

City of Shelton, Conservation Commission
Minutes for the Regular Meeting on Wednesday January 6, 2010 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
Ed McCreery, Commissioner
Jim 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

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve the minutes from the December 2, 2009 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

C. Public Portion

None

D. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path – upgrade to handicapped accessible standards

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the first part from Lane Street is finished except being rolled out. I hope it will survive the winter. The City will do the rolling in the spring.

We met with the Mayor and he has agreed to free some funds in 2010 for work to be done by contractors. We will be getting back to the Mayor with more specific funding needs and with a plan. Chairman Harbinson commented that this would be a capital project and would qualify for LOCIP funds.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said that the Trails Committee would try to do things that would allow the City to do some of the work, specifically on Phase II (the section from the white house to Oak Valley Rd). We will lay out the route to show the areas needed for the City to bring in fill or tree cutting. The Mayor suggested utilizing the Parks & Rec dept. for help.

We have been notified that we won the grant for \$73,000, which is normally awarded in March. We have a section of the path in mind that would use these funds and we will have to go out to bid soon.

E. Trails Committee Report – Bill Dyer

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported as follows:

1. Planned Rec Path Projects for 2010

a. Phase 1: Maintenance Issues

Trails Committee member Richard Skudlarek has purchased several items since August totaling \$140.64 and needs reimbursement.

Commissioner Tate MOVED to reimburse Trails Committee member Richard Skudlarek \$140.64 for maintenance items purchases. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

The Mayor informed us that he is having things taken out of the white house (Nells Rock/Rte. 108) to prevent possible damage. That house is visible to a lot of traffic so the thought may be we should be thinking of making the house look better. There was discussion of maybe tearing down all three buildings and put up a barn structure that Trails and Parks & Rec could utilize. We were enthusiastic of that idea. The house doesn't have any historical value. Commissioner Tate said the discussion of the house and property goes beyond Trails needs.

Commissioner Tate commented that several weeks ago when the dog park went in there it is known that there are parking issues, tree removal issues, Rec path issues, house issues, storage issues, probably utility issues and community garden issues. This parcel has been a storage yard for the City over the years. Trails had sort of taken up ownership of a part of the area. Parks & Rec is now working on the area getting it ready for the dog park. Now I hear they don't have adequate funding to complete the dog park concept. I was asked from a planning standpoint what would be a good direction there. I suggested doing an overall site plan or master plan to get all the uses on the plan before we begin. Then I think we'd feel more comfortable as a City investing money in the property. I think the Mayor wants to have the Conservation Commission and Parks & Rec get together to talk about their ideas for this property and put it on paper. What I hope that will come out of it is a new storage building. Where it's located will be key with all the other uses that are going on there. I think we shouldn't invest any more anyone's time on that property until we have a plan. I think we need to meet with Alderman Papa, Ron Herrick and maybe Alderman Kudej to go over our ideas and see what they think. The Commissioners discussed the site, use and structure ideas. They also discussed who would be meeting with Parks & Rec. Chairman Harbinson said he would coordinate the meeting.

Chairman Harbinson asked Agent Gallagher if the invoice for Jim Swift was paid and she said it had been resubmitted to accounting.

F. 2010/2011 Budget

Chairman Harbinson asked if all Commissioners received his email of the budget draft.

Commissioner Tate said he only had one change and then mentioned the goal statement is fairly important. We haven't looked at it in several years. Our Commission is almost reactive, not proactive. We have a couple of proactive projects such as the Rec Path. We can show each calendar year all the progress we have made on that particular project. To be valid there has to be some measurement for us to go in front of a town commission to ask for money. I am not sure that our performances are noted in the budget. For instance all the hours the Trails Committee puts in has to be part of the Board of A&T presentation. There may be a goal statement saying that we are going to invest 1000 volunteer hours this year, and for that we want "X" (for example a particular section of the Rec Path completed). Then we say for what we want, it will cost \$X, that is what we want for all the volunteer hours put in for the year. In other words you have to give feedback to justify why you need more money. Vice-Chairman Dyer said that they have a detailed log of volunteer's hours. Commissioner McCreery pointed out that last year's budget presentation didn't go well because the board came back at us for not spending all the budgeted

amounts. The problem was that the Mayor wouldn't let us spend the money budgeted, not that we didn't need it.

Commissioner Tate said to point out all the different factions of the work people put in to make the Rec path so successful. Vice-Chairman Dyer said that it isn't just trail projects that we have worked on throughout the year.

Commissioner McCreery suggested presenting pictures of all the projects done last year. Commissioner Tate said that all that is on our web site. He suggested pointing out some of the things such as helping with the mapping, the integration with other services, such as Parks & Rec and open space enforcement with the police.

The Commissioners discussed some of the budget numbers and felt they were fine.

Agent Gallagher said that she would like more focus on surveying the open space boundaries. Chairman Harbinson said it would come from land improvements but would put the surveying as part of the description on that line item. Agent Gallagher commented that it's not really land improvements but protecting the City's interest. Having this shown on the budget request may help if we note that we are protecting the 1900 acres of open space and there is funding needed to do this.

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to recommend the budget draft as presented by Chairman Harbinson to Finance and the Board of A&T. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

G. Dog Park Status

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that Parks & Rec is continuing working on the site (clearing vegetation) but the money has not been appropriated for the fence.

H. Community Garden – potential sites

Agent Gallagher reported that there would be a meeting in the Mayor's office tomorrow at 9 A.M. We might want to recommend some potential sites to present at the meeting.

Chairman Harbinson asked if we have any idea of what they have defined as what their needs are in terms of space, soil types, etc.? Agent Gallagher said we talked about it once before and it was very unofficial. In preparation for those kinds of questions we have maps where the soil types are defined.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked if they are planning to do the garden this year?

Agent Gallagher said yes. The meeting is called the 2010 Community Garden Kick-Off.

Agent Gallagher presented the maps and soil types of the Klapik, Tall, Wiacek and the 279 Soundview properties for the Commissioners to review.

Commissioner Goodman asked the purpose of the community garden. Agent Gallagher responded that the idea is for people who don't have good property to have a garden can lease a plot to plant.

Commissioner Goodman asked if it would be visible from the street and Agent Gallagher said it is an option. Commissioner Dutkanicz mentioned the one on the way to the Post Road by a golf course and described it.

Commissioner Tate described his experience with a community garden in NY when he was in school.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said that it should have a deer fence.

After review of the potential sites Agent Gallagher surmised that the following would be recommended from the Conservation Commission:

1. Klapik Farm
2. Tall Farm
3. Wiacek Farm
4. 279 Soundview Ave

Commissioner Tate expressed some concerns of Wiacek due to the proximity of the schools.

Tape 1, Side B

The Commissioners suggested spending more time reviewing the Klapik farm and the access points.

Agent Gallagher and Commissioner Dutkanicz will be attending the meeting and reporting back to the Commission.

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

1. Old Applications/Monitor/Follow-up

None

2. New Applications

None

J. Communications

- Agent Gallagher's report on enforcement issues and a contact at the Police Dept. has been established.
- Invitation for comment on the property owned by Brennan for a cell tower expansion on Oliver Terrace. Is there any impact on any historical properties? The Commission determined there is no comment.

- Review from Agent Gallagher on the properties we received development rights from on the Shelton and Jones Family Farm.
- Calendar from Iroquois where Shelton's boardwalk where the open space and land trust meet is featured on the cover.

Agent Gallagher said she would be bringing her files on the open space parcels she is reviewing for any of the Commissioners to review. It is also available if any of the Commissioners want to come by her office.

K. Executive Session

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to go into Executive Session at 8:02 P.M. to discuss land acquisition issues inviting the clerk, Marianne Chaya to attend. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Commissioner Goodman MOVED to return to Regular Session at 8:25 P.M. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Harbinson mentioned that while in Executive Session the Commissioners asked the Chairman to prepare a memo the Mayor regarding one of the parcels discussed that they would like to acquire.

L. Comments By Members

Commissioner Goodman said that he wanted to say what a great job Agent Gallagher is doing for the Commission.

M. Adjournment

The next regular meeting is Wednesday, February 3, 2010.

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission