

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

April 1, 2008
Adopted May 6, 2008

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, April 1, 2008 at 7:05PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, Peggy Carlson, Paul Stuhlman, Nancy MacKinnon, TJ Tarbox – departed at 7:50, Susan Merrow – arrived 7:15 and departed at 8:45, and Emmett Lyman.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mrs. Mackinnon to approve the agenda. Second by Ms. Carlson and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 3/4/08

Fix the spelling of the Urbanik property name. Replace Connection with Connecticut under 4.i. 5th paragraph. Fix the spelling of Kathy Klein's last name.

Motion by Ms. Carlson to approve the minutes as amended. Second by Mrs. Mackinnon and unanimously approved.

4. Old Business

a. Appointment to Inland Wetlands

Inland Wetlands has a seat for a member of the Conservation Commission (CC). Procedure dictates that the CC appoints a CC member to sit on Inland Wetlands for the Board of Selectmen to review and provide final approval of the appointment. Mr. Stuhlman has expressed an interest in the appointment. Motion by Mrs. Merrow to appoint Paul Stuhlman to the CC seat on Inland Wetlands. Second by Mrs. Mackinnon and unanimously approved.

Discussion ensued regarding how long the CC seat on Inland Wetlands has existed; Mr. Lyman suggested Mrs. Matthew check with Jim Ventres on the matter. Mrs. Matthew will notify the Board of Selectmen via a letter with a carbon copy to Mr. Dill and Mr. Ventres regarding the appointment of Mr. Stuhlman to Inland Wetlands. This topic can then be included on the Board of Selectmen meeting agenda in the next few weeks.

Mr. Lyman suggested that Mr. Stuhlman talk further to Mr. Dill regarding the potential for a compromised position with receiving non-public information through Inland Wetlands that the rest of the CC is not privy to. Extreme care is required given the legal requirements and regulations of Inland Wetlands. Mrs. Mackinnon asked that the legal implications of the appointed CC position on Inland Wetlands be clarified prior to Mr. Stuhlman's formal appointment.

b. Criteria for assessing a subdivision

Site/Subdivision Plan Review for Compatibility with Woodstock Plan of Open Space and Conservation: Mrs. Mackinnon offered the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review for Compatibility with Woodstock Plan of Open Space and Conservation* form as a useful tool for the CC to use when assessing a subdivision proposal. Historically, assessing a subdivision has been related to issues primarily related to runoff, steep slopes, protecting large stands of trees, archeological issues, and protecting stone walls; this tool provides further assessment of these items and more. What makes the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review* form a good tool is its objectivity. It works well with other tools that the CC has and uses. Much of the information that is needed to complete the plan review is required in the engineering review of the subdivision and is therefore accessible. A number of the criteria in the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review* form are already P&Z criteria. The Woodstock CC considers themselves a resource for Woodstock P&Z to provide further review and further oversight, which mirrors the East Haddam CC. Mrs. Mackinnon suggested that the Woodstock plan be used to review subdivisions.

Subdivision Walks: One of the procedures employed to ensure objectivity when conducting a walk of a potential subdivision is to have already determined the questions that will be asked and not express any opinion during the walk.

c. Review of Hanks subdivision application

Mr. Tarbox recused himself from the Hanks subdivision discussion.

The CC has received all the pertinent Hanks subdivision materials – subdivision application, engineering documents, all expert testimony (letters and reviews presented at Inland Wetlands hearing), and engineering drawings. Mrs. Matthew addressed the contents of Mike Harris' email, there was concern that a vernal pool was overlooked which was not overlooked by the CC on their walk.

Ms. Carlson reviewed the engineering map and provided details from the walk. On lot 6, there may be a vernal pool that requires further review. The access road will be paved. Mrs. Matthew suggested that more expert opinion regarding the vernal pools and wetland areas to review further and supports following the guidelines set out by the state. Mrs. Mackinnon has two outstanding questions: When are the specimen trees going to be marked and assessment of other vernal pools and are there other particular species of animals and plants that should be considered?

Discussion ensued related to what information should be provided to Inland Wetlands and P&Z and which commissions should receive CC input. There were many questions as to what information is needed by the regulatory commissions from CC. Mrs. Mackinnon suggested that comments on 1, 2, 3 and possibly 6 on the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review* form be provided to Inland Wetlands.

Discussion also ensued around the Open Space Committee's review of the property, who ultimately determined not to purchase it.

Action steps:

- Receive more information on #1 on the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review* form
- Urge Inland Wetlands not make any decisions prior to further information being provided (April 24th is the 2nd Inland Wetlands hearing on the property).

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Expert testimony is available and is being split up among the CC members to review prior to the next meeting.

Jody Chase expert opinion – Peggy Carlson will review

REMA expert opinion – Peggy Carlson will review

Letters from soil scientists and other experts – Sue Merrow (Mrs. Matthew will send copies of the letters to Sue for her review.)

Mr. Lyman raised the question related to Canary Grass and further details around what it indicates – Mr. Stuhlman will research what it indicates.

Mrs. Mackinnon will review the application materials from the engineer and begin to fill out the *Site/Subdivision Plan Review* form.

5. Confirmation of next meeting: May 6, 2008 at the River House at 7pm. Mrs. Merrow will not be able to attend.

6. Other discussion

A conference on open space issues is being held on April 5th, visit www.nature.org for the details, call Barbara Bloomberg for further details if interested.

Open Space Committee meeting date will be provided via email by Cynthia; it is an informational meeting outlining the current criteria and the CC is encouraged to attend.

Ms. Carlson tried to purchase the books approved by the CC but they were not available. She was able to purchase Last Child in the Woods for herself, and Nancy has purchased a copy to donate to the CC.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Carlson to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Stuhlman, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- Emails and agenda regarding CC walk of the Hanks Subdivision
- Site/Subdivision Plan Review for Compatibility with Woodstock Plan of Open Space and Conservation
- 3/20/08 Inland Wetlands Hearing on the Hanks Subdivision Proposal (note: 30 Orchard Road and reviewed by the Open Space Committee, not Commission)
- Subdivision Application email from Michael Harris
- REMA letter regarding Hanks Subdivision
- Petition Requesting Change to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map
- Ariel view of the Hanks subdivision