City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
March 14, 2018

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Joe Welsh, Jim Tate, Ed McCreery. Absent:
Sheri Dutkanicz

Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager;

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Chairman Tom Harbinson.

- Meeting Minutes: Jim Tate made a motion to approve the January 3, 2018
  meeting minutes. Seconded by Joe Welsh. All were in favor.

- Public Portion: No one present.

- Trails Committee Report. Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting held
  immediately before the Conservation Commission meeting. See the Trails Committee
  meeting minutes for further detail.

- “Shelter Ridge” application IWC #17-14, 121-acre mixed use development located
  on Bridgeport Ave, Mill Street, Old Kings Highway, and Buddington Road. Inland
  Wetlands Public Hearing continued to March 15 and March 22. Staff Teresa
  Gallagher prepared a report at the Commission’s request geared towards the Inland
  Wetlands Commission based on Conservation’s previous comments about the project
  to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

  Terrance Gallagher noted that they are proposing to clear 80-90% of the site. There is
  no ‘clearing limit’ line on the map. Jim Tate said he prefers a disturbance line.
  Terrance Gallagher said if they tried to get this approved in many other towns they
  would be laughed out of the room. And the sad part is that this could be a win-win for
  everyone.

  Bill Dyer and Tom Harbinson said they will be going to the meeting. Jim Tate wanted
  to know if photos will be on a board or something. Tom Harbinson agreed this would
be a good idea and said he would prepare a Powerpoint. He asked Teresa Gallagher to prepare a letter on behalf of the Commission. **Bill Dyer made a motion to send a letter to the Inland Wetlands Commission that integrates the staff’s report with a cover letter that has Conservation’s recommendations as bullet points. Seconded by Jim Tate. All were in favor.**

- **Booth Hill Estates application IWC #18-2 and PZC #18-05.** DRD Subdivision with 23 lots on 22.7 acres at the corner of Waverly and Booth Hill Roads with 6.1 acres of open space.

  Jim Tate asked: How large are the lots? This is a cluster plan, and cluster planning in Shelton has not worked well. At Huntington Woods, you can’t support that house size on that small lot. They can’t get their pool and patio in. This plan is just a way to build more houses. It’s out of context with the neighborhood. These are half-acre lots in a one-acre zone.

  Ed McCreery said Conservation should not underestimate the importance of keeping those houses as far from the drinking water reservoir as possible. Jim Tate said lots 13 and 15 are just crazy. And get rid of the narrow strip from Waverly Road. Get rid of Lots 17, 18, 15 and 13. Ed McCreery agreed with getting rid of 17 and 18 and the narrow strip, but questioned the reasoning for removing Lots 13 and 15. Jim Tate pointed to a vegetation line. Just go right along the vegetation line and get rid of these lots in the woods. That will provide realistic access to the open space from Booth Hill Road.

  Tom Harbinson said there should be a hard boundary between the open space and residential lots, such as a stone wall. Let’s learn from our mistakes. Joe Welsh said we should state that our original position was to purchase the entire property.

**Jim Tate made a motion to send a joint letter to P&Z and IWC seconded by Ed McCreery with the following points:**

a. **Conservation originally wanted the town to purchase the entire property, and does not understand why we were not consulted for the proposed open space configuration, because it does not work.**

b. **The property is located within a designated greenway.**

c. **The City needs to protect drinking water. Septic systems are a serious concern near the drinking water reservoir.**

d. **Remove lots 17 and 18 to allow for meaningful open space access and to remove lots off of the intermittent watercourse.**

e. **Eliminate the impractical narrow open space access off of Waverly Drive;**
f Remove the rear lots 13 and 15 because rear lots do not work with undersized lots and shared driveways, and to provide better access to the open space.
g Require a hard boundary such as a stone wall between the open space and residential properties. In our experience, the small lot sizes can lead to encroachment problems into the open space.

All were in favor.

Ed McCreery asked Teresa to distribute a draft for review prior to sending.

● Executive Session: At 8:36 pm Tom Harbinson made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing land acquisition. Seconded by Bill Dyer. All were in favor. The Commission came out of Executive Session at 8:58 pm. No actions were taken.

● Comments by members:
  ○ Joe Welsh said he had a nice day in Northwest Connecticut. He stopped in at HVA headquarters and was informed that they are going to have a cocktail party in Ansonia within the next few months.
  ○ Ed McCreery said that a wetland application in the Ivy Brook wetlands was denied, in part because he informed the Commission that the City does not actually own the paper street. The applicant was also including activities on Land Trust property without their permission.
  ○ Tom Harbinson visited some farms in Los Angeles. He never appreciated how fertile the land is there in the “Great Valley.”

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 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.