City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
February 1, 2017

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Sheri Dutkanicz, Joe Welsh, Pat Gadjosik, Ed McCreery. Absent: Jim Tate. Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Tom Harbinson.

2. Meeting Minutes: Pat Gadjosik made a motion to approve the December 7, 2016 meeting minutes. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor.

3. Public Portion – for items not on the agenda: No one wished to speak.

4. Trails Committee Report. Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting held immediately before the Conservation Commission meeting. See the Trails Committee meeting minutes for more information.

5. Plan of Conservation and Development Update: A draft of the update was distributed to Commission members online before the meeting and as hard copies during the meeting. A public hearing is scheduled for February 22, 2017. Joe Welsh said that the long term planning is not there. Tom Harbinson said it seems to be heavy on the fiscal perspective. Open space was not mentioned until Page 14. Joe Welsh said Conservation can encourage people to go to the hearing. Tom Harbinson noted that the 2006 plan had a goal of 15% open space, while in this version that goal has been eliminated.

6. Review of proposals before the Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetlands Commissions:

   a) PZC #16-29 Wells Hollow; Bridgeport Ave. and Long Hill Cross Rd, 17.4 acres zoned LIP. Proposed mixed use PDD including three 3.5-story apartment buildings totaling 152 units; a 4-story hotel; four restaurant buildings; two retail buildings; and an auto-tire repair center building. Applicant Royal and Thomas Wells.

   Ed McCreery recused himself from the discussion. Bill Dyer and Tom Harbinson both said the development is “way too much” for that parcel. Tom
Harbinson noted that the plans under review were dated Feb. 2016, a full year ago. The project may have been held back so that it did not coincide with the Shelter Ridge project across the street. Bill Dyer said the project was very disappointing. The commission examined parking areas next to Wells Hollow Brook and voiced concerns about impacts to water quality.

After reviewing the plan, Tom Harbinson made a motion to send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission stating that Conservation is offended by such an application and it should be rejected out of hand. The planned development reflects a lack of respect for Wells Hollow Brook, a feeder to the Far Mill River, with excessive impervious surfaces and restaurant parking areas prone to littering located next to the brook. The Commission also objects to the lack of streetscaping along Long Hill Cross Road, especially in light of the efforts made across the street at the Hawks Ridge development now under construction. Bill Dyer seconded the motion. All were in favor (Ed McCreery recused).

b) 405 Long Hill Ave. PZC #17-01. PDD for six single-family homes on 3.96 acres. Zoned R-1 and LIP. Tom Harbinson said the back portion of the project is LIP. A previous PDD proposal with 18 condominiums was withdrawn. The proposal shows a 2.1-acre common area along Route 8 which includes wetlands and a detention pond. Joe Welsh said he thought they should only be allowed to build the number of homes they could get with a conventional R-1 subdivision. Ed McCreery said the PDD mechanism should not be used to increase the density of single family home projects. Tom Harbinson said the site is complex due to the duel zones.

Tom Harbinson made a motion to send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission saying that the Conservation Commission recognizes the complexity of the property located in two zones but feels that the total number of homes should be no greater than what would be approved with a Conservation Residential District (CRD). Ed McCreery seconded. All were in favor except Joe Welsh.

7. Executive Session – Quality of Life (land acquisition)
At 8:16 pm, Bill Dyer made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing a proposed land acquisition. Ed McCreery seconded. All were in favor. The Commission came out of executive session at 8:45. Bill Dyer will arrange a meeting with the Mayor to discuss a property for potential open space acquisition.

8. Comments by Members: Joe Welsh said the Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership (FCRCP) will have their next meeting on February 22. There will be a guest speaker who will talk about pollinators. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher and should be considered in draft form until adopted at the next meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file in the Town Clerk’s office.