

**TOWN OF HADDAM
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY CENTER
7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM, CT 06441
WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 2024
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

A	Barbara Fernandez
X	Gail Reynolds, Chairman
X	Tom Worthley
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

GUEST: Drew

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Reynolds, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 24 April 2024 agenda as submitted. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Correction to the 28 February 2024 minutes: page 1, Old Business: b) Open Space – Gilkinson Property, first sentence – change “Pytliks” to “Pytliks”.

MOTION: Tom Worthley motioned to approve the 31 January 2024 minutes as submitted and the 28 February 2024 minutes as amended. Gail Reynolds second. Motion carried unanimously.

Recording Clerk’s Note: The 27 March 2024 meeting was cancelled.

Drew asked the procedure for conducting a meeting. Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Worthley spoke in regard to Robert’s Rules of Order, the posting of agendas, motions, and minutes (filed in the Town Clerk’s Office and on the town’s website), the approval of minutes (accurately reflect what took place at a meeting), and the public having the right to know what business was conducted at a meeting.

5. Public Comments

Drew, a Higganum resident and graduate student at Western Connecticut , introduced himself and explained that he was present due to a school assignment (taking a class about bio-diversity policy) and part of the assignment is to do two policy actions (learn more about current plans in Haddam – expand protected areas and needs to learn more on how environmental policy works). Mrs. Reynolds stated protected areas in town would be managed by DEEP (state forest and parks), Haddam Land Trust (HLT), and the town (Higganum Cove). Mrs. Reynolds spoke briefly about the POCD.

6. Old Business

a) Higganum Center Trails/Walking Path

Mrs. Reynolds gave a brief synopsis of this project for Drew. Mr. Worthley stated with the changes of ownership for some of the properties have made it possible to re-examine the project and perhaps do a better job of it.

b) Open Space

Conservation Land - Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Worthley discussed conservation land owned by the town – Higganum Cove and a parcel south of Route 82. **Gilkinson Property** – Mrs. Reynolds reported that Bill Cowan, HLT President, is negotiating with the Humane Society of the United States in regard to conducting a survey on the entire parcel and funding the conservation easement maintenance. Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Worthley explained the purpose of a conservation easement and the importance of an accurate property survey. **Burr Preserve, Morris Hubbard Road** – No update at this time. **Clark's Wharf Preserve** – Mrs. Reynolds reported the attorneys are still working on this matter noting that there are easements for access to the water and the abutting property just changed ownership. **Shop Board Rock, Town Owned** – Mrs. Reynolds reported that Mr. Cowan and she met with Bob McGarry, First Selectman, regarding the town donating the parcel to the HLT. Mr. McGarry indicated yes, but the matter would not be addressed until the completion of the budget process.

c) Budget

Mrs. Reynolds reported the Board of Finance (BOF) reduced the Commission's 2024-2025 budget down to \$500. Mrs. Reynolds has no objection.

d) POCD – Conservation Action Items - Discussion

Mrs. Reynolds provided a brief synopsis of the POCD to Drew. Drew was advised the POCD can be found on the town's website. There was no update at this time.

e) Native Plant Ordinance – Review Draft Language – Update

There was nothing new to report at this time.

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

There was nothing new to report at this time.

g) Connecticut Urban Forestry Grant – Follow Up

Mr. Worthley stated since the Commission's February meeting, a lot has happened regarding HES; and asked what the final disposition with respect to the school building was. Mrs. Reynolds stated she cancelled the Commission's March meeting in order to attend the HES presentation and gave a brief run down on some of the comments made. Three different plans with costs were presented. There has been no final decision made. It appears it will go to a referendum. Mr. Worthley stated he has read where youth and senior activities are conducted together it makes for very positive interaction sometimes.

h) Higganum Cove

Mrs. Reynolds reported she is getting closer to making a diagram of suggested plantings for the upper area of the Cove.

i) Clark Creek Wildlife Management Area – DEEP Forestry Mowing Project – Update

There was nothing new to report at this time.

j) Saraceno Preserve – Follow Up

There was nothing new to report at this time.

7. New Business

a) Detailed Natural Resource Inventory Document - Discussion

Mrs. Reynolds reported she has obtained a copy of the Natural Resource Inventory, Town of Norfolk, 2023, and that John Anderson had worked on the book. The book was reviewed by all. Mrs. Reynolds stated Mr. Anderson indicated that a detailed inventory will drive the POCD in terms of conservation due to its high level of detail. Noted that Steve Gephart and Dr. Kim Stoner also assisted with the book. Mrs. Reynolds stated she believes Norfolk's inventory would be a good model for Haddam to follow in developing an inventory document. Drew stated a species list would be something he would endorse and may be interested in helping with it. Mr. Worthley stated there's a lot of preliminary work that has been already been done (maps, lists that are available, and speak to fishery and bird people).

b) Connecticut Urban Forest Council Annual Conference - Update

Mr. Worthley reported the conference was well attended and the program was worthwhile. Mr. Worthley felt there were upwards of 500 people in attendance.

c) 2024 Connecticut Compost Conference – Update

Mrs. Reynolds reported the conference was well attended and that she was interest in composting at a community level and a town/industrial level. Mrs. Reynolds felt people need to be aware of the pros and cons of composting as well as the amount of work involved.

d) Connecticut Land Conservation Council Annual Conference – Update

Mr. Worthley and Mrs. Reynolds reported the conference was well attended and sessions they attended were briefly discussed. Mr. Worthley was glad the new publication on hardwood forests "Beyond the Illusion of Preservation" was highlighted as he felt it was a message this particular group needed to hear. There was discussion about passive management which is fine if forest land is healthy, productive, free of invasive species, etc., but some management is appropriate if the land is unhealthy.

e) Communications/Publications/Correspondence

Rockfall Foundation Programs: Mrs. Batzner distributed three notices (attached) regarding upcoming programs one of which features the Commission's own Tom Worthley (It's About Forests, Thursday, 16 May 2024, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Scotch Plains Tavern, 124 Westbrook Road, Essex).

8. Land Use Dept. Report

Mrs. Batzner reported on following: **P&Z** – Conducted a special meeting concerning FOIA requirements and approved a special permit for 28 town homes (14 homes each) at 1546 and 1556 Saybrook Road (Commonwealth Senior Living at Haddam). **Reappointments** – Need to submit letters for Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Worthley. Unclear what happened regarding Mrs. Reynolds reappointment last year. Mrs. Reynolds will look to see if she received a letter from the BOS. **Scovil** – Briefly discussed the Stop Work Order placed on the property.

9. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bunny Hall Batzner
Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 29 May 2024.

Learn How To Identify and Manage Invasive Plants In Your Back Yard
May 5 @ 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

This event is co-sponsored by [Everyone Outside](#)

Join us at the Rockfall Forest in Middlefield, CT, for an Educational Invasive Plant Workshop and Cleanup Party.

You will learn how to identify and remove some of the more aggressive invasives in our state: garlic mustard, barberry, Asian bittersweet, honeysuckle, privet, autumn olive, Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, and winged euonymus (burning bush), to name a few.

What to Bring: Bring clippers and gloves if you have them; a limited supply will be available. Tick repellant is suggested.

Bonus: You will have a chance to sample some invasive plant recipes.

What are Invasive Plants?

UConn's Invasive Plants Council best describes invasive plants as "non-native plants that are disruptive in a way that causes environmental or economic harm or harm to human health. In minimally managed areas, invasive plants crowd out native plants. The presence of invasive plants alters how plants, animals, soil, and water interact within native ecosystems, often causing harm to other species in addition to the plants that have been crowded out."

Location: Meet at 9:45 in the Middlefield Memorial School parking lot, 124 Hubbard St, Middlefield, CT. Heavy rain cancels.

Conservation - 24 Apr 2024
Communications
Rockfall Foundation

1 of 3

Meet Your Greens: "It's All About Forests" With Tom Worthley
May 16 @ 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Our May *Meet Your Greens* will be on **Thursday, May 16**, at [Scotch Plains Tavern](#), 124 Westbrook Road, Essex, CT.

Our guest speaker, Tom Worthley, an expert in forestry from the University of Connecticut, will share his extensive knowledge of forests and will follow up with a Q and A on "climate-smart" management practices. Tom will provide valuable insights and answer your questions on this crucial topic.

Tom Worthley, Associate Extension Professor for Forestry at the University of Connecticut, brings over 40 years of experience in industry, consulting, and academia. A graduate of the University of Maine, he is also involved in conservation efforts as a Conservation and Wetlands Commissioner in Haddam. Tom, along with his wife Catherine, is a woodland owner in Higganum and actively participates in organizations such as the Haddam Land Trust and the Society of American Foresters. He advocates for woodland owners' benefit, aiming to lower the risk of woodland conversion.

Don't miss this chance to learn from Tom and connect with fellow environmental enthusiasts.

Join us on Thursday, May 16, at [Scotch Plains Tavern](#), 124 Westbrook Road, Essex, CT.

While registration is not mandatory, we recommend it to help the restaurant ensure efficient service.

Conservation - 21 Apr 2024
Communications
Rockfall foundation

2 of 3


Guided Spring Bird Walk: Haddam Meadows State Park


May 19 @ 8:30 am - 10:30 am

Join Anthony Zemba, Sr. Ecologist with LANDTECH, and Rockfall Foundation Board member for a morning Bird Walk at Haddam Meadows on Sunday, May 19th. We will meet at the parking lot at the entrance of the park (the parking lot is on the left as soon as you enter the park and cross the railroad tracks) at 8:30 AM.

From there, we will walk south along the edge of the wooded wetland on the west side of the open meadow field. We will be looking for Spring migrants and breeding resident birds among the park's varied habitats, which include a forested swamp, a scrub/shrub swamp, a pond, the CT River and its associated freshwater tidal emergent wetlands, and open meadows. We will walk about a 2-mile loop on open, flat terrain. But wear sturdy shoes that you don't mind getting wet (but we will try to avoid walking in wet areas), and protect yourself from ticks. We plan to go until about 10:30 AM with the option to go longer if desired. A steady rain will cancel the trip, so monitor the weather and the Rockfall's website for forecasts.

 **Date:** Sunday, May 19

 **Time:** 8:30 am – 10:30 pm (With the option to stay longer)

 **Location:** Meet at the parking lot at the entrance, Haddam Meadows State Park

 Limited to 25 participants

Admission: FREE

Conservation - ~~2/4/2021~~
Communications
Rockfall Foundation

3 of 3