

City of Shelton, Conservation Commission
 Minutes for the Regular Meeting on Wednesday November 7, 2007 at 7:00 P.M.
 Minutes should be considered a draft version until approved by CC at their next meeting.

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Call to Order

Present: Tom Harbinson, Chairman
Bill Dyer, Vice-Chairman
Jim Tate, Commissioner
Hank Lauriat, Commissioner

The Commission currently has 6 active members.

Also Present: Teresa Gallagher, Conservation Agent
Marianne Chaya, Clerk

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harbinson called the meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 710 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2007 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice Chairman Dyery. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

C. Public Portion

None

D. Trails Committee Report

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported as follows:

Planned Projects for 2007

A. Recreation Path

We can put out a spec to have the work done. It will require a walk-through and I would like to form a sub-committee with Commissioner Tate, Terrance Gallagher (Trails Committee) and myself to look at it and the drainage issues and how much fill we will need. We do know companies to contact.

Terrance Gallagher stated his concerns with doing it without design plans to bid on. He said he felt we were setting ourselves up for cost overruns because each contractor has his own idea on what they are producing. Commissioner Tate asked and there was discussion of the probable cost overruns. They also discussed the process with the contractor. There was discussion regarding the fact that Vice-Chairman Dyer will monitor this project. Before this project is signed off by the Mayor our City engineer would have the opportunity to make comment and the contractor would have clear expectations of what is required. The sub-committee members said they would contact each other to set a time for a walk-through.

B. 2007 Recreation Trails Grant Application

Terrance Gallagher is handling this process

D. \$2500 State Grant

Agent Gallagher is still working on this.

E. New Bridge over Curtiss Brook

The volunteers will be doing this and we have a set of plans and have to determine the cost. This will be an 8'x20' bridge, similar to the one at Crabapple.

F. Turkey Trot Trail & the Shelton High School Cross Country Team

The team placed in the top 5 in the State and will be going to the New England championship event in Maine this weekend.

G. Trail at old Master's Site – Rte. 110 & Far Mill River

The contractor is leveling the area off.

H. Trail along the driving range & behind the hockey rink

They seem to be dragging their feet and I will have to contact Rick Schultz.

Terrance Gallagher stated that the owner wanted to forgo doing anything to restore the trail until he started work on the property next door (Centrix). I think that we should require that they take care of cleaning the area behind the hockey rink now and when they start on the property next door we will take him up on the offer of the gravel path.

I. Well Springs Estate trail

Agent Gallagher reported that Royal Wells is working on the open space area.

J. Connect Blue Dot Trail to Shelton Lakes

I did talk with the Mayor and we have agreed to go in and flag the area in the overlook that is going to bring us up to Mayflower. Lynn is going to find out why DEP they haven't approved our approach through Indian Well. This will be a winter project.

Chairman Harbinson commented that he was asked to meet with the association for Waterview Landing and speak about open space. Old Coram Rd. has a right-of-way with a cul-de-sac where there is an approved area for hiking. While talking to them about the open space and the hiking trail one of the residents commented about people walking near his home. It was interesting to listen to their comments about trails close to homes. It would be a good idea to have a map in our open space plan of approved trails or proposed trails.

Terrance Gallagher commented that he noticed there were quite a number of people using the Turkey Trot trail.

Agent Gallagher commented that the maps of the trails are a big hit with the residents.

K. Work Party Schedule

We will be working at Riverview Park next Saturday.

L. Shelton Day 2007

We participated along with the Land Trust and we got a lot of names of volunteers. The bobcat life-size picture was a big hit. A lot of people took pictures of it and posed with it as well.

We received a lot of positive comments regarding the trails.

M. Land Trust project on Lane Street

This project is to relocate the trail from the boardwalk up to the woods. They will be putting in a gravel trail and is not planning to put filter fabric down, which we feel is a mistake. Hopefully it will turn out ok. Terrance Gallagher will contact them to express our concerns.

N. Trails Maintenance

There have been repairs on some of the kiosks. Agent Gallagher commented that the one on Mill Street is in need of repair.

Terrance Gallagher commented that there are now painted crosswalks at Meadow Street and Constitution Blvd.

Vice Chairman Dyer MOVED to add the 2008 meeting schedule to the agenda. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

E. 2008 Meeting Schedule

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve the 2008 meeting schedule with meetings to be held on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7 PM, in room 303. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Marianne Chaya informed the Commissioners about the Housatonic River Estuary Commission that has just been formed. Commissioner Lauriat asked to be copied on the minutes of the meetings. This Commission will be meeting monthly, currently at the Community Center and may rotate the locations to the towns participating in the Commission (Ansonia, Derby, Milford, Orange, Stratford, & Shelton).

F. Review of P&Z Applications for Subdivisions and/or Development

Old Applications

49 Wesley Drive, ZBA #907-3, reduction in rear setback to 6 feet from abutting open space for swimming pool.

Agent Gallagher emailed the Commissioners the portion of the minutes from the ZBA minutes.

Twisted Vines, PZC #07-38; 26-lot subdivision of land abutting Birchbank Mtn Open Space off East Village Road.

Conveyance of open space to City of Shelton, BOA referral letter. Also, developer has agreed to allow significant trees to be marked by CC Agent for possible saving.

Commissioner Tate MOVED to have Agent Gallagher write a letter to the BOA regarding the dedication of open space and confirming that the Conservation Agent will be reviewing the site for specimen trees to insure minimal disturbance around the areas and possible saving. Also to mention that the stone walls should be reused in a like manner. Chairman Harbinson will email this information before the November BOA meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

New Applications

Wells Ave. Extension – Coram Gardens

Agent Gallagher presented plans for the abandonment of the right-of-way. She showed the parcels along this right of way. What would happen is it would become part of the corresponding parcels if the right of way is abandoned. She noted the area of the Ivy Brook greenway.

The Commissioners discussed the details of the area in question and decided they would discuss it further in Executive Session.

Shelton Canal – Approval by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 6066-026 to fill the canal north of the locks.

Chairman Harbinson and Agent Gallagher reported that FERC had given approval for the change in permitting for the McCallum Enterprises Derby dam project to fill in a section of the canal. This is near the locks where we felt was a nice feature of the River walk.

Tape 1, Side B

The area we are talking about is where the locks are to the power plant. Vice-Chairman Dyer commented that part of that is already filled in. Curtiss Brook is downstream of the locks. Chairman Harbinson asked if Inland Wetlands would be looking into it. Vice-Chairman Dyer said that he talked with John Cook who said he was shocked when he found out about it and that they would be doing this without prior approval from the IWC.

Agent Gallagher stated that in the approval it was stated that the reason for doing this was that they wanted to sell the property after they filled it.

Vice-Chairman Dyer commented that John Cook told him there was an application for 88 condos on that property.

Chairman Harbinson asked what can/can't be our affect on the process? We can make comment or ask to be an intervener for the purposes of being informed on changes or review. Agent Gallagher said we could ask for information from the State Archeologist.

Chairman Harbinson asked if this were something the Housatonic River Estuary Commission would be interested in following as well.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said that at some point this area was being considered as a historic landmark.

Agent Gallagher mentioned that it was stated publicly that they were looking to sell this property and the Commissioners may want to discuss this in Executive Session. This is within the Housatonic greenway.

Commissioner Tate suggested that we should continue to gather as much information as we can, especially from SEDC. Perhaps we could write a note to Jim Ryan or any other reviewing agency saying that in regards to the canal and

the efforts in the development of downtown that the Conservation Commission would like to be notified.

G. Open Space Plan

Agent Gallagher prepared the draft and stated that she is still in need of Chairman Harbinson's comments.

Commissioner Tate stated that he wanted the draft released as soon as possible. Chairman Harbinson commented that Agent Gallagher did a good job on the draft.

Agent Gallagher said that she would release it once she has the maps from Regis.

Chairman Harbinson and Agent Gallagher will take the draft to the Mayor.

H. Communications

Chairman Harbinson reported on the following:

- American Chestnut Foundation
- CT Forest & Parks Association – annual fund appeal
- Letter from Representative Larry Miller regarding our letter to him concerning the use of the plastic BB's and he said that he would be happy to look into introducing legislation in the 2008 assembly to encourage the use of the biodegradable BB's. Jason Perillo is also aware of the Commission's concerns.
- Zoning Board of Appeals – agenda item regarding a request for a reduction of the street line setback on Weybossett. The City's property is at the rear of the parcel. They meet November 20.
- CACIWC membership request. It is unknown if our IWC is already a member. Chairman Harbinson will approve our membership if it is not already done.
- Copied on a letter from Rick Schultz to Bob Kulacz regarding Meadow Woods Estates – Plum Tree Lane, re-subdivision of lot 7. (Letter read)
- Letter from American Farmland Trust
- CT Woodlands brochure

I. Shelton Farm & Forest Protection Program 2005 Applicant 1 : Homestead Acres

USDA Review of NRCS and Shelton's FFPP Grant Award

Chairman Harbinson reported that the bids came in for the appraisals. The BOA will be awarding the contract at their November 8th meeting. The low, and only bidder, was Vimini. It was for the same price he had given us before. It was just a longer process because of the bidding process the City has to follow. The surveyors were on the property last week. It seems to be on schedule.

J. Conservation Agent Report

Agent Gallagher reported on the following:

Open Space Inventorying and Mapping:

Discussed earlier.

Community Resource Inventory Committee

The Committee will tentatively be meeting on the 2nd Weds of the month at 7:00 pm. The first meeting has been scheduled for November 14.

Open Space inspecting, signage, encroachment

No new progress

Open Space Trust Account

Finance Dept. has not given us a report.

Consolidated Rec Path Grants Status

I did receive the report of the services in-kind from Engineering and Public Works. We have spent \$69,000 of the grant, leaving about \$6,000 left to spend. We are required to match 20% of the total grant amount in order for reimbursement of about \$15,000. I have documented \$9,000 that the City has spent for services in-kind. That will increase once I have the volunteer hours from the Trails Committee.

Vice-Chairman Dyer stated that the volunteers have put in about 300 hours. We could also count the millings that the City donated.

Land keeper Program

The patches have come in and we have already awarded some scouts. I will speak at the upcoming Girl Scout meeting regarding this program. Commissioner Tate asked to have any information regarding this sent to Steve McEwen for the Boy Scouts.

Fee in Lieu of Payments

I will be meeting with Rick Schultz next week to see what is still outstanding.

CACIWC annual conference

Scheduled for Saturday, Nov 10,

Far Mill River

HVA is planning a spring event involving student assessment of parts of the Far Mill River. They are going to do a shoreline assessment regarding macro

invertebrates. It will be an educational event. Part of this event is that they are supposed to present their findings to City officials.

K. Quality of Life - Executive Session

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing land acquisition issues at 8:26 P.M. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Vice Chairman Dyer MOVED to come out Executive Session and return to Regular Session at 9:18 P.M. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to ask the Chairman to forward the appraisal to the Board of Aldermen with our recommendation that they moved quickly to acquire this property. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

L. Comments by Members

Commissioner Tate suggested finding a way to let the public know what the Conservation Commission's accomplishments have been. We should publish it in something like Shelton Life and the Huntington Herald. Chairman Harbinson stated that he would also be doing it at budget time. Commissioner Tate said that we could also do it on the web site primarily focusing on the open space plan and the accomplishments and any issue that the Commission had input in this year.

M. Adjournment

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, December 5, 2007.

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Vice Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission