City of Shelton
Trails Committee
Meeting Minutes for
July 11, 2018

**Present:** Bill Dyer (Chairman), Val Gosset, Terry Gallagher, Mike Flament, Mark Vollaro; Bob Wood (arrived 6:00 pm)

**Absent:** Jim Taradine. Also present: Teresa Gallagher (Natural Resource Manager);

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Dyer at at 5:40 pm.

1. **Meeting Minutes:** *Terry Gallagher made a motion to approve the June 6, 2018 meeting minutes. Seconded by Val Gosset. All were in favor.*

2. **Membership Issues.** Chairman Bill Dyer reported that Sheri Dutkanicz had submitted a letter of resignation due to scheduling conflicts and family commitments. *Mike Flament made a motion to appoint Mark Vollaro to the Trails Committee. Seconded by Val Gosset. All were in favor.*

3. **Recent Trail Activities:**

   A. Two work parties were held on the Paugussett Trail between Mayflower Lane and Indian Well to clear summer overgrowth and a large number of blowdowns from the February and May storms. (27 hours)
   
   B. Clearing of the Rec Path at Great Ledge was done. (9 hrs)
   
   C. A work party was held to clear severe overgrowth along the Rec Path at Lane Street. (25 hours)
   
   D. Mark Vollaro and Jim Taradine mowed the Rec Path (8 hrs)
   
   E. Bill Dyer cleared Turkey Trot Trail (2 hrs)
   
   F. Bill Dyer removed a fallen tree from the Bluff Walk (1 hr)
   
   G. Teresa Gallagher cleared summer overgrowth along the Paugussett Trail at Indian Well State Park (6 hours)
   
   H. Paugussett safety reroute at Birchbank: Staff bypassed a steep, rocky section of the trail by creating a new section of trail about 275 feet long, benched into the side of a hill. The new route is much safer and easier to hike. Terry Gallagher spent an afternoon moving some of the larger rocks. (5 hours)
   
   I. Trail Signs: Terry and Teresa Gallagher fabricated three painted wood signboards alerting Paugussett Trail hikers of upcoming road walks and one
sign letting hikers from Indian Well know when they have reached the City of Shelton Birchbank property. (5 hours)

J. Property survey and reroute: Lewis Associates surveyed the open space accessway north of Thoreau Drive through which the Paugussett Trail passes. The bottom of the stairway was located on the property line. Once the property lines were staked out, staff removed the bottom of the stairway and redirected the trail into the accessway. The new route takes the trail off of the neighbor’s lawn.

K. The Gallaghers refurbished the Silent Waters canoe launch sign (3 hours).

L. Total volunteer hours: 91

(Bob Wood arrived at 6:00 pm)

4. Projects planned for the near future:

A. Chestnut Tree along the Lane Street fire access/Rec Path: Mark Vollaro collected leaves from an unusually large chestnut tree that produced nuts the previous year, and sent them to the American Chestnut Foundation in Maryland for analysis. The analyst concluded that the tree is a pure American Chestnut tree. Bill Dyer spoke briefly about this with City Engineer Bob Kulacz and will forward to him the documentation verifying the tree is an American Chestnut. Mark Vollaro said he has about ten years of experience with chestnuts, and this tree is about the most perfect American Chestnut he’s seen. Terry Gallagher said one option is to contact the Office of Environmental Planning at DOT. The Lane Street Means Brook bridge replacement is a local project that is being funded 80% by the DOT, so the state standards must be followed. Shifting the road to the left would avoid the mature trees and stone wall, but then they would need to obtain a wetlands permit due to a ditch on the left. Mark Vollaro said he will get in touch with the local TACF (The American Chestnut Foundation) for any guidance they can offer. Teresa Gallagher suggested contacting the Connecticut Ag station to inquire about construction recommendations for this tree. It’s not enough to save the tree, you need to keep from driving on the roots.

B. 89 Okenuck Way, ZBA Application for a variance in the frontage requirement to create a new rear lot abutting Birchbank Mountain Open Space. Committee members reviewed maps showing the proximity of the existing 4-acre lot to Birchbank Trail at the Scout bridge crossing Upper White Hills Brook. There is currently a wooded knoll that screens the existing houses along Okenuck from the trail. The variance application appears to show the location of the new house to be on the knoll overlooking the trail. Terry Gallagher wanted to know what the hardship was. The applicant is the same person who built the original Twisted Vine subdivision. Bill Dyer moved to inform the Conservation Commission that the Trails Committee is opposed to a new house overlooking the Birchbank Trail. The wooded knoll is a scenic buffer. Terry Gallagher seconded. All were in favor. Bill Dyer added to let ZBA know about the 30-foot conservation easement located along the existing property line. It’s a sensitive area.

C. Shelter Ridge. Terry Gallagher said that an Inland Wetlands meeting was held last week. They were going to close the meeting, but the City decided to hire a
consultant to review the project. The Planning and Zoning lawsuit is still active, and the Wetlands hearing is still open. Attorney Dominick Thomas made a point to say the open space shown on the plans is high quality open space and that the Conservation Commission’s assessment that the open space is poor quality should be ignored.

5. **Guided Hikes/Events:**

   **2018 Schedule:**
   A. Full Moon Hike Sept 23, 7:00 pm
   B. Shelton Day. Sunday, October 7.
   C. Buddington Loop. Saturday, October 20, 3:00 pm. Buddington Road Paugussett Trailhead.
   D. Turkey Trot Trek. Sunday Nov. 25, 1:00 pm

6. **Potential Work Parties:**

   A. Teresa Gallagher has someone in need of 40 hours of community service and plans to work another a safety reroute the Paugussett Trail, this one on the section between Thoreau Drive and Webb Mountain, where a long flight of steps is rotting out. The new survey pins will allow the trail to be routed along the hillside instead of going straight down the hill.
   C. July 28 Work Party: Silent Waters dam, meet at SIS 8:30 am.

7. **Eagle Scout Projects:** Josh Andes completed installing benches.

8. **Expenses** Terry Gallagher submitted receipts totalling $203.09 for two rogue hoes and other supplies.

9. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.**

*Minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher and should be considered a draft until approved by the Trails Committee.*