East Haddam
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Conservation Commission Meeting
Minutes Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Municipal Office Building, Room #1

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chair Bernie Gillis.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments
Members Present: Pat Capel, Joe Sina, Barry Bernard, Bernie Gillis, John Olin, David Walls, Susan Pagnano, Alan Ponanski
Members Absent: Cameron Beard
Guests: none
Alternate Appointments: David Walls was seated as an alternate for the meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda
Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Ponanski/Pagnano: Passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Conservation Commission Minutes from September 1, 2026. Motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Bernard/Pagnano: Passed Unanimously

5. Presentations from the Public – none

6. Chair's Updates: See updates under Stewardship and Forestry, and Outreach and Promotion

7. Old Business
a. Subcommittee Updates
i. Stewardship and Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis
Trees removed, trails checked and cleared on the following:
Lafevre
Patrell – trees down
Rose farm
Harris, tree down,
Sabine
Shugrue
Kronberg - installed directional post.
Jones Hill - kiosk
Hunting Signs posted at: Urbanik, Shugrue, Harris, Hayward, Roaring Brook, Lehman

Wally's woods – Joe Sina marked boundaries.
Wally's woods - tagged a new trail.
Wally's Woods – put a load of wood chips from Transfer Station on a rocky section.
Wally's woods – looked for boundaries again with Susan and Joe.
Essex Sign & Display- picked up a sign.

ii. Outreach and Promotion – Mr. Gillis
Bernie Gillis asked if anyone wanted to take it over. We need people to write articles. Susan will consider it. Gary wrote an article about fall activities in your back yard; Bernie will send it out to everyone.
Alan Ponanski – the Sustainability Team is trying to have a monthly theme, so that could be a joint project. The initiative right now is to bring back different resources to the Transfer Station to make it easier to recycle and dispose of hazardous materials. Don't dispose of your leaves, they are valuable for your soil. Pile them up and let them sit for a few years, you will have a valuable resource.

iii Climate Resilience– Mr. Olin
Mr. Olin reported that our two big grant efforts are still pending. We are on a rolling grant basis with DEEP now. There is a $650,000 grant to widen the Creamery Road culvert. DEEP is willing to work with us on the grant.

b. Liaison Reports

iii. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls
Bob Casner is updating plans for the next meeting. He is proposing 8 buildings, 4 are retail with apartments above. There are some wetlands and intermittent streams on the property, which is across from Shagbark. They need to get another state permit for the project.

iv. P & Z Updates – Mr. Gillis –
Planning and Zoning approved Joe Sina's donation of 40 acres to the Town of East Haddam. It needs to go to the town attorney for a title search. Then it will go to the Board of Selectmen, and to a Town Meeting for approval.

Joe Sina said the buyer for his house is a landscape painter and is concerned about his privacy. He asked if the Conservation Commission could install some native shrubs to block the view of the house from the trails. Bernie Gillis will talk to Gary about plants to put there that have some winter foliage and can provide some privacy.

v. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina
The Golf Course Committee did not recommend that the project move forward. It's not a working golf course right now, the greens need to be redone. The town cannot afford it right now.

vi. Eightmile Committee Updates – no update

vii. Sustainability Committee– Mr. Ponanski –
See above. Amalia and Tanya are doing a great job; they had an event at the Grange this afternoon about Energy Audits. They are free with Energize CT, funded through Eversource. They have a team come into your house and show you what to do to save money. You need to fill out an application. The audit takes a couple of hours, and they will do an air pressure test. Barry Bernard had one done at his house last spring and said they added insulation in the attic for almost nothing. Pat Capel warned that some of the contractors may try to upsell the customers, so be careful of that. Joe Sina recommended

having radon testing done if the house is tightened up. Alan Ponanski expects that the Sustainability Team will come up with some kind of approach for the energy audits and what is available. Composting is another major push for the Team. Haddam is doing an excellent job composting waste and they got a grant to help fund it. River COG has been trying to get a regional system in place to bring down the cost. We could work on building local support and include the Agricultural Commission and other segments of our local government to work on it.

8. **New Business**
   a. New Bills

      The following bills were submitted and approved:
      From Shagbark for lumber $52.90
      Paint for marking trails and recycling$67.14
      Headlock screws for signs and cowhide gloves 51.98
      Pressure treated 4x4 for kiosks $58.77.
      Sign for Wally's Woods Preserve - $185
      Motion to approve the bills as presented.
      Ponanski/Walls, Passed Unanimously.

   b. Discussion from Commission members – Bernie Gillis asked if David Walls would like to be a regular member to replace Joe Sina who is moving. David is the longest serving alternate and agreed to become a regular member. Thank you to Joe Sina for all the work you have done over the years. It is much appreciated and you will be missed.
      If someone wants to join the Commission they need to apply and be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Pat Capel suggested advertising for new members in the East Haddam News. The Commission can have a total of 9 members, including 3 alternates.
      John Olin asked how Wally's Woods got its name – It was named after Joe Sina's dog who liked to walk there.

9. **Public Comment** (can be submitted via email to ccchair@easthaddam.org)
   None.

10. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 10 November 2026, 7:00 PM, Meeting Room #3

11. **Adjournment**
    Motion to adjourn at 8:01 PM
    Walls/Sina, Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully
Submitted, Martha
Hansen