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Call to Order
Present: Tom Harbinson, Chairman
        Bill Dyer, Vice-Chairman
        Jim Tate, Commissioner
        Ed McCreery, Commissioner
        Jim Goodman, Commissioner
        Joe Welsh, 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 7:10 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
B. Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Dutkanicz MOVED to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2010 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

C. Public Portion (items not on agenda)
Chairman Harbinson welcomed the Shelton Patch reporter Sarah Ferrante to our meeting. (Periodically Chairman Harbinson explained various aspects of the Conservation Commission and Trails Committee)

D. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path, upgrade to handicapped accessible standards. Status.

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported to date the contractors have done a marvelous job. They have brought in a lot of fill and have done a great job cutting through. We don’t think it’s appropriate for them to finish it at this time due to the weather conditions causing frost heaves. We also will be waiting to have them start on the Lane Street section until the grant is completed. For now they will start on the Huntington Woods section – the second crossing out to Crabapple where they have to build the retaining wall near the swamp.

Chairman Harbinson suggested Vice-Chairman Dyer continue working with them on the best use during the winter months.

Trails Committee member Terry Gallagher mentioned that there are a couple places in the Huntington Woods section where the contractor has staked out the entire route from the land trust meadow to Crabapple bridge. There are a couple of areas that Vice-Chairman Dyer and I were talking about having the contractor fine tune a little bit. Chairman Harbinson said that he would try and be available if needed to meet with them and the contractor.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said he talked with the Mayor and he has been in contact with the State and they have some millings available. The question is how many cubic yards we will need. The question is also where to put them until needed. The Commissioners talked about it and decided that it could be put at the end of Crabapple Circle, temporarily. They would advise public works as well as Monty Blakeman of their intention.

We know we will need split rail fencing to delineate the Rec path from the Dog Park plus other areas for safety reasons. The Commissioners and Agent Gallagher talked about whether it should be a 2-rail or a 3-rail and the issues of pricing. The Commissioners decided on keeping it consistent with what we have, a 42” high, 3-rail fence.
E Trails Committee Report
Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that they have a hike scheduled at Nicholdale on January 30th at 1PM. We’re calling it our “Marshmallow March”. At the end of the hike we’ll have a bonfire and a marshmallow roast. Notices will be sent out to the press. It’s already on our Facebook page.
We will have a work party on January 15th where we will rough out where the trail will go next to the swamp from the other side of the Crabapple bridge out to the power lines. On January 29th the Trails Committee members will do some exploring of French’s Hill.
The granite pillars are now planned to be installed in March.
We looked at our accomplishments and goals in 2010. Some of them include a hike on National Trails Day, roughed out the entire Paugussett Trail from Indian Well to Buddington, work on the Rec Path, purchased a tow-behind mower & rehabilitated the red barn at the corner of Nells Rock Rd. Some of the goals for 2011 are that we will again participate in the National Trails Day and officially establish the Paugussett Trail from Indian Well to Buddington Rd. Reimbursements for purchases for Richard Skudlarek and Terry Gallagher needs a motion.
Chairman Harbinson MOVED to approve payment in the amount of $52.83 to Richard Skudlarek for reimbursement for purchasing drainage grate needed on the Rec Path. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Harbinson MOVED to approve payment in the amount of $54.67 to Terrance Gallagher for reimbursement for purchasing hardware for the Trails Committee for use on the red barn. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Vice-Chairman Dyer presented a slide show on the 2010 accomplishments created by Richard Skudlarek. Marianne put the CD in her computer to show the Commissioners. What a beautiful job he did and it was amazing to see all the accomplishments from our volunteers. JOB WELL DONE!

F. Goals and budget planning for 2011
Chairman Harbinson emailed all the Commissioners a draft of the budget proposal for review.
Tape 1, Side B
The Commissioners spent quite a bit of time talking about some of line items and how to justify any increases. It was felt that we could perfectly justify the efficiency of what we have expended in our budget. They talked about the goal of Agent Gallagher inspecting all the open space parcels by 2014 but so many of
the other tasks have taken her away from it. The Commissioners said they want to increase the number of hours for Agent Gallagher. One of the reasons for needing increased hours is because Agent Gallagher is finding so many encroachments on the open space parcels that need to be addressed. Commissioner Tate talked about the need for water resource protection as a goal.

Agent Gallagher said that she has noted in the budget goals is to implement the recommendations of the open space plan. Anything that is in that plan would be in our goals. Commissioner Tate said that along with that you have to reference in the goal, the plan of Conservation & Development.

There was also discussion of the goal of completion of the Rec Path and closing the gap (purchasing land needed).

Further discussion of the justification for a budget increase is to illustrate our successes and the grants received. We need to compile the grants awarded for the last 10 years and to illustrate how much was spent to get the grant money. Commissioner Goodman asked about if there would be funds needed for surveying for the open space encroachments. Agent Gallagher said some of the encroachments are obvious from aerial photography, available from Google Earth. Commissioner Tate talked about the problems where the encroachments change the character of the open space. Agent Gallagher talked about how she ranks the encroachments, in terms of changing the character of the open space.

In terms of budgeting maybe there should be a line item specifically for the surveying city property.

Commissioner Welsh asked about budgeting for invasive plant management. It was pointed out that those types of things are inclusive in our open space plan goals. There was discussion of where the money would come from as well as would this be a goal to list separately instead of being inclusive in “open space goals”.

After summarizing the changes to the draft budget proposal, Commissioner McCreery MOVED to recommend the budget proposal to the Finance Dept. as modified with $5000 added for a survey line item and an additional $5000 for the staff position, and modification of some of the goals as was discussed. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

G. Dog Park and Planning for Corner at Nells Rock Road & Shelton Ave. – Status update

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the dog park is being used even though it isn’t officially open.
H. Communications
- Copy of letter from Agent Gallagher regarding Scenic Grove Estates subdivision
- Thank-you letter from Housatonic Valley Association for dues renewal.
- Newsletter from CT Forests & Parks Association

I. Community Garden
Agent Gallagher reported that she sent out survey forms to the residents of Longview Ave. I only got one back.
Agent Gallagher talked about the number of spaces at the garden. The agreement was that there would be no more than 30 plots at the Longview site, so there is a need for another garden. Shelton is such a large town, geographically, there is a need for more of a centrally located garden area. They talked about the availability of water.

J. Open Space set-aside: Status of increase to 15% in subdivision regulations
We are still waiting for P&Z to agree to a meeting.

K. Review of PZC or IWC Applications for Subdivisions and/or Developments
1. Old Applications/Monitor/Follow-up
   None

2. New Applications (Applications received between agenda creation and our Regular Meeting may be amended to this Agenda at start of regular meetings by a vote from the Commission.)
   None

L. Executive Session-Quality of Life
Commissioner Goodman MOVED to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of security issues and land acquisition issues at 8:28P.M. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

At 9:08 Commissioner Goodman MOVED to return to Regular Session. SECONDED by Chairman Harbinson. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.
Commissioner Tate MOVED to spend up to $1400 for security equipment as discussed in Executive Session. The funds are to come from the Land Improvements budget line item. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

M. Comments By Members
None

N. Adjournment
The next regular meeting is Wednesday, February 2, 2011.

Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Dutkanicz. All were in favor; MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission