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Call to Order

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

Also

Present: Teresa Gallagher, Conservation Agent
         Marianne Chaya, Clerk
         Terrance Gallagher, Trails Committee

A. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman Harbinson called the meeting of the Conservation Commission to
order at 7:05 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
B. Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Dutkanicz MOVED to approve the minutes from the April 4, 2012 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

C. Public Portion (items not on agenda)

Michael Yevich, Troop 27
Michael stated that his proposed Eagle Scout project is a bridge at Birchbank. Pictures of the proposed location was handed out to the Commissioners as well as a blueprint. Michael detailed where the location is and the dimensions. He asked if rails are needed and Vice-Chairman Dyer said no, over time they become a safety issue. Chairman Harbinson suggested looking at the bridge on Lane Street that the Trails volunteers constructed across a watercourse. It does have what we call a rub rail on the edges designed more for bikes or horses. The width should be less than 4’, which would deter ATV’s. Michael is coordinating the details with Vice-Chairman Dyer. Michael said that what he is planning to do regarding the construction is to bring all the materials to the house closest to the trail and construct the bridge there and at the site.
Chairman Harbinson asked if they would need approval from Inland Wetlands and Vice-Chairman Dyer said yes, they are on the agenda for their next meeting, next week.
Chairman Harbinson asked how Michael is getting the materials for the bridge. Michael said that he will have car washes and donations and hopefully Home Depot, Lowes or Sears would donate some of the materials. Michael said he hopes to have the bridge constructed by September, October at the latest.
Chairman Harbinson talked about the Commission’s budget and that we might be able to use if needed.
Chairman Harbinson indicated that the Inland Wetlands Commissioners may advise him of how far back from the watercourse the bridge would have to be anchored. You will learn a little more about your design through their approval process.
Chairman Harbinson thanked Michael and said to keep in contact with Vice-Chairman Dyer.
Agent Gallagher said to take pictures of the construction process so that it can be posted on our blog.

Liam Fama, Troop 28
Liam stated he is proposing as his Eagle Scout project to build a bridge at the lower Birchbank trail. The trail will be about 16’ to help bikers and hikers. This is not on the Blue Dot trail, but on the Shelton trail.
Liam talked about his construction methods in that all the lumber will be pre-cut then brought to the site for assembly. He plans to have it constructed by the end of the summer.

Chairman Harbinson said that since this project is also going over a watercourse Liam would have to go before Inland Wetlands for approval.

Vice-Chairman Dyer told Liam that his project is on the agenda for the Inland Wetlands Commission that meets next Thursday night. He gave Liam some of the details of the approval process.

Chairman Harbinson suggested Liam and Michael collaborate on the design so that it may result in savings on materials.

Chairman Harbinson thanked both Liam and Michael for their efforts on improving our trail system.

Agent Gallagher noted that Troop 28 participated in the Clean Sweep cleanup last month and pulled garbage from Oak Valley and Boehm Pond. Troop 27 said they worked at Sunnyside doing the river cleanup. They talked about pulling almost an entire car out of the Winthrop Woods area.

Guy Beardsley, Shelton Farmers Market

Mr. Beardsley brought a lettuce plant (improved red sails) to the meeting. Jennifer picked a number out of his hat and the lettuce plant went to Commissioner Dutkanicz.

Mr. Beardsley reported that this year he had to assess $40 to each of the vendors to cover the increased insurance costs. This is the first time in 10 years that they had to assess the vendors for anything.

The Farmers Market is now on Facebook. The proposed opening date is June 16. He said they can live with the reduced parking situation due to the construction by Avalon.

Mr. Beardsley asked if this Commission gets involved in the recycling program. Agent Gallagher said that the City is working on expanding the program. The Commission is not involved.

They talked about what you can or cannot plant this time of year and Mr. Beardsley cautioned that any plant that is sensitive should be planted after the first week of May. Especially since a few days ago the temperatures dipped into the 20’s.

Chairman Harbinson thanked Guy Beardsley for his report.

**D. Farmland ConneCTions Service overview, UConn Cooperative Extension System**

Jennifer McTiernan, Project Coordinator, University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension
Chairman Harbinson introduced Jennifer and mentioned that she also gave this presentation at the last Land Trust meeting. Jennifer started the City Seed program in New Haven.

Chairman Harbinson mentioned that we previously investigated using the Farmland ConneCTions for our property on Soundview Ave.

Ms. McTiernan handed out a printed copy of the power point presentation as well as the Farmland Leasing Checklist. To download a copy of the Farmland ConneCTions guide go to: [http://www.extension.uconn.edu/](http://www.extension.uconn.edu/)

Jennifer gave details on each of the points in her presentation to the Commissioners. The topics are as follows:

- Leasing farmland to promote access to land and the agricultural economy
- Who relies on leased farmland in CT? 38% of principal farm operators, 29% of all farmers
- Cost of farmland – 2010 Farm Real Estate values = $11,500/acre in CT, nationally is $2,140/acre
- Outreach Service – outreach to towns and land trusts to educate about farmland leasing, one-on-one assistance developing leasing preferences for farmers and landowners (including towns)
- Additional Resources – Farmland Restoration Program – CT Dept. of Agriculture, Environmental Quality Incentives Program – USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service, CT Farmlink – CT Dept. of Agriculture
- Understanding Lessors in CT – Focus on towns, institutions and Land Trusts
- Why Lease? (Financial, economic growth and quality of life)
- Why Lease? To whom? Considerations in finding a farmer, leasing procedures & for how long?
- Tenure Options: Short term lease, long term lease, rolling lease, very long term ground lease, licensing
- Lessor complaints: Farmer fails to pay rent on time, inadequate stewardship practices, failure of farmer to maintain structures, underutilization of fields by tenant, concern about creating unfair competition with local farmers if tenant farmer comes from outside the community
- Farmer complaints: Lessor does not understand agriculture, lack of designated person or commission to make timely decisions about lease issues, maintenance issues (access gates, delays on road clearing, or possibly damage from utility work), damage from vandalism and poaching
- Landowner Considerations: Community farms, stewardship of town or land-trust owned lands, municipal policy limits on leasing, using open space for agriculture
- Community Farms: A community farm is typically a non-profit entity that leases a parcel from a municipality or land trust, with a mission to provide:
educational programs, job opportunities/service learning, production of food

- Examples of the Community Farm of Simsbury detailed
- Municipal policy limits: does town’s charter contain restrictions on leasing property, does town have a charter provision or ordinance requiring competitive bidding for the leasing of town property?
- Using open space
- Elements of a good lease (18 points outlined)
- Landowner Self-Assessment: Vision and Accessing your property for agriculture

Tape 1, Side B has no voices (clerk error)

**E. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path, upgrade to handicapped-accessible standards. Status**

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the contractor is about ready to start on the last section. They are working on getting the bond, which needs to be in place before they can begin.

The Trails Committee members are working on identifying where the granite pillars and removable bollards need to be installed.

**F. Proposed Monroe gas station adjacent to Far Mill River tributary at 528 Monroe Turnpike, request for comment**

Agent Gallagher stated that the Monroe Conservation Commission requested we review the proposal for tank replacement at the gas station located on Monroe Turnpike.

The concern is runoff from the property that would end up in the Far Mill river.

The Commissioners discussed some of the issues of gas stations. They talked about the tanks and how they are constructed and gasoline contamination.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to authorize Agent Teresa Gallagher to write a letter to the Monroe Conservation Commission stating that the Shelton Conservation Commission supports the recommendations as stated in the letter from Aquarion to Michael O’Reilly, dated March 14, 2012. SECONDED by Commissioner Dutkanicz. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

**G. Trails Committee Report – Bill Dyer**

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the Trails Committee planning the National Trails Day (Saturday, June 2) event. There will be a hike for the event starting at 10:30 A.M. starting at Pine Lake.
Many high school students turned out for the last work party. This is due to the fact that the students are required to do community service work before the end of the school year.
The April hike was at Birchbank. They picked this hike for wildflower viewing, which was not as abundant as they hoped for.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to reimburse Terry Gallagher for chainsaw materials in the amount of $88.06 and $52.87 for Richard Skudlarek for fence rails, weed and grass remover. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

Vice-Chairman Dyer stated that there is a balance left from the retainage of the last invoice from Bob Pruzinsky. The work for that section of the Rec Path has been completed and the work has been signed off. We need to authorize payment of the balance of that invoice in the amount of $3,265.45.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to authorize payment to Pruzinsky & Sons in the amount of $3,265.48. This is the balance of the funds retained by the City from the last invoice. All work specified in the scope of work for this invoice has been completed and signed off by Vice-Chairman Dyer. SECONDED by Commissioner Dutkanicz. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

**H. Open Space Trust Account. Status**
No change.

**I. Budget Status**
Chairman Harbinson discussed the need to transfer funds to cover Agent Gallagher’s payroll. This is due mostly in part because of her added responsibility for the litter committee and the clean sweep operation for the City.
He also said that since Marianne is doing the minutes for the Trails Committee as well as Conservation there needs to be additional money transferred into the clerical budget line item.

**Commissioner Tate MOVED to authorize the transfer of $2000 from Other Outside Services to the part-time payroll line item to cover Agent Gallagher’s additional time due to additional hours, primarily from the litter committee events. SECONDED by Commissioner Goodman. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**
Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to transfer $600 from Other Outside Services to Clerical Expenses to cover the additional expenses from the clerk because of adding the Trails Committee minutes to her duties. SECONDED by Commissioner Goodman. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

J. Open Space set-aside. Status of increase to 15% in subdivision regulations
Chairman Harbinson and Vice-Chairman Dyer discussed some of the items listed in Attorney Steve Bellis’ letter to P&Z regarding the stand the Builders Association is taking on the proposal of increasing the open space from 10% to 15%. As Vice-Chairman Dyer noted, the increase comes as a result of the building lots will decrease to obtain the extra 5% of open space. We will be notified as to the final P&Z decision on this regulation change.

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. Communications

- CT Forest & Parks Association newsletter
- CACIWC newsletter
- Letter from Agent Gallagher following up on a dumping complaint on Riverview Ave. Agent Gallagher said this was from the gentleman that was here at the last meeting who said he wanted us to check to see if the fence was on open space. To me it looks as if it is on private property. While I was out there are piles of paneling dumped on open space. Alderman McPherson came by and asked me to follow up on the complaint. I will send a letter to the neighboring homeowners asking for information. I also noted that there are boulders at the end which have been moved back and Alderman McPherson wants to get the City to come out and move them back in place.
Agent Gallagher said that the Community Garden committee is requesting funding for a woodchuck fence. They want 4 rolls (150’) of 4’ black vinyl coated chicken-wire. The total with shipping is $539.70. **Commissioner Tate MOVED to approve the expense of $539.70 for purchase of woodchuck fencing (4 rolls, which is 150’ of 4’ black vinyl coated chicken-wire). SECONDED by Commissioner Dutkanicz. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

The Commissioners and Agent Gallagher discussed the funds collected for the garden versus the expenses and the water situation. They suggested getting the well at the Soundview location tested. Commissioner Tate suggested contacting Greco and Haines and Commissioner Welsh provided two companies Agent Gallagher could contact to test the well and how the best way to get water to the garden plots.

**M. Quality of Life – Executive Session (land acquisition and security issues)**

**Commissioner Goodman MOVED to go into Executive Session at 9:00 P.M. for the purposes of discussing land acquisition issues. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to return to Regular Session at 9:10. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.**

There were no motions or actions that took place in Executive Session.

**N. Comments by members**

Vice-Chairman Dyer and Commissioner Dutkanicz brought up the email discussion they have been having regarding the Millennium trees. Commissioner Dutkanicz said she had talked to Sandy Nesteriak. Sandy said she didn’t have the information on where the specific trees were planted. She had suggested having me contact someone in Rhode Island. That person has retired so my next contact person is Charlene DiFillipo. Agent Gallagher said she’d talk to Charlene. Commissioner Tate said that the oaks by the Farmers Market are millennium trees. Sandy and Dean watered them personally. Commissioner Tate said that the charter oak tree that was given to Terry Jones to take care of is now planted at the corner of his parking lot. Seedlings of the original charter oak was given to each town years ago from some type of state celebration, either an Arbor Day event or an anniversary of the charter oak. Chairman Harbinson said that the seedling was given to Terry Jones to keep until
we were ready to use it. We were planning to use it at the tribute walk by the Riverwalk expansion.

**O. Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.
The next regular meeting is Wednesday, June 6, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission