

**TOWN OF HADDAM
 CONSERVATION COMMISSION
 REGULAR MEETING
 COMMUNITY CENTER
 7 CANDLEWOOD HILL ROAD, HIGGANUM
 WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2015
 APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Submitted at the 24 June 2015 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

X	Walter Bragoni, Vice Chairman
A	Ian Gibson
X	Mardi Hanson-d'Alessandro
X	Gail Reynolds, Chairman
A	Deb Umba
X	Tom Worthley (7:07 p.m.)
X	Liz West Glidden, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Reynolds called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Mardi Hanson moved to approve the 25 March 2015 agenda as submitted. Walter Bragoni second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Tabled.

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Old Business

a. Open Space

Geo-Referencing of Conservation Easements – Mrs. Reynolds reported that she had spoken to some of the geo-graphic information specialists at the UConn Extension Center about hiring someone to help with this project and that they had mentioned they have an intern who is a GIS specialist who may be able to assist with this project. Mrs. Reynolds will speak to the intern and report back to the Commission.

Haddam Neck Property, Land Trust - Mrs. Reynolds reported that about a year ago Torrance Downes, Senior Planner, Gateway Commission, had contacted her in regard to the Gateway Commission purchasing a property in Haddam Neck and if the Haddam Land Trust (HLT) would accept the property. Mrs. Reynolds stated that HLT was interested, but was not prepared to take on a major fund raising project at

that time; however, HLT offered to manage the property should Gateway purchase it. Mrs. Reynolds further reported that she recently read that the Gateway Commission did purchase the property and gave it to the Middlesex Land Trust. A brief discussion followed with Mrs. Reynolds noting that Mr. Downes has not returned her calls. Ms. Hanson suggested that Mrs. Reynolds reach out to Mr. Downes, perhaps by email, in regard to this matter.

b. Budget

There was nothing new to report at this time.

c. Higganum Cove Remediation Project – Follow Up

Mrs. Reynolds reported that Melissa Schlag, First Selectman, sent out an email on 11 March 2015 to a select few people to obtain their opinion on three questions from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mrs. Reynolds stated that she responded and read her responses to the Commission. A copy of the Report of Higganum Cove Committee, November 2000 was distributed for review (report available on the town's website – click "Regulations" found on the left of the home page).

Mrs. Glidden reported that there was a meeting with DEEP to discuss town and DEEP goals; and it was noted that asbestos has been found on the site, that it's not a contact hazard; however, DEEP would like to remove it. Mrs. Glidden stated that a member of the Fisheries Dept. was present and discussed the possibility of installing osprey platforms, types of plantings that would be appropriate for the site, and water channels. The next step in this process is to put this information into document form and present it to EPA.

Mrs. Glidden stated that EPA will be back onsite on 6 April (restoration plan to be developed and some additional work completed) and they should be done by September.

Mr. Worthley noted that there are a number of good examples in other communities of natural areas that have been turned over to towns and turned into low impact recreational sites that are assets to the town, but are not abused by individuals. Mrs. Glidden stated that the site presents a challenge due to its geography (difficult to see if inappropriate activity taking place). Mrs. Glidden noted that the area is still closed to the public.

Mrs. Glidden reported that the bridge on Depot Road will be removed and reconstructed which will impact access. Mrs. Glidden believes the bridge work will begin in 2016.

d. Salmon River Watershed – Follow Up

Mrs. Reynolds reported that she attended an introductory meeting on Thursday, 26 February, in Marlborough, and that it appears to be a steering committee for the Salmon River (set up similar to the Eight Mile River committee). Mrs. Reynolds stated that Pat Young is the project manager and that she was also the project manager on the Eight Mile River Watershed. The focus of this project is to educate people in the watershed about the importance of the river and that meetings will be held quarterly.

Mrs. Reynolds distributed a copy of the latest Salmon River Newsletter for the Commission's review.

e. Emerald Ash Borer Tagging – Follow Up

Mrs. Reynolds gave a brief review of the program for those Commissioners who were not present at last month's meeting and stated that she felt it would be a worthwhile project for the Commission to get involved in. Mr. Worthley stated that he felt tagging the trees is a fine idea, but was not pleased with the language on the tag. Mrs. Reynolds will contact Katherine Dugas, Entomologist, Agricultural Experiment Station, to see if she may obtain additional tags.

Mr. Worthley stated that the Emerald Ash Borer can stay in a tree for a couple of years before they emerge as adults. Mr. Worthley also stated that it may be worthwhile to look into tagging trees that are within the town's public right-of-way. Mr. Worthley discussed the System Resiliency Program, a pilot program approved by the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, and volunteered to tag ash trees within the program's purview.

7. New Business

a. Communications/Publications/Correspondence

Mrs. Reynolds reviewed correspondence from Aquarion in regard to their environmental awards program. Deadline for nominations is Wednesday, 6 May 2015. Mrs. Glidden asked if this program would merit reaching out to Howard Thiery, Superintendent, Regional School District 17. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioners received their copies of The Habitat.

Ms. Hanson briefly discussed an item within the Haddam Bulletin pertaining to the "Welcome to Haddam" signs. Ms. Hanson commented that the idea for the signs initiated with the Commission and was supported by the selectmen. Mrs. Reynolds noted that the Haddam Garden Club has now taken over this project and are doing a wonderful job.

8. Land Use Dept. Report

Beautification Project - Mrs. Glidden reported that the Haddam Garden Club came before the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to discuss this project. Mrs. Glidden stated eventually a presentation will be made to the Commission looking for their opinion/assistance.

Mr. Worthley stated that work can be done along the streams so long as there is no work taking place directly within the waterway or there's a change in the watercourse. Discussion followed in regard to native species and plants that will encourage pollinators (bees and butterflies).

Community Center Sign – Mrs. Glidden reported that she spoke to the first selectman in regard to signage at the Community Center and that a quote has been obtained. Hopefully this matter will be rectified.

Tylerville Planning Session – Mrs. Glidden reported that one of the recommendations within the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is to develop either village or business district regulations for Tylerville. A visioning session will be held with assistance from UConn's landscape architecture program on Wednesday, 8 April 2015, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at the Riverhouse, 55 Bridge Street. John Alexopolous, Associate Professor, UConn Landscape Architecture, will be running the program.

Higganum DOT Garage – Mrs. Reynolds asked if the garage has been transferred to the town. Mrs. Glidden reported that she does not believe the property has been transferred, but believes it's imminent. Mr. Worthley asked if there will be a visioning session for it as well. Mrs. Glidden stated yes.

Higganum Cove – A brief discussion followed in regard to the need for a visioning session for the Cove when the town takes it over. Mr. Bragoni asked how many acres there are with the site. Mrs. Glidden stated close to 13 acres.

McCane Property – Mrs. Reynolds asked if there is still interest in the property. Mrs. Glidden stated yes, she is; however, funding is an issue. Discussion followed in regard to accepting funds from other agencies and specific requirements when accepting agency funds; and public/private partnership to generate revenue.

105 Bridge Street, former Eco-Tourism Center – Mrs. Glidden reported that the property has been transferred to Center Plan Development.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Tom Worthley moved to adjourn. Mardi Hanson second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 29 April 2015.