

City of Shelton, Conservation Commission  
 Minutes for the Regular Meeting on Wednesday December 2, 2009 at 7:00 P.M.  
 Minutes should be considered a draft version until approved by CC at their next meeting.

Call to Order ..... 1  
 A. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance..... 2  
 B. Approval of Minutes..... 2  
 C. Public Portion ..... 2  
 D. Farewell to Commissioner Lauriat/Welcome Sheryl Dutkanicz ..... 2  
 E. Plan Implementation Committee of Planning & Zoning Commission..... 2  
 F. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path-upgrade to handicapped accessible standards. Status ..... 2  
 G. Trails Committee Report ..... 3  
     *Trails Committee Award*..... 3  
     *Granite pillars and removable bollards*..... 3  
     *Connect Blue Dot Trail to Shelton Lakes – Status*..... 3  
     *DEP Grant*..... 4  
     *Guided Hikes*..... 4  
 H. Dog Park Status ..... 4  
 I. Long Hill School buffer planting ..... 5  
 J. Review of PZC or IWC Applications for Subdivisions and/or Developments.... 6  
     1. *Old Applications/Monitor/Follow-up*..... 6  
       *i. Cranberry Hill Estates: Conveyance of Open Space*..... 6  
     2. *New Applications*..... 6  
       *i. Dlugas Subdivision – 88 Valley Rd* ..... 6  
 J. Communications ..... 6  
 K. Trail Camera..... 6  
 L. Executive Session..... 7  
 M Comments By Members ..... 7  
 N. Election of Chairman/Vice-Chairman ..... 8  
 O. Adjournment..... 8

**Call to Order**

Present: Tom Harbinson, Chairman  
 Bill Dyer, Vice-Chairman  
 Jim Tate, Commissioner  
 Ed McCreery, Commissioner  
 Joe Welsh, Commissioner  
 James Goodman, Commissioner  
 Sheryl Dutkanicz, Commissioner

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

## **A. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Harbinson called the meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Goodman MOVED to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2009 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

## **C. Public Portion**

None

## **D. Farewell to Commissioner Lauriat/Welcome Sheryl Dutkanicz**

Chairman Harbinson stated that Commissioner Hank Lauriat submitted a letter of resignation that was accepted and wanted to thank Hank for all of his years as a Commissioner. He also welcomed the newest member of the Commission, Sheryl Maybeck Dutkanicz who is also a member of the Trails Committee.

## **E. Plan Implementation Committee of Planning & Zoning Commission**

Chairman Harbinson stated that P&Z is putting together a Plan Implementation Committee to keep the Plan of Conservation & Development a living document. They would take a chapter at a time for review to keep it up to date. I would recommend that Jim Tate serve as our Conservation representative to that committee.

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to have Commissioner Jim Tate serve on the Plan Implementation Committee as a representative for the Conservation Commission. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

## **F. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path-upgrade to handicapped accessible standards. Status**

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that he has been keeping the Commissioners up to date throughout the project via email. Barry Mucci did a marvelous job and it took him a lot longer than planned because it took the City a lot longer to get the materials there. The first reason was that the big city trucks were too big and heavy for the trail. The solution was to use trucks from Parks & Rec but it was hard to get them when needed. Barry eventually went over and got the materials

himself, at no additional cost. It was completed for what Barry was to do for us. We still need to go in there and do some additional work. I have asked Bill Mooney (Highways & Bridges) to use his roller on the trail. He did say he would do it for us; the time it will be done is unknown. I have asked Dean Cawthra to go in and chip some of the brush and tree limbs from the trees cut along the path. He would not commit to a time frame either. We also want to go and try and dress up the sides to try and avoid erosion. All in all, it looks very good and complements the other meadow with the 8' path on both sides of the boardwalk. Trails Committee member Terry Gallagher mentioned that they have a punch list and gave copies to the Commissioners. I did go out and measure the base that went in and there are a couple of spots that are a little thin. In general Barry did a very good job getting the material in. P&R did a good job helping as well. We should send a letter of commendation to Barry. You just don't get a contractor to come out for multiple days volunteering his time and his equipment at virtually no cost to the City. The contract was for \$1500 and Barry was out there for probably 5-6 full man days plus a few partial days. This would normally cost for at least \$800/day for an equipment operator. The City received a huge benefit from Barry and he did a very nice job. He did even say that he is still willing to do more work for the City in the future. We just have a little bit of cleanup to do plus getting the granite bollards and the sign kiosk installed. This will be a really nice feature that will be a good publicity item for Conservation. Chairman Harbinson said he went out there and it looks really good. Just a thought when we get to the point of installing the granite bollards we need to make it wide enough for equipment to get through to the open space since it is a haying field.

## G. Trails Committee Report

### Trails Committee Award

Vice-Chairman Dyer showed the Sportsperson of the Year award that the Trails Committee received from the Fairfield County Sportsman Commission. They will put it up by the Conservation office.

### Granite pillars and removable bollards

I am still in process of trying to obtain a quote from Swenson. There was discussion and they determined that Vice-Chairman Dyer and Chairman Harbinson would work out the details.

### Connect Blue Dot Trail to Shelton Lakes – Status

Vice-Chairman Dyer and Commissioner Dutkanicz did meet with the adjacent property owners talking about use of their property as an alternative and they declined to have the walking trail go on their property. We still need to meet with the Mayor to tell him that is not an option. We need to do something within the

next few months or we will lose another year. Our recommendation continues to be able to use Mayflower as the route.

### DEP Grant

We have been notified that we have been selected. We got the evaluation results of our proposal and it is remarkably high. We got the maximum number of points for every category that we met. It was disappointing however that we did not get a letter of support from HVA and CFPA that were promised. We think that if awarded the monetary amount will be around \$73,000 to do the path from the meadow up to Wesley Drive.

### Guided Hikes

We had a very successful and enjoyable guided hike of the Tahmore loop with about 30 people.

Trails Committee member Terry Gallagher mentioned that it was nice to see the turnout of all the Land Trust members. We had a lot of cars parked along Tahmore Place; no one blocked anyone's driveway or their mailbox. None of the hikers stole or burglarized anything from any of the homes. The dogs did not carry off any of the neighbors children nor did any of the children get run over. We also had two very successful work parties at the Tahmore Trail and at the Turkey Trot trail. There were also a few other smaller work parties at various locations on the trails.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to have a letter written to Barry Mucci thanking him for all of his work on the Recreation Path. A copy of this letter should be forwarded to the newspaper as well. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

### H. Dog Park Status

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the Board of Aldermen has approved the concept but not the funding. The major expense would be the fence. Parks & Rec has been authorized to go in and start working. They removed a hedge and some small trees that they will be chipping. There are some significant tall dead trees that should be removed. There is some engineering work that should be done such as water draining out onto Nells Rock road that could be a hazard when it freezes. We will be talking to Alderman John Papa to see if there is more of a plan than what we have seen so far.

Commissioner Welsh said he wants to make sure that the Rec Path is on that plan and gets done with the project. Vice-Chairman Dyer agreed and said that the plan shows parking places for the Rec Path without it even being shown on the map.

Chairman Harbinson suggested talking with Bob Kulacz to find out how our Rec Path will be integrated with what they are proposing.

It was agreed that the section from the white house to Oak Valley Rd. is probably the easiest to do of what is left on the Recreation Path construction.

Agent Gallagher said that she went to the Trumbull dog park and explained how their park looked.

## I. Long Hill School buffer planting

Commissioner Tate updated the Commission by stating that there are several fields that are being constructed behind Long Hill School. About 1/3 of the area was City open space wooded area that have been excavated. In this process it exposed the neighbors on one side. The neighbors have now been educated on this process and have been very understanding about things. Part of the plan involved a planting of evergreens as a screen to delineate the property line. What we found was that they had encroached upon the City open space and they are very anxious to have this screen back so as to find out where their property line is. The area has been surveyed and marked. The City had applied for a grant to plant this under the America the Beautiful program. It had been bid for the plantings and it had lapsed waiting for the grant. The grant, as of Friday, was not granted to the City. The original plan was to have the Conservation Commission front the money until the grant money came in. However, now that is a mute point. My recommendation to the City is to go back out to bid for the planting so it could happen in the spring so that it could be part of the construction contract for some other source of money.

I think as the Conservation Commission become more entwined in restoration or enhancements or any kind of natural improvements if the Commission could oversee some of that kind of thing rather than having it go under control of Parks & Rec, or similar entity, there may be some advantage to that. The reason for that is that we could understand a little more of how we can appreciate what we already have in terms of restoring slopes that may be a problem, planting some of the areas near subdivisions that come to us, etc. Years ago we did some planting at Southbank park – slope along Rte. 110. It also would help at budget time trying to make sure people understand what the Conservation Commission does and we can point to specific examples.

Commissioner McCreery commented that he likes pointing to the Recreation Path and our accomplishments. He mentioned that Jason Perillo complemented the accomplishments.

Chairman Harbinson said the way he understands what Commissioner Tate is saying is that if we get involved in solutions that integrate with Parks & Rec and Board of Ed, they would also gain a better understanding of what our goals are in addition to us understanding what their needs are.

Commissioner Tate talked about City projects, bidding process and using local residents and City resources and the costs involved.

He just wanted to make the Commission aware that they may be asked to come up with some money for the planting screen on this project.

Chairman Harbinson reminded the Commissioners that now is the time they have to start thinking of the next fiscal year budget.

## J. Review of PZC or IWC Applications for Subdivisions and/or Developments

### 1. Old Applications/Monitor/Follow-up

#### i. Cranberry Hill Estates: Conveyance of Open Space.

We sent a letter regarding the request for dedication of open space and Chairman Harbinson reported that we have not heard any comment back. Our recommendation was that it follows in the same manner in which we recommended at the original application that it be City open space.

### 2. New Applications

#### i. Dlugas Subdivision – 88 Valley Rd

This is a two-lot subdivision that is exempt from open set-aside due to the deeding of the new lot to a family member.

## J. Communications

- Letter from HVA requesting to renew our annual \$100 membership gift.

**Commissioner McCreery MOVED to renew the membership with HVA at a cost of \$100. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

- Newsletter – CT Forests & Parks Association.
- Newsletter – CT Farmland Trust
- SEDC Annual meeting, Tuesday, December 15 at Brownson Country Club at cost of \$30.

## K. Trail Camera

Agent Gallagher said that she has already emailed the Commissioners via the Google group about the deer cam they want installed at a particular trail location that has been getting inundated with graffiti. She showed the camera she wants to purchase at a cost of \$550 each.

Tape 1, Side B

The Commissioners discussed the cameras, the location, and the details of the installation.

**Commissioner McCreery MOVED to approve the purchase of 2 deer anti-vandalism cams as a test case to try and minimize vandalism that has occurred along the recreation path at a cost not to exceed \$650 each. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer.**

Discussion:

Commissioner Tate said he thinks this is a good idea and wants to try at first to not have the camera obvious. I want to maintain as much of a natural character of the trails as much as possible. He suggested maybe posting on the blog site that we have the cameras at the Pine Lake trail.

Commissioner Welsh suggested we tout it as a camera to monitor wildlife and the bonus feature is that we also could see who is doing the graffiti. We could spin this off in a positive way instead of an invasion of privacy. Vice-Chairman Dyer suggested using it to count the number of visitors to use when we apply for grants.

Agent Gallagher said that so many people commented when she was cleaning the graffiti and asked what we could do to try and catch the people doing this.

Commissioner Dutkanicz suggested using the approach of safety and to protect the hard work the community has put forth in the trails.

Commissioner Tate suggested putting an article in the paper saying that we have installed cameras to monitor the high vandalism areas, hope that the residents would keep an eye out as well and report any incidents.

**A voice vote was taken, all were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

## **L. Executive Session**

**Commissioner McCreery MOVED to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing potential land acquisition issues and some bidding numbers at 8:08 P.M. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

**At 8:30 P.M. Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to return to Regular Session. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

No votes were taken in Executive session.

## **M. Comments By Members**

Chairman Harbinson said that he was elected as the Planning & Zoning alternate and when I ran I was under the understanding that I would be able to serve both Commissions. The Charter does say that you can serve on one elected and/or two appointed Commissions unless otherwise specified. It was pointed out to me at my first P&Z meeting that the P&Z section of the charter specifically says a member of P&Z cannot serve on any other elected or appointed position. I asked

for Counsels opinion and even though I am not a member, but an alternate to P&Z, his opinion was that I couldn't serve on both Commissions. I had to make a decision. My decision is to stay with Conservation and I will resign from Planning & Zoning.

## **N. Election of Chairman/Vice-Chairman**

**Commission Tate NOMINATED Tom Harbinson as Chairman and Bill Dyer as Vice-Chairman. SECONDED by Commissioner Goodman. Commissioner Tate MOVED to close the nominations. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. A voice vote was taken, all were in favor; Tom Harbinson is Chairman, Bill Dyer is Vice-Chairman.**

## **O. Adjournment**

The next regular meeting is Wednesday, January 6, 2010.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:33 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Marianne Chaya  
Clerk, Conservation Commission