning invasive species and how Connecticut should add every plant to their native species list that neighboring states have. Mrs. Reynolds stated adding plants to the list is based on nine criteria; and just because a plant is on another state's list doesn't mean it may not be a threat to Connecticut. Unclear of the progress of this proposal.

7. New Business

a) Communications/Publications/Correspondence

Mrs. Batzner distributed a copy of an article from the East Haddam Events magazine, Quarter 1, 2023 regarding the 19 Trails Challenge (a copy of the article is on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office). Mrs. Reynolds stated she had submitted this information to the Haddam Killingworth News and will submit it again.

Discussion followed in regard to the impact of trails on plants, how trails can be detrimental to the habitat especially if people start biking and/or four wheeling on a parcel (this has been occurring on Beaver Ledges and some parts are a mess), and hikers being a detrimental to birds during nesting season.

b) 2022 Invasive Plant Symposium – Follow Up

Mrs. Reynolds reported she was not impressed with the symposium. Discussed a presentation where the presenter felt that deer, jumping worms, and earth worms are creating problems for the environment; and if all three were gotten rid of, there wouldn't be a garlic mustard problem. Mr. Worthley stated there was an article in the Washington Post regarding deer being very destructive.

8. Land Use Dept. Report

Mrs. Batzner reported things have been quiet.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to adjourn. Gail Reynolds 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 2023.