



Tuesday, July 2, 2024
Municipal Office Building Room #1

1. Call to order – Called to order at 7:00 p.m.
In attendance: Joe Sina, Bernie Gillis, Cameron Beard, John Olin, Alan Ponanski, David Walls, Barry Bernard, Tanya Bourgoin, and Ruth Ziobron via YouTube.

Absent: Susan Pagnano and Gary Wilson.
2. Alternate appointments (if necessary)-Mr. Walls and Mr. Ponanski were appointed.
3. Approval of agenda-add under 8B “Tree Cutting”,
Motion to approve the agenda.
Gillis/Walls Passed Unanimously
4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes June 4, 2024
Motion to approve the meeting minutes.
Mr. Ponanski abstained
Beard/ Olin Passed
5. General announcements
 - Allison and Will Guinness brought black walnut trees to the sustainability meeting. The remaining trees were repotted and placed in the community garden. There are 25 pots available for distribution. These trees are beautiful but have toxic root systems that inhibit the growth of nearby plants. Potential locations for planting were discussed, including areas near parking lots to help control invasives.
 - The film crew finished filming a documentary scene on Lexington and Concord at the Patrell Bridge and cleaned up the area promptly. They trimmed some vegetation with permission. The filming was non-disruptive, and the area was left in good condition. The filming ran from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM, with minimal impact on the ADA Trail.
 - Budget discussion: The current year's expenses will determine what goes into next year's budget.
 - A resident expressed concerns about Asplundh trucks parking at the Harris property and performing maintenance activities. The trucks were parked on municipal property, not open space.

- Plans to address knotweed at the Salmon River Overlook are underway. The tarp method is being used. A work party will be organized to further manage this effort.

6. Presentations from the public- There were none.

7. Old business

a. Subcommittee updates

i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis

- New maps for Dean /Hatch have been installed.
- A kiosk/maps were installed at the Harris property.
- Maintenance activities included weeding, tree removal, and trail clearing at various locations such as Lena, Hatch, and Rose Farm. Specific tasks included removing a large beech tree, clearing trees on the Red Trail at Hatch, and addressing overgrown ferns on the Yellow Trail at Rose Farm.
- A pavilion is being planned for Burnham Brook.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – Mr. Wilson via email

- An article on oak trees' environmental benefits is being planned for the East Haddam News.
- A draft interview with Michele Velez regarding the tree-cutting processes is in progress. The interview aims to clarify the decision-making process for tree removal and neighborhood notification.
- A piece on land donation for the next Events Magazine is being considered, highlighting personal experiences and benefits of land donation.
- Efforts are being made to increase community involvement through various events and publications. The next Events Magazine will describe the Conservation Commission's activities and volunteer opportunities.

iii. Climate Resilience –Mr. Olin

- The Succor Brook project is progressing slowly. Meetings are scheduled with various stakeholders to discuss flood volume projections and their impact on the village and surrounding areas. The technical and citizen advisory board will meet in August, and a public meeting is planned for September.

b. Liaison Reports

i. IWWC Updates-Mr. Walls: No updates.

ii. P&Z updates – Mr. Gillis

- Fox Hopyard plans to add a pool, pickleball courts, and a pool house.

iii. Open Space updates-Mr. Sina: No updates.

iv. Eightmile Committee updates – Mr. Beard

- No recent meetings, but efforts are ongoing to reroute the Goodwin Trail where it is washing out in East Lyme.

v. Sustainability Committee- Mr. Ponanski

- The town-wide picnic was a success with significant participation. The committee's efforts were recognized with a Silver Sustainability Award.
- Flyers and posters on sustainability actions were created and distributed. Future events will continue to promote these actions. Efforts are being made to make recycling and composting more accessible to residents.

c. Planting/existing garden updates – Mr. Wilson via email.

- Regular maintenance and watering of plants at the Salmon River Overlook and other locations are underway.
- Plans to plant swamp oak and highbush cranberries in suitable locations are being developed. Volunteers are being organized to assist with these efforts.

d. Reserve Monitor Discussion –Mr. Sina

- Additional reserve monitors are needed to ensure regular coverage of all areas. Volunteers are being sought to fill these roles.

8. New Business

a. New bills

Motion to approve the bill(s) as presented:

- Essex Printing Invoice #36263 dated 6/9/24 for \$110.00.
- Essex Printing Invoice #36274 dated 6/9/24 for \$232.15.
- Essex Printing Invoice #36272 dated 6/9/24 for \$105.00.
- Essex Printing Invoice #36273 dated 6/9/24 for \$135.00.
- Shagbark Lumber dated 7/20/24 for \$89.96.
- Joe Sina for Shagbark supplies for \$15.51.

Gillis/Beard Passed unanimously

b. Discussion from Commission members

Hand Property Discussion - Mr. Beard:

- A potential trail through the Hand property was discussed. A walk with state representatives is planned to explore the feasibility of this project. The trail would connect the parking lot of Devil's Hopyard to the Lena preserve.

Tree Cutting Discussion:

Mr. Ponanski expressed shock at the proposed tree removal by the town, specifically noting 103 tagged trees on Newberry Road. He emphasized the need for a transparent process that involves public input and considers environmental impacts. The historical and aesthetic importance of tree-lined roads was acknowledged, as they contribute to the town's heritage and property values. Concerns about environmental effects, such as erosion and loss of shade, were raised. Establishing a clear process for tree removal, involving public hearings and expert input, was discussed. Replacement planting and considering road width impact were also mentioned. Preparing for storms while carefully selecting trees for removal was emphasized.

Motion by Mr. Ponanski:

- Mr. Ponanski made a motion to establish a committee to study tree-cutting policies and practices and develop recommendations for a more transparent and informed process. **The motion was seconded by Mr. Olin.**
- After discussion, Mr. Ponanski amended his motion to focus on fact-finding about other towns' tree-cutting policies and processes, with the potential to establish a formal committee based on the findings. The amendment was accepted, and the **motion passed unanimously.**

9. Public Comment (can be sent via email to: ccchair@easthaddam.org) -There was none.

10. Next meeting: Tues. 06 August 2024 7:00 pm, Room #1

11. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 9:03 p.m.
Gillis/Beard Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary