

**TOWN OF HADDAM
HIGGANUM COVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2023
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Peter Baird (Arrived 6:02 p.m.)
X	Sue DeCarli
X	Tim McCane
X	Ed Schwing, Chairman
X	Tim Teran
X	Dante Ursini
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

Guest: Lisa Malloy, Director, Haddam Historical Society.

Mr. Schwing, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Sue DeCarli motioned to table the approval of the 10 November 2022 minutes. Tim Teran second. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Comments

Lisa Malloy, Director, Haddam Historical Society, reported that the State Register listing is almost complete and believes it will go to the Historic Preservation Council either in March or April 2023.

Mrs. Malloy stated she is hoping to conduct a history walk in the Cove on Sunday, 16 April 2023, 2:00 p.m., (approximately one hour); and asked if a Committee member could attend the tour to discuss what the Committee has been working on as well as what's proposed for the site. Mr. Schwing stated the Committee has been hoping to conduct some type of presentation to let residents know what they have been working on and this would be a perfect opportunity. Discussion followed regarding the Higganum Cove Master Plan and it not being available on the town's website. Mr. Teran asked that this be reviewed to see that it is easily accessible. Mr. Schwing asked Mrs. Malloy if she would be directing the tour. Mrs. Malloy stated the tour would be directed by either the woman who wrote the nomination (an Historic Preservation Architectural Historian) and/or herself.

Mr. Ursini asked what it means to be on the listing and Mr. Warner asked what the boundaries of the listing are. Although she did not have the map depicting the entire proposed district with her, Mrs. Malloy stated the boundaries include Dublin Hill almost up to Lt. Shubael and across Depot Road to the houses on Calliari Place (mill housing). Mrs. Malloy stated this is an honorary designation; and although it does offer some protection when serious things are contemplated, it does not prohibit anyone from doing anything.

Mr. Baird asked if this is a town historical site or a state historical district. Mrs. Malloy stated it's a State Register Historic District noting there are varying degrees: National Register doesn't offer very much protection; State Register doesn't offer very much protection; and local Historic District offers a lot more

protection (has regulations and an historic district commission; Haddam has never embraced this). Mrs. Malloy stated Landing Road is on the National Register Historic District (a step up from the State). Mr. Baird's house is on the State Register.

Mr. Schwing asked if the Cove was included within the proposed district. Mrs. Malloy stated the Cove was specifically asked to be put into the district because of its industrial and geological history.

Mr. Teran asked if the designation offered an opportunity for the State to pay for a plaque or sign. Mrs. Malloy stated yes, and because the Cove will be listed there will now be funding opportunities. Mr. Schwing asked where one would apply. Mrs. Malloy will check, but believes it's the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Mr. Schwing asked if the Historical Society would have to be the one to apply for funding. Mrs. Malloy stated she could apply for the funding, but believes the Committee or the Town could apply as well and may also be able to go through the Connecticut Humanities because the Cove is a designated site.

Mr. Schwing stated the Committee would like to know what Mrs. Malloy would like on the plaques and how many she would like. Mrs. Malloy will work with the Committee on this as these are the types of projects she loves to do. Mrs. Malloy passed around a mockup that she had put together for Kent + Frost at the beginning of the process for the master plan. Mrs. Malloy also stated since the original mockup was generated, additional thought has been put into it and she would like to include the very early mills and how they were operated, then the 19th century mills, and finally the big mills. Mr. Teran stated the way the Committee has things laid out with the walkways and foundations that would lend quite nicely to Mrs. Malloy's ideas.

Mr. Schwing asked if there's a plan of how the tour will be laid out. Mrs. Malloy stated no, not yet; and asked if the Committee would like to combine the events. Mr. Schwing stated the Committee will have a table, information, and perhaps refreshments. Mrs. Malloy stated she would start at the top of the Cove and believes it's important to have the Committee available for questions. Mr. Ursini suggested a dry run/walk thru be conducted at the Committee's April meeting.

Discussion followed in regard to the following: parking – suggested people be advised to park at the former Rossi Property (a sandwich board will be placed at the site); explain to attendants how the Committee wants to create a walkway from the parking area to the Cove; brief talk about the former Rossi property as well as pointing out the area where the pond was located; inviting the selectmen or at the very least notifying First Selectman Bob McGarry; and conducting a separate talk with Steve Gephard and Bill Wintsch. Mr. Teran suggested a brief agenda be put together so people are aware of what will be taking place. Mrs. Malloy will write up a press release. Mr. Schwing suggested the distribution of small maps showing the connections would be helpful (noted that the map on the board will need to be updated). Mr. Schwing asked Mrs. Malloy how far she planned on going down into the Cove. Mrs. Malloy stated down to Area #3. Mrs. Malloy also stated there is a lot of information regarding the Cove Wharf, but that too should be a separate talk and walk down to the river. Mr. Schwing stated the pathway needs additional clearing. Mrs. Malloy stated she would like to offer more history walks in town and this was a good opportunity and coordinates with the designation of Dublin Hill and the Cove.

Mrs. Malloy stated she has started looking up the early mill sites up in Area A and found advertisements from 1814. Mrs. Malloy noted that the earliest sites are from 1699. Mrs. DeCarli believes the foundation that was uncovered is the earliest and someone should look at it in more detail. Mrs. Malloy pointed out the location of the Fulling Mill. Mr. Schwing suggested Mrs. Malloy calculate how many panels she might need and advise the Committee. Mr. Warner stated he believes the Committee will obtain a Rockfall Grant and that will be for the pollinator garden, work on a path, and includes signage as well. Mrs. Malloy stated she will primarily focus on the industrial history but would like to focus on a couple of people who worked on site. Mr. Schwing spoke in regard to a QR code to be scanned to provide information.

Mr. Baird spoke in regard to a mill site in Camden, NY that has a number of plaques outlining the history of the site as well as having a Friends group. Mrs. DeCarli stated it's a story and the story is different all the way down the site. Mr. Teran offered to help Mrs. Malloy.

Mrs. Malloy stated she would like to work on signage, especially the historical aspects of the site.

3. Budget Review

Mr. Warner distributed/reviewed the Maintenance Budget: Balance as of 1/15/2023 - \$8,000 and with proposed maintenance for April-June at a cost of \$3,000 will leave a balance of \$5,000 (funding will be lost if not spent by 30 June 2023) and the Capital Budget (Higganum Connections): Balance as of 1/15/2023 - \$4,900 (funding will not be lost). Total balance of both line items: \$9,900.

4. Spending Priorities

a. Local Funds

Projects - Mr. Warner reviewed projects being looked at for the \$9,900 by the end of the fiscal year: 1) Drainage and grading on entry road (excavating and draining a pipe located on site) and installation of a split rail fence. While on site with Brian Kent, Kent + Frost, and Jeff Jacobson, Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, it appears if they can get close to an ADA accessible grade to the overlook, with a 6 foot walkway and the installation of some PVC pipe. Noted there is a small dip in one area that will need to be smoothed out. 2) Better definition of upper trail with small bridge, trail markers, and stone work for easier walking. Mr. Baird suggested the glacial pot holes be highlighted. Mr. Teran asked if the Committee felt there should be an area(s) marked "Stay Out". Discussion followed in regard to the dirt bike riders and that something more than the boulders need to be done. Mr. Warner stated during a recent EDC meeting, he did discuss the potential for a bump track behind HES (viewed the Town of Madison's facility; nice/busy). 3) Seating and stone/mulch at the clearing on Nosal Road. Discussed how benches and picnic tables are secured at Haddam Meadows and the placement of stone dust further down Nosal Road. 4) Clearing pit to create views of falls from future overlook area (with the removal of some trees and vines can create a direct view of the falls from the overlook).

Rockfall Grant - Mr. Warner stated the Rockfall Grant announcement should be made sometime in April. This would be \$8,500. This funding would help with the planting of a wildflower garden in the upper area as well as fencing and stone to deter dirt bikes, and signage.

Local Capital Budget – Mr. Warner reviewed potential uses for the \$100,000 funding. 1) Design Overlook area with all local funds – Mr. Warner reported he has a price from Lee Hunter to build the area out, boulders/flat area (machine work) for \$35,000. To design this area from Kent + Frost by going out to bid through the normal State process would cost \$85,000. Mr. Warner stated when using State funding, the Committee cannot by-pass the process; however, if local funding is used, it's less structured. Discussion followed in regard to not constructing the area out too far (no more than 25 feet).

b. State Funds (Meeting with Kent Jacobson)

Mr. Warner distributed/reviewed the State Preliminary Budget. Mr. Warner suggested removing Area 19 - \$65,000 – as listed on the State Budget and rework it and save some money. Mr. Baird asked if some benches could be purchased for the Overlook closer to the river. Mr. Warner stated they could; however, the State is looking for some participation to use the State money. If Area 19 is eliminated, the funding could be reallocated into another project.

Mr. Warner stated what he has Kent + Frost and Jacobson working on is redesigning the bridge (where the culvert is located) near Rossi's. Mr. Warner also stated that while talking to Mr. Jacobson, he learned that Public Works will be excavating the roadway, pulling out the guiderail, and putting a membrane over the culverts that are located in the area. Mr. Warner stated while that's happening the abutments can be installed which will help to save funding.

Mr. Warner stated the frustrating part is the Committee is making great progress; however, if State funding is used and it goes out to bid, construction probably would not begin until the spring of 2024. Mrs. DeCarli stated it's exciting for people to see what's happening there. Mr. Warner voiced concern over State contractors not being interested in the project because it's not big enough. Mr. Ursini suggested combining two projects to make it bigger.

Mr. Warner stated he believes something substantial should take place this year. The Committee agreed. Mr. Teran asked if there is anything the Committee would like to have completed before the 16 April 2023 tour. Mr. Warner stated he believes the split rail fence would have an impact. The Committee agreed. Mr. McCane offered to make the split rail fence if Mr. Hunter can cut the locust that's on site.

In regard to the \$65,000, Mr. Ursini asked if the money could be used to help with Areas 13, 14, and 16 – such as the reinforced concrete slab for the gazebo as it is unclear what's under the existing slab. Mr. McCane suggested port-o-lets due to the number of people who visit the site. Discussion followed in regard to eliminating the pull off on Depot Road by the falls (within the State budget; access control).

Mr. Warner stated that the entire property is within the flood plain. Mr. Warner spoke in regard to a Flood Management Certificate because in order to do anything in a flood area with state money a certificate is required. Mr. Warner noted to obtain a certificate just for the transfer of the site took almost nine months.

The Committee was agreeable with items discussed and Mr. Warner will speak to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Warner stated he did approach the garden club about the pollinator garden (consulting only).

Mr. Ursini reviewed a series of photos that were distributed to the Committee. Photo 1 is in the area of the proposed guardrail that was previously discussed and with a little bit of trimming will create a better view of the falls. Photo 2, taken from the picnic area, provides a distance view of the falls and the river. Photo 3, at the platform, is a view of the river coming down from the falls. Mr. Ursini talked about the foundation and a flat grassy area and the possibly of creating a pathway from the picnic area. Photos 4 and 5 shows the metal fencing. Mr. Ursini stated the fence is still nice, but needs to be shored up. Unable to see the falls from here; however, if some effort was put into constructing a small viewing platform, the falls would be visible. Mr. Warner stated with the State funding perhaps a step up with railing could be created and then step down into the foundation area. Mr. Teran stated it cannot be okay to have 16-18 inches between the fence and ground. Committee noted the project is in progress.

Mr. Warner stated the engineers indicated the area of the foundations is unique, but questioned whether people would like to be in a hole.

Mr. Warner stated he would like to add additional stone dust going down to the river and he would like the dock removed. The Committee stated even if stone dust is not applied, at least level the road. Noted that dirt bikes are tearing up the muddy area of the road.

5. Bike Racks

Mr. Baird asked the Committee if they had reviewed the photos of the Massachusetts bike racks created in the towns' zip codes and that this may be something to consider. Mr. Warner stated if bike racks are something that are going to be done; hopefully, they're creative and not just your standard bike rack.

Mr. Warner reported that Kate Anderson, Selectwoman and EDC Chairman, informed him that Park & Rec have funding for bike racks at the Cove. Mr. Warner will speak to Park & Rec about assisting with this matter.

Mr. Schwing stated Park & Rec's new chairwoman resurrected (cleaned off the rust and repainted) a bike rack that had been donated by the Conservation Commission; and that she thought perhaps additional racks would be appreciated. Discussion followed in regard to the placement of bike racks – one at the Cove parking area and one at the proposed parking area on the former Rossi property.

Mr. Ursini asked if there is anything further the Committee wants to do with the Cove parking area – drop off area, a couple of handicapped parking spaces, and a bike rack; and if so, the area may need to be reworked. Mrs. DeCarli stated she believes the stone wall should be built up a little more and the installation of split rail fencing or low heavy wooden guardrails to define the end of the trail should be considered.

New Member – A brief discussion followed in regard to filling Jessica Condil's position. Dorothy Gillespie will be asked to become a member of the Committee.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Sue DeCarli motion to adjourn. Tim Teran second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

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Recording Clerk

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9 March 2023, 6:00 p.m.