City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
March 1, 2017

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Jim Tate, Joe Welsh, Pat Gadjosik, Ed McCreery (arrived at 7:30 pm). Absent: Sheri Dutkanicz. Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Tom Harbinson.

2. Meeting Minutes: Pat Gadjosik made a motion to approve the February 1, 2017 meeting minutes. Seconded by Bill Dyer. All were in favor.

3. Public Portion – for items not on the agenda: No one wished to speak.

4. Trails Committee Report. Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting held immediately before the Conservation Commission meeting. See the Trails Committee meeting minutes for more information.

Jim Tate made a motion to write a letter to Mayor Lauretti requesting that the City take the following actions at the Rec Path Pine Lake trail entrance: 1. Remove the gatehouse; 2. Flush-cut the stumps; 3. Install boulders at the edge of the parking area to reduce the risk of someone driving over the embankment. Seconded by Bill Dyer. All were in favor.

5. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update: Tom Harbinson summarized the Board of Aldermen POCD workshop held on February 21, 2017 for which members of the Conservation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission were invited. Many members of Conservation attended and two members came from Planning and Zoning. See minutes for the Board of Aldermen meeting for additional information.

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

   a  PZC #16-29 Wells Hollow; Bridgeport Ave. and Long Hill Cross Rd, 17.4 acres zoned LIP. Proposed mixed use PDD including three 3.5-story apartment buildings totaling 152 units; a 4-story hotel; four restaurant buildings; two
retail buildings; and an auto-tire repair center building. Chairman Harbinson said that the public hearing has been continued. A lot of people were at the hearing and it appears they wanted to speak. However, a lot of time was spent with the applicant discussing the Great River Water Club application and by the time they came to the Wells Hollow item on the agenda, only four people had time to speak.

b  405 Long Hill Ave. PZC #17-01. PDD for six single-family homes on 3.96 acres. Zoned R-1 and LIP. Teresa Gallagher asked commission members to clarify their position for a letter she was asked to write during the February meeting, specifically the number of units they wanted to see on the property. The commission members decided not to comment on the project at this time.

c  Great River Water Club (Beacon Point Marina) PZC #16-28. 164 apartments on the Housatonic River. Chairman Harbinson said he spoke at the public hearing. The commentary from both Planning and Zoning members and the applicant was all about the view from the road, while Conservation’s interest is in the view as seen from the river. He referenced a nearby rendering of the project as seen by the river, and said it shows no vegetation along the riverfront, which I think is inappropriate. Jim Tate agreed. Also, the traffic report was ten years old.

d  Independence Drive 2-lot subdivision involving the excavation of a rubber dump. On Monday, Teresa Gallagher was investigating a complaint she received from the volunteer who has adopted the street for cleaning up litter. She observed several issues at the rubber dump, spoke to the driver of some equipment at the work site, and took photos which were shared with the Conservation Google Group. There were large piles of excavated rubber spilling out into the city right-of-way near a catch basin with non-functional silt fencing. She also noted clean fill being placed on top of rubber and also alongside the rubber pile, and that the excavation hole appeared to have been dewatered, potentially into the nearby wetlands which drain into City open space and Silent Waters.

On Tuesday morning, after speaking with Fred Wills in Planning and Zoning, and learning that Inland Wetlands Administrator John Cook would be out for the week, she contacted David McKeegan of the CT DEEP and forwarded the photos she took. Mr. McKeegan replied a few hours later and said he reviewed the photos and spoke with the developer Roger Spinelli and his Professional Engineer Alan Shepard, and both assured him the DEEP permit conditions were being met.

Jim Tate instructed Teresa Gallagher to go up a level and speak to David McKeegan’s boss. Tom Harbinson made a motion to ask the Planning and Zoning Department to issue a Cease and Desist order. Bill Dyer seconded the motion. All were in favor. Teresa Gallagher was also directed to make
Mayor Lauretti aware of the situation.
7. Executive Session – Quality of Life (land acquisition)
At 8:04 pm, Ed McCreery made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing proposed land acquisition. Bill Dyer seconded. All were in favor. The Commission came out of executive session at 8:34 pm.

Tom Harbinson made a motion to recommend to the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor that property recently seized by the City for backtaxes in the area of Pawtucket Avenue be declared open space. The area is located with the designated Ivy Brook Greenway, and Land Trust President Joe Welsh has noted that neighbors petitioned for preservation of the area. Ed McCreery seconded the motion. All were in favor.

8. Comments by Members: Tom Harbinson shared his recent visit to New Zealand.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 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.