Conservation Commission Meeting
Minutes
February 4, 2004

(These minutes will be formally presented to the Commission on March 3, 2004 for their approval)

1.0 Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Co-chairmen Terry Jones and Harriet Wilber called the February meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Shelton City Hall, Room 303. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendees: Terry Jones, Harriet Wilber, Joe Welsh, Hank Lauriat, Ed McCreery, Jim Tate, Jimmy Pjura

Not Attending: Tom Harbinson

2.0 Approval of Minutes of January 7, 2004

At 7:11 p.m. Hank Lauriat made a motion to approve the January 7th minutes, motion seconded by Jim Tate. All in favor; motion passed.

3.0 Public Portion

There was no public who wished to address the Commission.

4.0 Report of Jim Ryan – Enterprise and Commerce Park

Jim was unable to attend the meeting.

Terry mentioned he was pleased to read about the proposed development for the Botti Building and said he would meet with Jim to discuss ways that the
Commission could work with him on matters that might be the Commission’s concerns.

Terry listed three things:

First, the architecture of the parking garage so that it is not concrete.  
Second, looking to whether the Riverwalk can go through the east end of that building.  
Third, to explore the solution of the asphalt plant.

5.0 Communications – Harriet

Terry stated there was an E-Mail received tonight stating the Governor did say today in his budget address he wants to continue the fight against sprawl by investing further in open space and farmland protection.

The following items were received:

- A copy of a letter from Shelton’s Corporation Counsel to a homeowner in Shelton regarding an encroachment onto the City’s open space.

- A memo from Robert Kulacz, City Engineer, regarding the submission of names of soil scientists who are professional members of the SSSSNE so the City can begin the design process for the Recreation Path.

- The Valley United Way is having a fund raiser on Wednesday, February 11 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Shelton Community Center Lobby. Sterling silver jewelry, handbags, and candle gift sets will be sold.

- Hidden Pond Associates, Deanwood Estates, sent a check for $6,200 for one of their lots for the Open Space Fund. The Commission discussed fee in lieu of on a piece of property. Jimmy P. has to find out for the next meeting how fee in lieu of is computed.
The Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists will hold its seventh annual meeting c/o Land-tech Consultants, regarding Wetland Buffers: Scientific and Regulatory Issues on February 25 at Ramada Plaza Hotel, Meriden, CT.

- The missing page of last month’s PZC’s minutes of December 9th.

- A copy of the Habitat addressing the issue of Avalon Bay and its building of the large complex in Milford.

- A notice for Research Grant Guides, Inc. regarding obtaining grants available to nonprofit organizations for office equipment, furniture, vehicles, land acquisition, renovation, construction of new buildings, computer and high technology, organizations serving people with disabilities.

- Agenda of City of Shelton Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting, Tuesday, February 17th, at 7:30 p.m., Hearing Room, Shelton City Hall.

- Agenda of Inland Wetlands Commission, February 11th, Room 302, 7:00 p.m. Shelton City Hall.

- Agenda for Shelton Planning and Zoning Commission public hearings on February 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the Shelton City Hall Auditorium.

The Conservation Commission discussed the hearings on the agenda.

6.0 Subdivisions

Renaissance, Public Hearing Feb. 3, 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Auditroium

Terry said Tom Harbinson went to the public hearing.

The Commission discussed the building’s height and transfer of development rights.
Also discussed was the newly formed committee which will write the new Plan of Development. Tom and Jim were chosen to serve on the committee. The new plan should address proposals for high residential density.

Harriet asked, is it possible to amend a PDD to include open space for high density residential? Ed M. said it is something the plan of development committee could look into.

Jim T. said the history of the corridor development is there was an effort in the record to keep the heights of the building within reason due to the esthetics of Trap Falls Reservoir and the whole area there. There has been an effort to keep the designs of the buildings at grade so the buildings would not come above the tree line and impact the viewscape along the major arteries. Now, that will not be the case if the Renaissance is built.

Terry said, that the direction we should be going is to preserve more open space by building up rather than spreading out. Jim T. said it is the overall landscape, not just the ground area. It is the whole visual field involvement. He said he doesn’t know if the Commission will have any say in that matter, thus, he stated the Commission should voice its opinion through people it knows.

A letter was submitted to PZC in January stating the Commission’s stand on the proposed residential structure stating our concerns about the height of the building.

Reservoir Corporation Center Apartments, Public Hearing Feb 5, 2004, 7:00 p.m. Auditorium

On behalf of Roseland Shelton, LLC for modification of new PDD (apartments), 4-four story buildings, 150 apartments on Research Drive, Shelton. Public hearing will be held February 5th at 7:00 p.m. Auditorium. It has been rescheduled from January 27, 2004.
On January 7, 2004 the Board of Aldermen and Shelton Conservation Commission had a joint meeting and a presentation of the Wiacek Farm, Tall Farm, and Wabuda Farm at 6:00 p.m. in the Shelton City Hall.

- **Wiacek**

  Terry said the Board of Aldermen authorized to move forward on the negotiation of all three properties. He told Harriet to get another meeting with the Mayor for next week for an update on the properties.

  Tom Harbinson said after a PZC hearing meeting there was a discussion about the Wiacek property. The Wiacek property did get a short extension. There is a lot of turmoil and disagreement, and PZC told the Wiacek people Planning and Zoning needed more time to review it.

- **Tall Farm**

  Tom said the developers are coming in with an application.

- **Wabuda**

  Harriet said it is before Wetlands Commission now.

- **Hidden Meadows Estates**

  A map of Section 3 of the subdivision, Hidden Meadow Estates, was presented. It was prepared for John and Bob Pawlowski and has 4 lots on 6.238 acres, with open space of 1.023 acres, on Beardsley Road. The Commission discussed details of the plan.

  The PZC has received the plan, but it has not been scheduled on its agenda. The Commission asked Jimmy P. to bring the master plan for
this property along with the new map to the next meeting so the Commission can compare them.

7.0 **Report of Conservation Agent – Jimmy Pjura**

**Landkeepers Program**

Jimmy P. has met with four individuals and has 11 individuals still to meet with to align them with a parcel of property. He has given them landkeeper’s forms to mail to him to let him know if they find any violation on a property. Jimmy P. said it is going well. Jim T. asked him to make a copy of the list of these names because he would like to know who they are.

**Open Space Violations**

- **Fran’s Way**

  Rich Romano of Fran’s Way still hasn’t flagged the back of that property because of the snow. However, he said he will get to the back of the property as soon as he can.

- **Nature’s Way**

  He spoke with Ken Schiable today regarding the conservation easement. Mr. Schiable told him where the tree cutting occurred. Jimmy said he will take pictures when he walks the property after the thaw sets in.

- **Hickory Lane**

  A letter from Attorney Welch was sent to a homeowner on Hickory Lane, and the Commission is waiting for his response.

**Installation of Gates, Split Rail Fences**

Jimmy P. stated he spoke with Sandy Nesteriak. She said she spoke with Iroquois Gas who said they need access onto that property where the pipeline is.
Jimmy P. said Sandy mentioned there is a person in the company who said the gas company would be willing to share some of the cost of the gate installation. Jimmy P. said the gates will be on Oak Valley, Independence Drive, and Route 108. Jimmy showed some pictures of the areas needing the gates. The Commission discussed the pictures. Jim T. told Jimmy to take a picture of the new gate at the police station because the gates purchased will be modeled after that one.

**Pearmain Road, Orchard Park**

Jimmy P. went to Permain Road with John Cook regarding the installation of a split rail fence. He showed pictures of the homeowner’s property adjacent to open space, but didn’t know where the homeowner’s property ends and open space begins. The homeowner may be parking his cars on open space. Jimmy P. stated a surveyor will have to survey the property, and a split rail fence will be installed. In addition, Terry said the builder of Orchard Park is trying to get his $5,000 bond back from PZC. The Commission discussed the pictures Jimmy presented.

Ed M. made a suggestion to tell Corporation Counsel that the Commission has determined the homeowner is parking on city space and a stern letter be issued to him wanting him to remove the vehicles from town-owned property.

Ed. M. said a separate letter be sent to PZC stating that the Commission strongly objects to the release of the $5,000 performance bond on this Orchard Park development on Permain Road because of the atrocities that were committed on city owned open space which remain to be corrected.

At 8:21 p.m. Ed McCreery made this in a form of a motion.

Hank Lauriat seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.
Recreation Path

- Huntington Woods

Jimmy P. spoke with the developer, Jim Blakeman, who said he would grade a portion of the Recreation Path in Huntington Woods where a drainage pipe is installed. A slope has to be graded so the water would drain out.

Harriet asked Jimmy P. if he found the Huntington Woods subdivision map to see if the Recreation Path is on it. Jimmy replied it is on Phases 1 and 2 on the Record Map.

Jimmy P. spoke with Jim Swift who said he will go there with him. Also, Jimmy said the trees on the Recreation path on the Lane Street side are still intact; the trees have not been disturbed. He said Jim Swift will help him flag the Recreation Path.

Boehm Pond Woods

Jimmy P. stated Boehm Pond Woods has been deeded and the deed is in escrow. The Commission asked what the definition of escrow is. Ed M. said escrow is held until resolution of final issues. Harriet suggested Jimmy P. find out from Rick Schultz under what condition the deed is brought out of escrow and recorded.

In addition, Jimmy P. is asked to find out if there is a site monitor on the property and who it is, also, when the open space signs are to be hung.

Harriet said if Rick says it would be up to Jimmy P., Jimmy should have the signs put up now. It can be done through the site monitor, assuming there is one.
Falls of Huntington

The Commission sent a letter to PZC last month regarding Open Space money be accepted in place of a pedestrian foot bridge over the Far Mill River. It is on PZC’s agenda tomorrow night.

12.0 Quality of Life – Possible Executive Session – Terry

At 8:35 p.m. Ed McCreery made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss potential property acquisitions for open space; seconded by Hank Lauriat. All in favor; the machine was turned off.

At 8:50 p.m. Hank Lauriat made a motion to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Jim Tate. All in favor and the machine was turned on.

8.0 Meeting with Mayor Lauretti, January 23, 2004 – Terry, Jim, Tom, Ed C.

Third Timber Bridge

At the meeting a third timber bridge, to be located at Silent Waters, was discussed. It was decided that a plan for it is needed.

At 8:51 Ed McCreery made a motion to authorize the Commission to obtain one or more quotes, to expend up to $2,000 out of the Outside Services, Line Item Account No. 001-1300-414-30-23 to do a schematic plan for a wooden bridge across the weir for Silent Waters being based upon the design of the recently installed bridge on Route 108 at Pine Lake, together with a proposed fencing design for safety purposes along the top of the dam that would be appropriate for a natural trails system that would run from Constitution Boulevard, the area just across the Intermediate School, to Route 108. The design would be in compliance with all safety requirements with appropriate marginal notations and specifications that would include the details on the project including the installation to allow the project to be put out to bid. It should include cost estimates
and a schematic profile on how the bridge should look and should have an elevation rendering.

Hank Lauriat seconded the motion except the Account No. is not 414-30, it is 414.30. Ed McCreery accepts that as a change to his motion. All in favor; motion passed.

Harriet questioned if the Commission should wait until the fencing fellow comes out, so he could give us options for fencing the Commission would want before the Commission goes to the rendering stage. Jim Tate declared he will be out in the next 30 days.

9.0 **Trails Committee Report – Tom**

**Trails Brochure**

Harriet mentioned Tom Harbinson was working to complete the trails brochure. Jim Tate said it was the Trails Committee situation.

10.0 **Budget – Harriet – Jim T.**

Harriet stated all the Conservation members received a copy of the budget. In the Shelton Conservation Commission’s 2004-2005 goals the only one changed was No. 5, which was an addition, “Investigate the formation of a leasing program to allow the use of open space land for agricultural purposes”.

**Protection of City-owned Trees**

Jim T. stated the City and other sources have spent a lot of effort and money in the last several years to plant all different types of trees such as, the centennial trees organized by Dave Parkins. People have spent $200 to $250 to plant these trees at no cost to the City. He declared it was a good thing to keep a tree planting program. The problem has been that all these trees routinely get demolished or destroyed at a young age because of improper maintenance. They get weed-whacked and curdled and don’t get adequate protection or care in order to
get past the critical stage of growth which he considers to be about 5 or 6 inches in size. He stated it is quite an investment to be made by different people to try to keep them going from this yearly stage.

He recommended tree guards, plastic pipe, or burlap, and some education so the trees are not touched or weed-whacked and left alone. Someone thought that mulching these trees was a good idea, but the trees were filled up above the level they should be mulched which then kills the roots of the trees.

He said there are some maintenance guidelines that need to be followed. This information should go to Parks and Recreation for monitoring around the City. Some of these trees have to be replaced to other key locations.

Jim alerted the Mayor that it would be something Jimmy P. could work on to find some areas that could be looked at to solve these particular problems. He suggested publicizing with a handout sometime this year and suggested it would be something like the Landkeepers Program. If something needs attention, the public could inform the Conservation Commission. Harriet recommended Jimmy P. should talk to Dean Cawthra, tree warden, about our concern and invite him to the Conservation’s April meeting.

11.0 **Tree Cutting on Open Space Land – Harriet**

Harriet stated Sandy Nesteriak was going through her old files and when she was an alderman in the energy crisis in the 70’s, the City let the public go onto open space and cut dead wood. It was a very well organized program with applications, a lottery system to choose people, and brochures that were given to participants by the State. The people were told where they could go to cut up to five cords of wood. Sandy wanted to know if the Commission was interested in the program again because it worked so well.
The Commission thought there was not a demand for it at this time. The Commission thanks her for the suggestion, and if we run into another crisis, the Commission will open up the doors again, but there is no point in doing it right now.

13.0 Comments by Members

Ed M. commented that he was looking at the ZBA list and someone was trying to put 4 houses on a piece of property that would only take 3 on a subdivision which is something the Commission has always unapproved of.

Jim T. was concerned about the idea that a 35x35 wood shed is proposed to be located in an R-1 zone with a setback reduction to be able to do that. Another homeowner wants a 24 foot by 40 foot garage and a setback reduction is needed. The Commission discussed these applications on the ZBA list and thought many were way out-of-scale for the neighborhood.

Harriet mentioned she met a fellow from Monroe who talked about an open space parcel Monroe wants to buy near Webb Mountain. She said he will send her a map because there is a big piece adjoining it in Shelton that maybe the Shelton Commission might want to investigate.

In addition, Harriet said the people of Monroe have a petition up that would require that they are asking if the town buys the land, it should be required that it remain only for passive recreation. She thought that recommendation was very interesting. She declared when the property is purchased, the public wants to know exactly what it will be used for.

On another matter, in regard to the meeting with the Mayor, it was discussed the Natural Resource Manager would be made into a full-time position in the upcoming fiscal year.
Terry said the Commission would have to advertise. Jim T. said the idea is to see if the demand is there to go full-time.

Tasks for Jimmy for the March meeting is to follow through with the Recreation Path in Huntington Woods, fee in lieu of, the master plan for Hidden Meadow Estates, picture of the gate at the police station and the placement of the other gates, Tom Welch’s letter about Pearmain Road, Boehm Pond Woods site monitor, Dean Cawthra about the maintenance, the list of landkeepers, and Jim Tate mentioned he would have something else for him.

14.0 **Adjournment**

At 9:25 p.m. Hank Lauriat made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ed McCreery. All in favor; meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by _________________________
Anita Shortell, Secretary