City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
August 3, 2016

Members Present: Pat Gajdosik, Jim Tate, Joe Welsh, Bill Dyer, Ed McCreery, Sheri Dutkanicz

Absent: Thomas Harbinson

Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager; Terrance Gallagher, Trails Committee member.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:14 pm by Bill Dyer.

2. Meeting Minutes: Pat Gajdosik made a motion to approve the July 2016 meeting minutes. Seconded by Jim Tate. All were in favor.

3. Public Portion – for items not on the agenda: No one wished to address the Commission at this time.

4. Trails Committee Report.

   a  Shelter Ridge: (Ed McCreery recused himself from this discussion). Bill Dyer and Terrance Gallagher attended the Shelter Ridge public hearing on July 27 during which the applicant presented modifications to the original proposal, including a reduction in the building height for the apartment towers located on the ridgetop adjacent to the route the Trails Committee delineated for the Paugussett Trail. The parking area near the Old Kings Highway waterfalls was also pulled back somewhat. The proposed construction is still on top of the ridge overlooking the open space corridor, residential neighborhood, scenic road, and Far Mill River. Terrance Gallagher noted that the applicant is “not working with the town.”

Bill Dyer shared the Trails Committee’s motion regarding the modified plans: “The Trails Committee reviewed the modified plan and it is inadequate due to the construction on top of the ridgeline. Also, the Committee asks that the applicant stop referring to the line on their map as the “Paugussett Trail”
since only the Connecticut Forest and Park Association can designate the trail as such, and to stop misrepresenting the Paugussett Trail to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The modified proposal does not preserve a scenic corridor and therefore precludes the Paugussett Trail from being extended to Bridgeport Avenue as the City has been planning for twenty-five years.”

Jim Tate said that, ‘I don’t want anyone to think we are accepting of this modification. I want the plan marked with a thick line that clearly shows the area we don’t want touched.’

Joe Welsh said that line should be exactly as Conservation showed it originally. Nothing has changed.

Jim Tate said that the modified plan is a ‘slap in the face’ and it’s obvious that the Shelton Conservation Commission doesn’t mean all that much to the applicant. We didn’t do our study and create our graphics for nothing. We need to be clear: Don’t Touch that area behind the line.

Jim Tate made a motion to send a letter to Planning & Zoning, copied to the Mayor, BOA, Engineering, Inland Wetlands, and Save Our Shelton, with a map showing the modified proposal with a heavy line drawn over it identifying a “do not touch” zone. The letter would state that Conservation is very unhappy with the modified plan. It is obvious that the applicant did not take Conservation’s previous submission seriously, so the Commission will show this line once again. The City’s open space investment and the neighborhood will be better for it. Stay closer to the Plan of Conservation & Development. Teresa Gallagher should also check with Chairman Tom Harbinson, who is not here tonight, if there are any additional comments he would like to make. Mr. Tate noted that when something is not right, it’s time to speak up. Pat Gajdosik seconded the motion. All were in favor (Ed McCreery recused himself).

b Lane Street Bridge Replacement: Terrance Gallagher described a public informational meeting about the Lane Street Bridge replacement scheduled for 2017. Bill Dyer noted the Trails Committee’s concerns about public safety on the Rec Path, as well as access to the trail, during construction, since Lane Street vehicular traffic will be rerouted onto the Rec Path for approximately six months, and the engineers have not addressed what would be done to ensure public safety. In addition, the Committee wanted to communicate with the project designers that if any restoration of landscaping or staging areas needs to be done after the bridge is replaced, that it is done with the Rec Path in mind. If additional sidewalks or parking areas could be incorporated into the project, that would be great.
There was a lively discussion about whether Conservation & Trails should be concerned with Rec Path access and safety during the construction process, since it is only temporary. Jim Tate asked that the details of these concerns be emailed to him and he will be sure to have them addressed at the next public hearing.

c) Other issues discussed at the Trails Committee meeting were summarized for the Commission. See the Trails Committee minutes for a summary of issues discussed.

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

a) Bridgeport Avenue Shelter Ridge Associates, LLC, P&Z #16-8, PDD Step #1 site plans, 122-acres bounded by Mill Street, Buddington Road, and Woodland Mobile Home Park, zoned Light Industrial. Map 50 Lot 9.

See item 4a) above.

b) Brook View Apartments PZC #16-14 Step One PDD, 309 Old Bridgeport Ave, 36 units on 3.3 acres located near Sunwood Drive.

Ed McCreery made a motion to send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission stating that Conservation reviewed the Brook View Apartments proposal and does not comment on the concept of a PDD in this location, but has strong objection to the proposal to create lawn area in the wetland setback. The grass will be fertilized and runoff degrade downstream areas. The wetland setbacks should remain undisturbed. Sheri Dutkanicz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

c) Soundview Crossing resubdivision lots 4, 5 & 6, PZC #16-11; @249, 251 and 257 Soundview Ave. Conversion of three existing rear lots to seven building lots with frontage on new subdivision road.

Joe Welsh said he has a problem: We reviewed the project in 2012, and now they want to add a road and four more lots. Did they rebuild the stone walls according to the conditions of the original approval? Ed McCreery said he was not bothered by the density and Jim Tate also did not think the density was relevant. Several members noted the original wall along Soundview was very tall, and the replacement was much smaller. The commission directed Teresa Gallagher to check the status of the stone walls and the conditions of the original approval. If those conditions were not met, then send a letter to Planning and Zoning reiterating the original conditions.

d) Zuber Homestead, PZC #16-08, 2-lot subdivision. The Commission declined to review the project.
e) **Grove Street Ridge, 2-lot subdivision, PZC #16-07.** The Commission declined to review this project.

f) **Mountain Laurel Ridge Resubdivision, PZC #16-16,** Independence Drive opposite Lexington Court. Two proposed lots on 3.5 acres, site of foam rubber dump and unaccepted conservation easement.

Ed McCreery voiced concern about the rubber dump. ‘We’ve had a long history of this project. I am concerned new buyers may be unaware of the old dump.’

Jim Tate said he was uncomfortable with the old dump being disturbed.

*Ed McCreery made a motion to write a letter to Planning and Zoning saying that the City owes a responsibility to neighbors of the old rubber dump on Independence Drive to ensure the site is properly monitored and that as a condition of approval, P&Z require the applicant to hire an independent Licensed Environmental Professional to review the status of the site and any remediation thereon. Joe Welsh seconded the motion. All were in favor.*

6. **Communications:** Teresa Gallagher said that the Engineering department received a complaint about a fallen tree in the open space which the abutting homeowner wanted the City to cut up because it was on his lawn. The open space is behind #11 Rushbrooke Lane, and is being mowed by the homeowner in defiance of Conservation’s previous communication to stop mowing the conservation area. Now the homeowner wants the City to come and remove the tree from the area they aren’t supposed to be mowing. The tree is deep into the open space. The Homeowner’s Association previously said they did not have a need for the property to be mowed – it is only for the benefit of one homeowner. This is another reason not to allow private lawns on public open space.

7. **Quality of Life – Executive Session (land acquisition and security issues):** Bill Dyer made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:33 pm for the purpose of discussion land acquisition issues. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor. The Commission came out at 8:51 pm. No actions were taken.

8. **Comments by Members:** Sheri Dutkanicz distributed the 2016 Shelton Trails Marathon packets and encourage all members of the Conservation Commission to participate and hike all the trail routes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 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.*