Call to Order

Present: Tom Harbinson, Chairman
        Bill Dyer, Vice-Chairman
        Sherri Dutkanicz, Commissioner
        Jim Tate, Commissioner
        Jim Goodman, Commissioner
        Joe Welsh, Commissioner
        Ed McCreery, 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 7:05p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
B. Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Tate MOVED to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2011 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

C. Public Portion (items not on agenda)
None

D. Farmers Market – Guest Speaker, Nicole Berube, City Seed
Chairman Harbinson welcomed Nicole Berube to the meeting and explained that Shelton has a farmers market and there is a Shelton Farmers Market Association that has a 2-year license to operate at the Shelton Farmers Market facility. They have been operating as a farmers market for a number of years. Guy Beardsley is the market master. We’ve had a request from another farmer in the community, Stone Gardens, about possibly expanding it. Conservation Commission is purely an advisory agency and we’ve been asked by the Mayor to examine the situation as to what could be the most robust offering for farming/agricultural activities in our community. Knowing that City Seed is a well-run organization and well-versed in farmers markets, we thought we’d ask for your expertise. What we are curious about is how your market has been able to flourish and specifically how expanding the market to the winter months has played out in your environment.

Nicole Berube stated that City Seed started in 2004 with a 501C3 status. We started out with the purpose of giving back to the community with community programs. We built the farmers market as a way of reaching out to the community. The first market that started in 2004 is in Wooster Square. That market accepts food stamps as well as WIC. That means that everything had to be CT grown. As of this year we now have 5 farmers markets in New Haven. Our markets range with the largest having 35-40 vendors(Wooster) to 4 vendors (Fair Haven). The largest market typically sees over 1000 people on Saturdays in the height of the season. Our fruit and vegetable farmers are allowed by the CT Dept. of Agriculture to accept the farmers market nutrition program coupons. These are given to women with children who are low income and to seniors who are low income. The farmers have redeemed over $85,000 worth of these coupons in one year.

Chairman Harbinson asked what percentage is this of your market sales. Nicole said our market sales(based on vendor sales sheets) in 2010 was over $3 million. This is year-round (2 markets, once a week in the winter months). Chairman Harbinson asked if New Haven accepts WIC coupons. I understand they end in October.
Ms. Berube said yes, we do accept them. Technically the coupons say the end of October but often the Dept. of Agriculture will let market managers know that they can continue to accept them into November. Typically October is the busiest month for redeeming coupons. Last year we redeemed $25,000 just in October.
Chairman Harbinson said it also surges in October in Shelton. For the winter market does it tails off?
Ms. Berube said yes, definitely. That’s why we only run 2 markets in the winter. The sales for the winter typically are dairy and meat. For the past two years the farmers have figured ways of growing produce in the winter, such as potatoes, onions, bok choy, greens.
Chairman Harbinson asked, when you first started year-round, if you gave forewarning to the farmers to prepare for the winter months.
Ms. Berube said that she wasn’t around in the first year it started up. Stacia Monahan commented that it was the farmers of the market saying they didn’t want the market to end. We still had stuff to sell and knew we could still produce stuff. It was the farmers who came to City Seed and asked to have a winter market. We wanted to extend our income over a longer period of the year.
Chairman Harbinson asked where they draw most of the customers that come. Nicole said that at the height of the season it’s more of a destination market on the weekend but there is a core group of neighborhood folks that do walk and drive easily to the markets and are our regular customers. During the winter it could still be a destination since there are as many winter markets. We are seeing that we are still drawing from other towns.
The producers come from various areas, as far away as Enfield and Lebanon. Most come from the valley and New Haven County. The dairy and meat farmers tend to come from further away.
Chairman Harbinson asked about the CT grown rule. Nicole answered that it’s set by the Dept. of Agriculture. They can also come from just across the border (maybe 10 miles).
Not all farmers markets can accept WIC coupons. The farmers markets have to prove they have all CT grown product to the Dept. of Agriculture to be certified. The WIC coupons not only provide a needed access point for fresh fruits and vegetables to low income individuals but also means revenue to the farmer. City Seed was the first market to accept food stamps electronically at our markets and we are seeing a higher redemption. There is a new WIC coupon can be used at the grocery stores and at the farmers markets. Right now it’s not mandatory that all of our farmers that sell fruits and vegetables accept that particular voucher. Next year it probably will be mandatory.
Chairman Harbinson said so the vetting of the farmers to participate in that are providing plot plans for what they are going to grow for the season. The vetting is done by the Dept. of Agriculture.
Nicole answered yes, but City Seed typically will visit new farms that are entering our market. I am a new Executive Director. I’ve been with City Seed for a while.
but originally many of our farms were vetted by the Dept. of Agriculture but also by our founding Executive Director who visited every farm.

Chairman Harbinson asked if they do casual checks of the farms. Ms. Berube said we do checks on an as needed basis. It is an honor system and our forms do ask very detailed questions about the product. We are looking at not only the fruit and vegetable farmers but we also look at value-added producers as well.

We started a market committee to deal with issues as they crop up, which has been very successful.

They talked about the honor system in filling out the sales sheets. They do reserve the right to ask for receipts.

Chairman Harbinson asked if the number of vendors is set at the beginning of the season or could someone come in mid-season.

Ms. Berube said they took a hard look and saw that we were losing money if we weren’t able to fill market space. We do send out an annual application but we also have a guest vendor application. We could accept them if we have an open space for part-time. If it works out well for all concerned we might pull them in for the next year.

Chairman Harbinson asked how they market the farmers market?

Ms. Berube said it’s a combination of in-kind advertising through the area advocate newspaper and partnerships with other organizations throughout New Haven who would do in-kind advertising on their websites or newsletters. We have a newsletter that we send to market customers from lists made at the markets and every other function we’re at. We also do a mass mailings and post signs in the area.

Chairman Harbinson commented that the Shelton Farmers Market Association had a meeting last night to talk about their rules of operation. Some of the things I’ve been asking are things that came up at the meeting. So your answers are hopefully to the benefit of the listeners.

Commissioner Tate asked Nicole to explain the fee structure and your salary structure. What excludes/includes a farmer?

Ms. Berube answered that we started our markets with asking for fees for applications from the vendors. Then we decided on asking for a stall fee instead. This is a fee for how many tables and tents you’re setting up. The other fees are based on the sales. It ranges from $9 (missed market fee) up to 72.

Initially when we started the market we were looking to get as many vendors as we could and we didn’t specify what product could come in. We are a lot more discriminating now because of space restrictions. We don’t like to saturate the market with too much of any one thing. We are very cognizant of the fact that our name is “farmers market”, not “craft market”, or “bottled product” market. Our first focus is fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat. We’re very discriminating now. We have to turn away more than we can accept. There is a market committee, which is made up of board members of City Seed and two elected farmers that are voted in by other vendors of the market. Stacia sits on our market committee.
Vice-Chairman Dyer asked about the sales dollars. Ms. Berube said that this sales figure does not measure economic impact. For every dollar spent at the farmers market another three is spent in the local community. We find that there is more use of the playground and parks whenever we have the farmers market as well as a bump in traffic to the local businesses. Our local coffee shop has had to hire an additional 2 people on Saturdays just to deal with the volume of people coming to the farmers market.

Chairman Harbinson asked if the city of New Haven charges City Seed for space. Nicole says they charge for the public park space that we use, which is based on our usage on a daily basis. It’s around $35 now.

Commissioner McCreery asked how the fees compare to what Shelton is charged.

Mr. Guy Beardsley answered that there is no charge to the Shelton Market. You do have to have your own liability insurance.

Chairman Harbinson said that Agent Teresa Gallagher did research on all the farmers markets in CT, only 2 have a municipal committee that operates the farmers market. That was one suggestion that was brought to us to create a more robust market place. You obviously are a private entity and the organizational structure is close to governmental I would assume. Do you have any comments on how a loosely kind of community run organization like Shelton operates now versus something that is more structured and organized the way you have – the benefits and deficits to that.

Ms. Berube commented that she thinks that it’s often difficult for a volunteer run organization to be able to manage the data collection, the fee structure and all the checks and balances are working. There are examples of volunteer run markets that do very well. There is no one size fits all. I think that every community has to decide how much effort and work can be put into this. We enjoy a professional market management because we can afford to. We collect $35,000 in fees throughout the year. That doesn’t just pay for the market manager. It helps pay for the assistant market manager. We run 5 markets. It also pays for signage, insurance and our fees. From my perspective, if City Seed didn’t have professional market management, I don’t know how we would do it. It’s really critical for us.

Chairman Harbinson surmised that the $35,000 collected in fees certainly isn’t enough to pay two salaries. Is there some sort of grant of some sort?

Ms. Berube said that they do get grants. We also run other programs that generate revenue. We have a friends of the market program where one can buy into the program for $25 and receive small discounts at all the vendors tables. We have other revenue generating programs as well.

Commissioner Tate asked if they control the price structure of what the farmers charge. Ms. Berube said no. The farmers set their own pricing. I’ve only seen two examples since I’ve been there where a farmer charged too low of a price and we encouraged them to be more in line with the others for the same product.
Commissioner Goodman asked if this is typically a profitable venture for the farmers. Ms. Berube answered yes. I think Stacia can talk a little more about that.

Ms. Monahan said by being at City Seed with other farmers we’ve seen our farm grow in the last 8 years. With what we’re able to do they’ve set some examples as a community supported market. There is another program that they run where there were shares of market produce sold to different customers helped us to learn how to bring a CSA to our community supported agriculture program to our farm. There are other farms that I know have grown by expanding their product line, hiring people in the community as interns who want to learn farming and do that on their own someday. There is an educational factor that has grown with this market. I think Shelton is a great location to start bringing more to the community market.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked what estimate would you say the percentage of the vendors are basically making a living off farming versus the ones who sell something like chutney for a short period of time. How many treat it as sort of a hobby or supplemental to their normal income?

Ms. Berube said while the farmers market might be one revenue stream for some of the vendors who sell the value added products, typically it is their full-time business. The farmers market might be just one revenue stream for some and there are some where it is the only revenue stream. We’re finding more and more farms do what Stacia does which is diversifying. They have their own CSA, they offer CSA shares to customers at the market. They go to other markets during the week and they also have a farm stand. I think for most of them it’s full time.

Chairman Harbinson invited the other members of the public to speak.

Guy Beardsley, 276 Leavenworth Rd.

Mr. Beardsley asked Nicole to explain the market management.

Nicole explained that they have one full-time market manager and one for the 5 different managers. They make decisions with myself, the market committee, the vendors and the City. The line of communication for the market manager because of the 501c3 structure is they come to me first and then we typically bring things on to the market committee for a full review. The market committee consists of board members plus two voted in farmers. The two farmers are voted in annually.

Mr. Beardsley asked who files the 501c3 reports? Is it done by an accountant? Ms. Berube said we do have an accounting firm we use plus we do have a bookkeeper. You have to have an educational component as well as community component to get the 501c3.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said you are doing $3 Million a year in sales. Shelton doesn’t need the same kind of market for 2 days a week.

Ms. Berube said we don’t do the $3 Million, the farmers do. Our annual budget for City Seed is under $300,000.
Commissioner Tate asked how many vendors did you have before you realized you needed a professional management.

Nicole said that when they first started their Executive Director was able to devote her time as well as another board members time to the market. After the first year they collected enough fees to pay someone to do it. Back then we had under 10 vendors for the first year. It has grown expeditiously since then.

Commissioner Tate said the reason he asked is, does the professional management increase the size of the market?

Ms. Berube answered yes. It increases our ability to sell every single spot in the market. I do have a market manager that has experience in trade shows and in filling spots and looking at locations.

Commissioner Tate said so if I was a farmer I might look at professional management as increasing my market share, correct?

Ms. Berube said yes. I would say that word of mouth does help a lot. If a vendor has had a positive experience with us they tend to tell other people. We’ve been able to bring on at least 2 people that Stacia has recommended.

Commissioner Tate asked if they were the largest. She responded no, she thinks Coventry farmers market is the largest. We may have the most fruit and vegetable vendors right now.

Mandy Oram, 18 Forest Ave

Ms. Oram commented that you have a population of about 10 times what we have here. It might be a little hard to replicate what you’ve got in our town. What’s your take on that?

Ms. Berube said the Coventry farmers market is a great example. They were volunteer run for a long time. They are seeking a 501c3 right now. I would say that vendors, producers, farmers deserve a lot of care when it comes to being able to sell their product. I would say a dedicated person, whether or not they are paid, just dedicated to that market.

Ms. Oram said I think we have that.

Edward Fainer, 438 Walnut Tree Hill Rd

Mr. Fainer asked, what is the capacity of our market?

Mr. Beardsley said that on an average day we have about 12 vendors. We can go up to 16. Inside we can go up to 6.

Mr. Fainer asked as to the selection of the vendors, if you are a Shelton vendor do you have an advantage? Who decides who gets a spot?

Ms. Berube answered that they have criteria for the farmers market in that we prefer the local vendor.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked if some of the vendors bring products from their neighbors. There must be some of that, not everyone has enough to provide.

Ms. Berube said we do allow for exceptions on the application. They note what product they want as an exempt product.

Michelle Bialek, 10 Weybosset St.

Ms. Bialek asked what happens if someone brings in product they or their neighbors didn’t grow?
Ms. Berube said it’s not allowed.  
John-Paul Marcian, 165 Dickenson, asked how you verify someone is a producer and what is the penalty if they’re caught?  
Ms. Berube said we don’t police them.  We can request receipts for exempt items. The value added producers have to describe where they get their products from in their application.  For instance the bakery using berries we have asked for receipts in the past and received them to our satisfaction.  We understand that among farmers there will always be talk about who is doing what, and where and why and how.  We try to stick to the facts and go to the Dept. of Agriculture and request crop plans.  I am not the rouge authority to know how many apple trees you have and does that correlate to the number of markets you participate in with the apples.  We have trust and value with our farmers and with our vendors.  If you start off on the right foot then you can continue with it.  Mr. Marciano asked what happens if someone shows up with tomatoes with stickers on them?  Ms. Berube said they’d be asked to leave.  We have had to remove some product from vendors.  The person that grows the food isn’t always the one who comes to the market.  It could be a family member, staff member or volunteers.  Sometimes they may not be aware of a product that isn’t allowed.  We have removed product and it is in the application that we can do that.  

Chairman Harbinson stated that the Conservation Commission was asked by the Mayor to examine the subject.  We have been gathering information and visiting farmers markets.  Bill and I were at the Shelton farmers market this Saturday and we’ve spoken with Guy and Rick at the Dept. of Agriculture about farmers markets in general and how Shelton’s is run.  I don’t know that the City of Shelton, being the operator/manager of a farmers market is the best direction.

Tape 1, Side B

There is currently a 2-year lease signed for the farmers market and the building is not exclusive to the farmers market.  It’s called the Shelton Farmer and Public Market.  It is used for other events throughout the year.  The market committee is examine some of the rules and regulations they have and how other markets might operate.  The information you provided tonight is very helpful in how they might market themselves better.  Personally, I see the potential for us to liaison with them in terms of what city efforts could supplement their activity.  For an example, I discovered that eggs cannot be bought with WIC coupons.  It doesn’t make sense to me.  As a Commission perhaps we could advocate to our state representative to encourage them to examine the regulations of the WIC program.  That is the kind of thing we could do as a governmental commission and liaison with a farmers' association as to how they operate and give us feedback on issues they encounter that we might be able to help them with.  I think personally that is a solution or framework of how we might move forward.  Does anyone else in the Commission have some thoughts?
Vice-Chairman Dyer said that right now the farmers market is run from June to October and has one group that runs it. One thought is maybe if you want to go year-round maybe the same person doesn’t want to run it because they may not have the product for year-round. Is there any reason why you couldn’t have one person run it for 6 months and another for 6 months?

Ms. Berube said the only issue she’d have with that is there different rules and you’d have some of the same vendors and it could be confusing. For consistency sake there should be some sort of bridge between the two. The goal is to make sure the farms remain viable and continue to grow and people can continue to access them in a predictable way.

Commissioner McCreery asked what times of the year the markets run.

Ms. Berube said start the official season between May and July. Two markets end in October and one ends in November. Two stay open.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked if there were any restrictions on greenhouse/hothouse products. Ms. Berube said no, no restrictions.

Susan Marciano, 165 Dickinson

Ms. Marciano said she is a long-time customer of Stacia’s. I came here as an interested member of the community. What process would it take here in City Hall to get this to happen? This seems like a no-brainer to me. Are there other obstacles that I don’t see?

Chairman Harbinson said that Conservation is purely an advisory Commission to either Planning & Zoning on development applications and to the Board of Aldermen regarding acquisition of land for open space. In this case we were asked by the Mayor to examine the subject of the farmers market and how it could potentially be expanded because of a request. We’ve been gathering information and the advice we would give to the Mayor along with the Board of Aldermen. That structure is managed by the Mayor’s office.

Ms. Marciano asked if you would make the recommendation formally to him.

Chairman Harbinson said we’ve just heard from City Seed and we’ll have minutes prepared next week and they will be online for anyone to review. We’ll digest that information and potentially visiting other farmers markets such as Coventry that was mentioned, and then come up with a recommendation to the Mayor as to how they might proceed.

Ms. Marciano asked what do you think you need to see to make this happen?

Chairman Harbinson responded that the City does have a lease with the Farmers Market Association. It is a revocable lease, in case there was something they had done improperly or they weren’t operating to the best interest of the farmers in our community, the City could break that lease. In my discussion with the Dept. of Ag they said our market is run very well. The reporting of forms are done promptly and fully. They expressed satisfaction with the way the Shelton Farmers Market the way it operates now.

Commissioner Tate said the basic premise of what we’re looking at is, if someone wants to expand the market we (City) want to give them every opportunity to do that. We’re not looking to limit anyone in any way. In my point
of view is if someone could organize a winter market and it made sense with the existing structure that you have here, go for it and do it. We’re all behind you. We understand the way it is working is now everyone gets along great and everybody seems to be working well together. It’s a great market for the City of Shelton, but it could be expanded, and there is a way to do it, and because we need a little more help to do it from somebody else, maybe it might be more than Guy can handle more than the summer market. Maybe if someone would step up to do that, I think we’re behind that. I think that’s the direction I’m headed and I think that’s the direction the Mayor is after. If there is anything we can do to expand the market and usability of the facilities that we have at the Riverwalk, we’re behind.

Chairman Harbinson said, as a City, there are two aspects that we’re very supportive of in this community, the citizenry and our leadership. One is the value of open space and what it provides to the community, whether it be the quality of life, the trails, but also the agricultural activities. We’ve purchased development rights on active farms. We’ve preserved open space so that farming activity can occur. That’s a supportive nature of our community. The other thing is we’re really directed toward downtown with the economic vitality and the investment that’s been made with renovating the area. A farmers market at that location helps two things that are high value to our community.

Ms. Marciano said it helps everyone, the consumer, other business people like Michelle. She expressed her feelings of bringing the market to Shelton in the winter. I don’t see the down side.

Darlene Darkota, 11 Misty Lane

Ms. Darkota said she was confused on the agenda to expand the market. Where is that agenda coming from? Is it the people in Shelton want a bigger market? Is it that the town wants to be a part of the market?

Commissioner McCreery stated that this Commission hasn’t voted that’s the agenda. That’s Jim’s comment. Bill seems to support it. That is not the agenda of the Commission. We haven’t discussed this and come to that conclusion that it is the right thing to expand it. Some may feel it’s not broke, don’t fix it. I want to go on record that’s not the agenda of this Commission.

Ms. Darkota said that it sounds like we have space to expand as is. There is room to grow.

The Commissioners agreed there is definitely room to expand at that location.

Joey Miller, 91 Coram Rd.

Mr. Miller said he is a resident and a Science teacher and have a degree in environmental education. My focus was on food issues. I’ve been a visitor to the New Haven Wooster market for 3 years. It is a destination for me and my family. It’s an issue that we care about. I feel like it’s sort of a testament to the ground swell in interest of locally grown fresh food. I love going to New Haven but I would love nothing more than to be able to have that same experience in my own community. It seems to me like there are a lot of people who can’t always trust all the food you get from the grocery store and this is a demand that’s growing.
The farmers market is not only a place to get better tasting food but also offering us a stable food supply as prices of gas rise and things get more expensive. I want to know if the response to more community members wanting more fresh food from the area or region is being heard. If the farmers that are running the market now can see the opportunity to expand it through the winter, I go all winter to get greens, milk, meat and other foods. I know other people in the community that are after that.

Ms. Durkota said there are other people in the community who aren’t aware that it’s possible. That’s a huge opportunity.

Mr. Miller talked about the educational/social value of the market.

Commissioner Welsh has a quote from a Shelton farmer. It’s called take care of the farmer, and they will take care of the land. Whether you’re a large, small, full-time or part-time, I applaud everybody’s efforts. I think if Shelton has a need for a year-round farmers market we should make it work and all work together. I feel like I’ve been duped at a farmers market (not Shelton) while buying tomatoes wondering where they came from because I knew no one who even had them in their greenhouses. I think if that does become an issue we need to enforce that but to support the farmers who take care of the land and earn a living off of it, full-time or part-time. How could we not? We have to listen to what the needs are and figure out a positive outcome.

Someone said maybe they need to get it local and a really good grasp of the knowledge where the food at the market comes from.

Guy Beardsley said that the market individuals are here to listen and appreciate your comments. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 15 and at that time we’ll have our rules and our vendor qualifications lined up. It’s at the Market building at 7PM and everyone is welcome. I think if Stone Gardens wanted to expand their CSA distribution point, the Market site would be a great place for that. I don’t know if Stacia would consider it or not.

Ms. Monahan responded that they have the CSA pickup at our farm during the weekdays, there is definitely a possibility to do a community supported market share, where not everything came from my farm but there was other product like eggs and other vegetables. This worked with City Seed. That would be an ideal thing for somebody to market it to the community. They can support the market but not have to worry about the time to shop there. Their stuff is already prepared for them when they came to the market. They can just grab their box and go. It’s a way to support the market and get some market funds ahead of time too.

Mr. Beardsley said that he has other vendors who use the market as a CSA distribution point.

Chairman Harbinson said that after attending their meeting last night and observed some of the process you are going through to expand your rules and revamp your process, and what we’ve heard tonight of what has been successful at City Seed and some of the market conditions of residents who are eager to see expanded produce or expanded season, there is a lot for you as a farmers
market association to consider, and as a Commission I would prefer to sit back and see how the market place works some of these issues out.

Mr. Beardsley said he would welcome an opportunity to provide liaison either from the Commission or from the market to the Commission to keep people abreast because it would be reflected in your minutes and would not necessarily cost the city anything extra.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked if it was potentially possible to start a winter market this year.

Ms. Monahan said she has a farmer that just got a grant from the federal government to start a hydroponic thing in Prospect ask if we got wind of this potential year-round market in Shelton and how much he should start growing.

Chairman Harbinson said there is definitely potential for farmers, the farmers market association and farmers who are not currently participating to potentially have further discussion.

Mr. Beardsley said that his personal farming operation has been impacted by the weather plus problems with the animals. This has cut me back considerably. It would knock me out for a winter operation this year. He talked about the winter harvest manual.

Chairman Harbinson said that as a Commission I would say we let the market place play itself out a little bit and digesting what’s been offered by City Seed. We thank Nicole for coming tonight. With the farmers that are looking to expand the market place discuss with the current market place how that might integrate. Is that ok with everybody? Several agreed.

Mr. Beardsley thanked the Commissioners for listening.

Commissioner Welsh thanked all the farmers for continuing to farm and keeping land in an agricultural use in our community.

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

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that the contractor has completed all the tasks required. Chairman Harbinson, the Mayor and I met at the Great Ledge portion of the Rec Path that still needs to be finished and the land that’s parallel to Oak Valley Rd that we haven’t even staked out.

He said that the City is still holding 5% of the contract funds (about $11,000) that still needs to be released. If we do that we’d have to go out to bid again for additional work coming up. The Mayor does want to use City workers to spread millings and put in drainage. I do have an invoice from Pruzinsky & Sons for $8000 for partial release of the retained funds, which would potentially allow us to use that contract vehicle to add on some time in the near future.

The Commissioners talked about the idea behind releasing part of the funds.
Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve the invoice for $8000 from Pruzinsky & Sons for partial release of the 5% funds retained by the City. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Harbinson reported that they had a good turnout for the Rec Path Celebration/Ride/Bike event. We gave a recognition award to Perkin Elmer for their volunteer work on the Rec Path. We also gave recognition to Basil Difkofsky recognizing his contribution of land to the City. His family attended the event. They talked about the additional activities at the event.

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that Orange Fence has completed the 380 linear feet of two-rail split fencing. Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve the invoice from Orange Fence in the amount of $4,448.40 for installation of 380 linear feet of fencing on the Rec Path. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said he is still trying to obtain a quote for the removable bollards. He hopes to have one by next meeting. Commissioner McCreery mentioned the need for the guide wire to be moved on the UI pole just off Route 108 on the Rec Path. A letter just needs to be written to the UI noting the pole # requesting moving the guide wire as it conflicts with the Rec Path. Commissioner McCreery MOVED to authorize Agent Gallagher to write a letter to the United Illuminating Co. requesting the guide wire on one of their poles on the Rec Path to be moved stating that it is conflict with the Rec Path. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Vice-Chairman Dyer asked if we could send a letter to P&Z requesting them to develop an accommodation for walking on Huntington St. between Huntington Depot and Beechwood Market. The Commissioners talked about the need for the sidewalk and where it could be located and who to send the request to. Commissioner Tate suggested going to the Street Committee with the request. Write a letter to the Street Committee, copy P&Z and the City Engineer. Instructions of the contents were given to Agent Gallagher.

F. Trails Committee Report
Vice-Chairman Dyer presented receipts for reimbursement for the Trails Committee members.
Chairman Harbinson MOVED to approve reimbursement in the amount of $34.14 to the Trails Committee members for purchases made. SECONDED by Commissioner McCreery. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Vice-Chairman Dyer presented a quote for a chipper the Trails Committee would like to purchase. There are 3 quotes for a 4 ½” diameter chipper. All quotes are just under $3000. The Commissioners discussed the size of the chipper, what and where they would need it, and buying it versus renting it. They decided maybe they should rent the size they want to buy and see if it works out the way they want.

They will be applying for a grant from Iroquois that will be awarded for up to $15K. The deadline is November 15th. We want it for the work that needs to be done on the section parallel to Oak Valley Rd.

Vice-Chairman Dyer showed the Commissioners an area of the Rec Path that needs some work. He said that he walked the Great Ledge area with the Mayor and Tom Harbinson. The Mayor saw what needs to be done, in terms of drain pipes and millings. We talked about the idea of relocating the homeowners (Ralph DiSanti) driveway for better Rec Path access.

Tape 2, Side A

G. Dog Park and Planning for corner of Nells Rock Road & Shelton Ave
The Commissioners talked about the progress of the dog park (the tape wasn’t going at the time).
The Commissioners talked about the character of the parcel and the continued interest from Conservation.

H. Community Garden
We are nearing the end of the season. One of the problems we encountered at the Soundview location was the infestation of the horse nettles weed. They were terrible to remove because of all the thorns. Commissioner Dutkanicz said there is equipment stored in the barn that she needs to get out and there is a vehicle blocking it. Agent Gallagher said that for the next season we need to invest in some good quality weed block and make it available to the gardeners. They talked about the success of the gardens in terms of people using them.
I. Open Space Trust Account: Status
The balance in the account is $32,000. Rec Path grant balance is $952.00.

J. Budget Status
The budget report was handed out to the Commissioners.

K. Open Space set-aside: Status of increase to 15% in subdivision regulations
Vice-Chairman Dyer said he spoke with Rick Schultz and he said they pretty well have it all done and now they are going through the public hearing process.

L. 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.)
   P&Z Application #11-17. Re-subdivision of Lot #1 in Parcel A, Crystal Lane Estates. Applicant is Roger Spinelli. This is a 2-lot subdivision. $24,000 was paid to the Open Space Trust Account in lieu of open space. The Commissioners reviewed the drawing and discussed it.

M. Communications
None

N. Quality of Life – Executive Session (land acquisition and security issues)
Chairman Harbinson MOVED to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing land acquisition issues at 9:00 P.M. SECONDED by Commissioner Welsh. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

At 9:27 P.M. Chairman Harbinson MOVED to return to regular session. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Harbinson stated that no actions took place in Executive Session.
O. Comments by members

Commissioner Dutkanicz said that on October 23rd at 2pm the Shelton Trails Committee is having a hike on the Tahmore trail.

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that Shelton Day went very well and they got 30 names of volunteers for the trails work parties. We got a lot of positive feedback about the Rec Path.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said that there was a letter in the Huntington Herald from a person who was using the Rec Path on his bike all the comments he gets from people walking with their dogs.

Agent Gallagher talked about people using the Rec Path near the dog park.

Vice-Chairman Dyer told the Commissioners about the visitor they had at the Trails Committee who was in a wheelchair and had his guide dog. He met Terry Gallagher at the Riverwalk where there was a handicapped event and Terry invited him to try the Rec Path and come and give us an account of his experience. He showed us pictures of the places he went to and then showed a picture at Pine Lake bridge where there is now a 3” gap at the edge and he was unable to make it up the bridge without help from a person who happened to be there. This is where we had millings that have settled. Then he wanted to cross over Meadow Street at the crosswalk but the curb cut was never done. He then went to the Rec Path by the dog park but he was a little nervous to do it by himself due to the incline at the beginning. Overall he was pleased with the path.

Commissioner Tate suggested that if we or Trails have any projects that need to be done now is the time to send the list to the Mayor because there should be some time to be able to do it.

Commissioner Dutkanicz presented a shirt made by Blanchette’s Sporting Goods. It’s a Lands End shirt with our logo on it. They are $20/each. We’d like to buy them to give to volunteers, sell, etc.

P. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.
The next regular meeting is Wednesday, November 2, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission