

TOWN OF HADDAM
HIGGANUM COVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2024
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
Subject to Approval by the Commission

ATTENDANCE

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| X | Peter Baird |
| X | Sue DeCarli |
| X | Dorothy Gillespie |
| 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 |

1. Call to Order

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

2. Election of Chairman

MOTION: Sue DeCarli nominated Ed Schwing as chairman. Dan Ursini second. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Additions/Corrections to Agenda

Mr. Schwing asked that the agenda be amended to include Signs under Discussion and the numbering of the agenda be corrected. The Committee was agreeable to these corrections.

4. Discussion

a. Expenditure of Remaining Capital Funds

Mr. Warner distributed/reviewed a handout outlining local and state funding (yellow and green boxes, respectively) and an aerial photo of the concrete slab (Exhibit A – copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk’s Office and the Land Use Office). Mr. Warner reported there is a remaining balance of \$37,715.

Mr. Warner reported that at the last meeting there was discussion regarding the removal of the chain link fence and installation of a split rail fence. Mr. Teran asked if the split rail would go all the way down to where the turbine was located. Mr. Warner stated yes, and given the steep terrain has discussed the installation of fine mesh behind the railings. For consistency, mesh will also be added to the existing split rail fence. A quote from Durham Fence for \$5,023.00 was received as well as a quote from Lee Hunter for constructing the turbine viewing platform for \$9,957.00. Mr. Baird asked what this work would entail. Mr. Warner stated at the turbine area the fill will be graded so it will ramp down and a wall will be built around it to create a platform. Mr. Ursini asked if the platform would extend a bit further. Mr. Warner stated it would extend to where the fence is located as it drops quickly afterwards. Mr. Ursini asked if the black fence would be used. Mr. Warner stated it will be used it for now as he believes it will blend in. As part of the quote, Mr. Hunter will pull some of the dirt away from the foundations and grade it better and

reposition some of the rocks that have fallen. New split rail fencing will go around the overlook in the area of the fork in the road as there is a steep section there as well as after the overlook as it's very steep – quotes needed.

Mr. Warner distributed/reviewed a second handout showing four (4) photos (Exhibit B, copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and Land Use Office). Mr. Warner reviewed the upper right hand photo (ruins area by parking lot) – eastern end a steep drop and on the stream side an even steeper fall, both onto rock. Quote received from Durham Fence for a stainless rail. Mrs. DeCarli asked if fencing similar to the overlook could be installed in these areas (safety of children). Mr. Warner will speak to Mr. Hunter for a quote.

Mr. Warner stated \$2,500 has been designated for the Welcome sign. Mr. Ursini stated the historical signs (by the Jail) that have been installed are three-quarter inch Azek (very strong steel). Mr. Ursini stated he understood the posts are to be painted white. Mr. Warner stated yes, noting that every sign in Haddam has white posts.

Mr. Teran asked where the welcome sign is proposed. Mr. Ursini stated he believes the Committee should conduct another site walk, but one option is to the right behind the two existing benches (prior to coming around the corner of the metal gate; opposite of current Welcome sign). Mrs. DeCarli stated she doesn't believe the area should be obscured with signs; however, the area of the sluiceway should have historical signage drafted by Lisa Malloy, Director, Haddam Historical Society. Mr. Teran suggested moving the welcome sign closer to Depot Road. Discussion followed regarding the use of the existing sign, placement of a welcome sign by the split rail fence, and the colors (brown and green; park-like colors).

Mr. Baird stated he likes Mr. Teran's comments regarding the language on the signs. Mr. Schwing asked that this discussion wait until the appropriate time on the agenda.

MOTION: Tim McCane motioned to approve the spending from the Capital Plan. Dan Ursini second. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Status of Concrete Slab and Plan to Proceed

Mr. Warner reported that Amy Vaillancourt, Director of Environmental Services, VHB, reviewed the final EPA report from the cleanup project. EPA did a cleanup to a residential standard except for the slab as they were running out of funding. Mr. Schwing stated Janis Tsang, P.E., EPA, did ask for a supplement but ran out of that money. The report indicates that EPA did not test the slab or under the slab as it would be dealt with during development.

Mr. Warner reported the slab is collapsing and pulling away. Mrs. DeCarli stated it went down (a sway in it) after the last storm. Mr. Warner stated this needs to be removed and when factoring in testing of the slab, soil, concrete for PCBs, Ms. Vaillancourt estimated \$8,500.

c. Use of State Funds

For those Committee members who did not know, Mr. Warner reported that he will be taking a leave of absence as of 1 April 2024 and will be gone for six (6) months.

Mr. Warner recommended that the Committee spend the state money - \$8,500 for testing and if contaminated, proceed with developing a remediation plan (see green block of Exhibit A). Mr. Warner noted that all of the work would be taking place within a flood plain and when state funding is used within a flood plain it's very difficult to fill in a flood plain; however, when taking out, it provides an opportunity to put in some fill. Mr. Warner stated he will have Jacobson & Associates coordinate the project and do a subcontract with VHB who will develop a plan. Mr. Warner also stated the project will need to obtain a

flood management certificate (approximately six to eight months to obtain), the natural diversity data base will need to be reviewed, etc. Mr. Warner stated when he returns, the project would be ready to go to bid in early 2025.

Mr. Ursini asked if they would have to wait until July 2025 for matching funds. Mr. Warner stated it would go out to bid to remove it all - \$280,000 – DEEP will not be too concerned about the match. Mr. Warner will send a revised budget noting in-kind services. Mr. Warner pointed to a photo, lower right, on Exhibit B depicting a deck area to improve the connection to the water and kayak launch. Mr. Warner also pointed out a photo, second from left, on Exhibit B showing the water elevation after a five (5) inch rain storm. Mr. Warner reviewed the potential deck and benches, evolution of the wetlands signage, osprey nests, etc. If the Committee is agreeable, Mr. Warner will have Jacobson & Associates put together a proposal and get the state to approve it.

Mr. Teran asked Mr. Warner what he envisioned would happen while he's away and if the Committee would need to take a more active role in supervision. Mr. Warner stated no, that Leon Mularski, Zoning Enforcement Officer, will be going to full time to fill in. Mr. Warner noted that Mr. Mularski is also an architect – project management most of his career; and Mr. Hunter knows when to cut the grass.

Mr. Warner stated he envisions having all of the items within the yellow box (Exhibit A) completed before he leaves and there will be a remaining balance of \$11,593.

MOTION: Peter Baird motioned to approve the use of the state funding. Tim Teran second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. DeCarli asked if the hill (from the overlook toward the river) could be trimmed back. Mr. Warner stated the flooding debris was cleaned up today. Mr. Ursini asked about the slab – would bids be obtained. Mr. Warner stated Jacobson & Associates will create a concept design, all the testing to be done, and once Committee approves, Jacobson will prepare bid documents and the project will go out to bid. Mrs. DeCarli asked for clarification regarding the removal date of the slab – 2025. Mr. Warner stated due to the project being a state job and it being within a flood plain (flood management) it would take time. Mr. Teran asked if the Committee were indemnified. Mr. Warner stated municipal parks are covered.

d. Financial Support for Eagle Scout Project

Mr. Warner reported that Bob McGarry, First Selectman, received an email from the Eagle Scout who is working on the smaller overlook regarding financial support for the metal kiosk. Mr. Ursini stated he did speak to the young man and explained that the Committee needs to see what the options are, obtain quotes, etc. It was noted that up to \$1,500 through GoFundMe was raised. Mr. Ursini spoke in regard to the Scout coming down Sunday, 14 January 2024, to clear out the area, remove the organic material, put down stone dust, and install benches. Once he knows what remains, then the Committee can select a good kiosk – similar to the library. Mr. Warner stated those are expensive due to the signage. A link for another kiosk - \$1,000 – has been provided. Mr. Warner stated he's comfortable with up to \$1,000.

Mrs. DeCarli asked where the work was being proposed. Mr. Ursini stated it's in the first clearing on the right side, there are two white stakes marking the site. Beyond where the road splits – 100-150 feet passed the overlook.

MOTION: Dan Ursini motioned to approve up to \$1,000 to help out the Eagle scouts. Tim McCane second. Motion carried unanimously.

e. Signs

Mr. Schwing reviewed the proposed signs drafted by Lisa Malloy, Director, Haddam Historical Society (Exhibits C and D, copies on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and Land Use Office). The Committee was pleased with what was presented. Mr. Schwing asked about funding. Mr. Warner stated

the Rockfall grant has signage incorporated in it. Mr. Schwing will reach out to Steve Gephard to see about generating drafts for the environmental aspect of the Cove. A brief discussion followed in regard to possible placement of the signs.

Mr. Teran spoke in regard to text, format, and typos and felt that right-hand justified, as opposed to centered text, would be seen more easily. Mr. Teran noted the chronology is off. Mr. Schwing stated what is before the Committee are quick drafts. Mr. Teran stated the drafts are wonderful and that he was just offering thoughts. Mr. Ursini stated he felt Mrs. Malloy should also be invited to attend the site walk when a date is selected. Mr. Warner stated there is still \$11,000 in Capital that could be used to purchase signage. Mr. Schwing asked that any comments/suggestions pertaining to the signs be sent to him and he'll speak to Mrs. Malloy.

Mr. Teran stated how and where the signs are placed will help define what are the ruins and what are not the ruins, etc. In some ways having two, three, four, or five signs together in the upper ruins (give a feel of what was there) may be better than having one or two. The Committee felt an environmental sign should also be included. Discussion followed regarding potential locations: the overlook, the turbine, parking area looking at the ruins, and by the water (sign regarding the eco-system, birds). Mr. Warner asked what type of signs – table top, colors that do not fade – similar to the signs at the library.

Discussion followed in regard to prohibiting marijuana (state has put them up in the parks).

Discussion returned to Mr. Teran's comments regarding the language on the sign. Mr. Teran suggested instead of – "Enjoy non-motorized cycling throughout the preserve except for on upper ruins trails and ruins pathways" a minor change to "Enjoy non-motorized cycling throughout the preserve on all pathways except those pathways within the ruins." After some discussion regarding the location of the ruins and the possibility of including a map pointing out the various locations (similar to the map Mrs. Malloy used for the site walk). Mr. Ursini stated he was okay with the language and will make the adjustment. Mr. Baird stated he like Mr. Teran's revised language.

Cove Attendant – Mr. Schwing asked if the funding would be used. Mr. Warner stated although it is in the 2024-2025 budget, this year's funding has not yet been used. Mr. Warner stated he had the line item changed to Cove/HES Monitor. Discussion followed regarding working during the winter months (not a lot to do), core time 15 April to 15 October, job description available, seasonal employment, retired individual, and starting the process to advertise being in the hands of the BOS.

5. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dorothy Gillespie motioned to approve the 9 November 2023 minutes as submitted. Sue DeCarli second. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Public Comments

There was no public in attendance.

7. Review of Ordinances to be Presented BOS

Mr. Schwing reported that he had not yet contacted the BOS has there is a lot of activity going on and town meetings. Mr. Schwing stated he was hoping to meet between Rossi and HES so the BOS could concentrate on the ordinance solely. Mr. Ursini asked if the BOS should receive the updated documentation. Mr. Schwing stated yes, but would like to be there to explain anything if questions arise. Mr. Schwing also stated that he had changed "park" to "preserve" on the documents. Mr. Schwing stated the Committee will present to the BOS and if the town attorney needs to review anything, the BOS would do that. Mr. Warner stated the BOS is also in the budget process as well as the Rossi (meeting set) and HES (no meeting set) projects. Mr. Baird stated he felt the ordinance for the Cove would pass and asked Committee members to be patient.

Open House - Mr. Teran suggested conducting a second open house, similar to the one conducted with Lisa Malloy and Steve Gephard. Mrs. DeCarli suggested the spring.

Pollinator Garden – Mr. Baird asked for a status update. Mr. Warner stated the Rockfall grant will be awarded in April, the town currently has \$8,500 in the state grant, and if the town wins the award it would bring the total up to \$18,500. Mr. Warner stated he would work up proposals for landscapers.

8. Chairman's Report

Mr. Schwing had nothing further to report.

Parking Lot Subsurface – Mr. Ursini asked if Mr. Hunter had checked the parking lot subsurface. Mr. Warner stated yes, and he found an ugly situation. Mrs. DeCarli stated EPA did a great job and did what was important (water) at the time.

Directional Signs – Mr. Warner stated since the trees have been removed, his small directional signs are now too small. Mr. Warner will order larger signs and the small signs will go on the split rail fence.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Tim Teran motion to adjourn. Dorothy Gillespie second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 8 February 2024.

| Local funds | Expended | Going forward |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Capital line | \$ 100,000.00 | |
| Overlook | \$ 59,435.00 | |
| Split Rail fence | \$ 2,850.00 | |
| Remainder | \$ 37,715.00 | \$ 37,715.00 |
| Pull chain link add split rail | | \$ 5,023.00 |
| Turbine viewing platform | | \$ 9,957.00 |
| New split rail around overlook | | \$ 3,000.00 |
| New stainless rail at east side of upper ruins | | \$ 5,642.00 |
| Welcome sign | | \$ 2,500.00 |
| Remainder | | \$ 11,593.00 |

State Money

Break slab, test soils, develop plan to remediate, remove lower slab, expose foundation ruins, if worth saving work around them, if not remove with soils, gradual grade down to kayak launch removal of material from the flood plain allows some filling. 20,000 cubic feet Enclose and cover concrete ruins where picnic table is with decking as wetlands overlook.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Engineer Design | \$ 30,000.00 |
| Environmental | \$ 8,000.00 |
| Flood Cert | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Construction | |

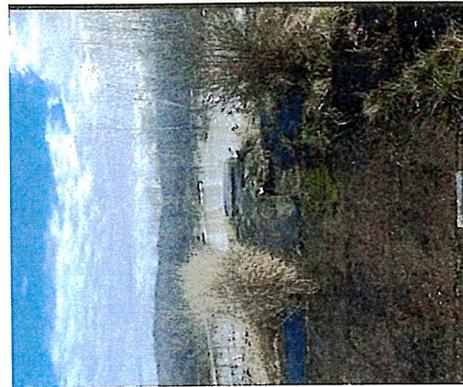


Cave - 11/1/2007
Exhibit A



New decking

Remove slab
Improved connection to water and kayak launch storage



After 5 inch rain



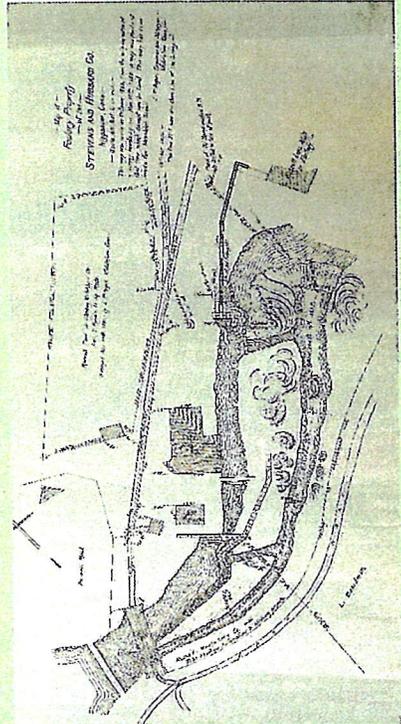
Cove-11-Jan 2024
Exhibit B

HIGGANUM CREEK EARLY HISTORY

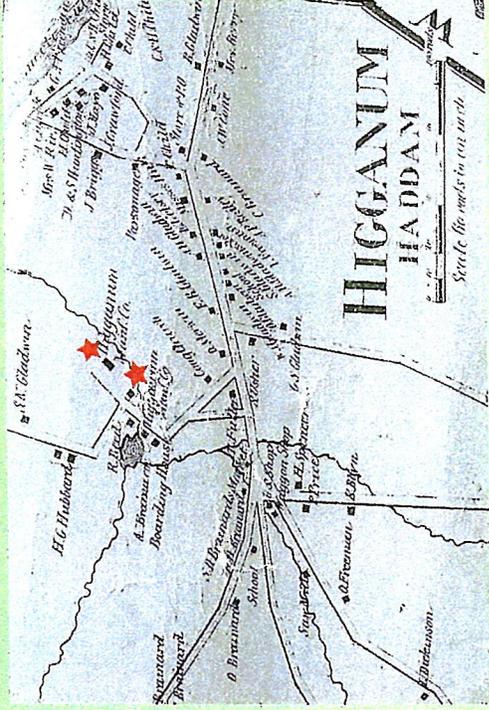
Higganum Creek, historically known as Higganum River, was created by the confluence of three brooks: Bible Rock Brook, Candlewood Hill Brook, and Ponssett Brook.

The waterpower resources of these waterways allowed for industrial development of Higganum from an early date. A grist mill was the first mill recorded along the creek in the

1670s, which was later joined by a sawmill operated by various local families including Rogers, Bailey, and Sears. By 1814 Jonathan Usher had erected a dam and factory for his clothing works and fulling mill which produced both wool cloth and yarn.



Upper Right: 1859 Walling Map of Higganum Center. Lower Left: 1899 Map of Stevens and Hubbard Co. along the Higganum



By 1821 there was an oakum factory along the creek which used old ropes and tar to make caulking for the seams of ships and later manufactured webbing. By 1859 this firm was known as Higganum Manufacturing as shown on the Walling Map.

The firm of Stevens, Hotchkiss, and Hubbard in the mid-19th century manufactured lamp fixtures and chandeliers and employed between 75 and 100 men and women. They later produced brackets, cutting nippers, pliers, and wire cutters.

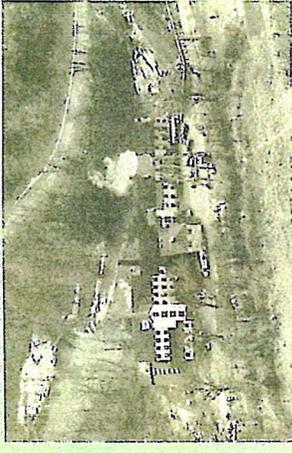
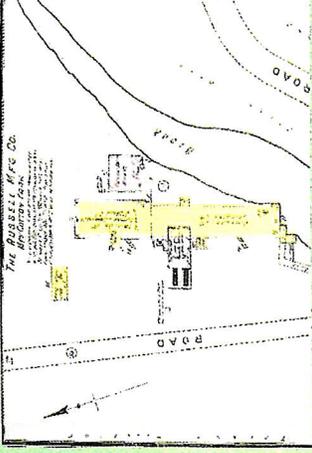
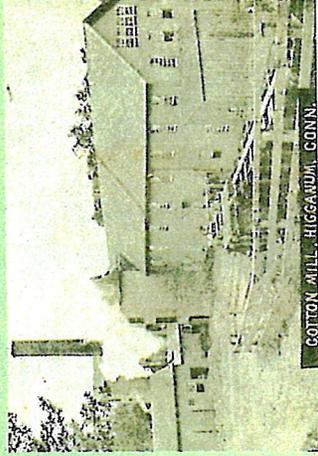
*Case - 11 Jan 2021
Exhibit C*

RUSSELL MANUFACTURING

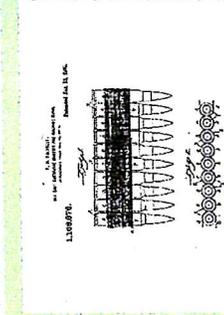
Russell Manufacturing Company of Middletown bought the mills along the creek in 1860 and by 1869 and employed between 50 and 100 employees in Higganum. The upper mill made W/webbing; the lower mill made textiles.

Russell was one of the village's major employers. Workers not only included descendants of early families, but immigrants including Irish, Scottish, and Danish. The mill employed older children and young adults, most of which were under the age of twenty. Unlike Scovil Hoe or Clark Cutaway Harrow which required heavy manual labor, girls were employed at Russell working the looms. During WWI, the firm made canteen covers, first aid pouches, cartridge belts and rifle slings.

Later the firm produced braid for use in bicycle tires and various woven items needed by soldiers during the Spanish-American War and WW I. By the 1940s Russell was manufacturing brake linings, safety belts, Venetian blind tap and tapes required for setting zippers. They also produced suspenders.



In 1937 Frismar, Inc. took over the mill and made carbon paper and by 1945 had as many of 50 employees. The building also housed Frissell Fabric Company which weaved and dyed narrow fabric. Frismar owned the property until 1983 following which it passed through a number of owners. The factory burned in 1989 and in 2018 the Town of Haddam took ownership of the property through a tax foreclosure. The site had been declared to be contaminated superfund site and with funds from the EPA the cove was cleaned up between 2014 and 2015.



*Cove - 11 Jan 2024
Exhibit D*