City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for August 7, 2019

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Jim Tate, Ed McCreery, Sheri Dutkanicz

Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager.

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

Meeting Minutes: Bill Dyer made a motion to approve the July 10, 2019 meeting minutes. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor.

Trails Committee Report. Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting that preceded the Conservation Commission meeting. For details, see the Trails Committee meeting minutes.

ATV Violation: Bill Dyer described a video showing illegal ATVs that was submitted to the Natural Resource Manager from a trail user who was hiking on the Rec Path near Wesley Drive. The hiker told Conservation that he and his wife were followed and harrassed by the ATVers at length and he called the Police. While speaking with the responding officer, the first ATV rider returned in his car. The officer knew the ATV rider and spoke with him. The pedestrian left under the impression that the ATV rider was not going to be ticketed, and said that he and his wife would no longer use the trails in Shelton. Teresa Gallagher forwarded the video to Police Chief Shawn Sequeira and asked for clarification of the incident, with a copy to the Mayor’s assistant Jack Bashar and Bill Dyer. Bill Dyer responded with an email to all requesting full enforcement. No one from the Police Department responded to Bill Dyer or Teresa Gallagher. Jack Bashar did tell Teresa Gallagher that the Police Chief had been on vacation and that they were discussing the matter.

Tom Harbinson thought a letter should be sent citing the egregious misuse of open space and listing the enforcement options. Jim Tate said that Chairman Harbinson also needs to call the Police Chief and speak with him personally. Mr. Harbinson agreed. Ed McCreery made a motion for the Conservation Commission Chairman to speak.
directly with the Police Chief, followed up with a letter. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor.

Indian Hole Bridge Project: The CT DOT sent the Conservation Commission a copy of their permit application to the CT DEEP for a General Permit for Water Resources Construction Activities for the rehabilitation of the stone arch bridge at Indian Well State Park. Teresa Gallagher researched the bridge origins and verified the bridge was a WPA project built from 1935 to 1937 (DOT’s records indicate the bridge was constructed in 1910). She posted her findings and some pictures of the bridge on the Shelton Trails Committee’s blogspot site (https://sheltontrailscom.blogspot.com/2019/07/indian-hole-bridge-repair.html). Several commission members indicated that they had never seen the bridge from below (including the arch) and only saw the bridge while driving over it on Indian Well Road.

Bill Dyer noted that according to the plans, the DOT was going to remove the stone walls that line the top of the bridge and replace them with concrete walls. The outer walls would be faced with stone, but not the inner walls. Teresa Gallagher added that “capstones” would replace the field stone at the top of the wingwalls, and that the project would result in each lane being 9” wider than before. Also, the plans have no recognition of the Paugussett Trail that crosses over the top of the bridge. During construction, the bridge would be closed to pedestrians. Teresa Gallagher previously submitted a letter as the Paugussett Trail Manager asking the DOT to consider moving the double guide rail upon completion of the project that pedestrians currently need to climb over.
Ed McCreery made a motion to send a letter to the CT DOT confirming that the bridge is a WPA project, that it is important to the people of Shelton to preserve this part of Shelton’s heritage at Indian Well, and that Shelton would like the DOT to replicate the historic look and character of the bridge from all angles, including the view from Indian Well Road. The letter should also ask the DOT to eliminate the guide rail obstruction for pedestrians and should request provisions for trail users during construction. If possible, the letter should be from the Mayor. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor.

Executive Session:

At 7:40 pm, Bill Dyer made a motion to go into executive session to discuss potential land acquisitions. Seconded by Sheri Dutkanicz. All were in favor.

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 8:10 pm. No motions were made.

Comments by Members:
Rec Path parking areas: Commission members discusses the disrepair of the parking areas for the Rec Path, especially the trailhead at Pine Lake Shelton Ave. Members also discussed the Lane Street trailhead, at which only a few cars can park, leading to parking along the narrow street. There is no actual parking lot there. Some of the trees at the trailhead are in bad shape and could be removed to make room for a larger parking area.

Southbank: Tom Harbinson noted that it was unbelievable how many cars are parking at Southbank Park during busy days in the summer. He has seen about 40 cars there, with some people parking along Rt. 110.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 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.