City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for March 4, 2020

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Sheri Dutkanicz, Jim Tate, Ed McCreery.
Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Tom Harbinson.

Meeting Minutes: Sheri Dutkanicz made a motion to approve the February 5, 2020 meeting minutes. Seconded by Ed McCreery. 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. Much of the discussion involved choosing a storage barn design, with some members recommending a smaller building and others wanting something larger.

New Applications:
“Nichols Place” PZC #20-06 413 Nichols Ave, Designed Residential District (DRD) for 18 homes on a 15.5-acre property. Teresa Gallagher handed out maps showing an overlay of the proposal on the GIS Open Space map (attached). Tom Harbinson noted the existence of open space to the west, including Land Trust and City-owned properties.

Developer A.J. Grasso described the project, starting with a conventional layout showing thirteen lots. The bonus density of the DRD allows for both additional lots and additional open space. Jim Tate noted that the proposed density was much higher than the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Grasso responded that from Nichols Ave, the density will look the same, and there are open space buffers to the north and south of lots 9 and 10. Jim Tate said those buffers areas had no value for public access. Teresa Gallagher noted the buffers can become a liability because future homeowners may want the City to cut leaning trees down along the property line.

Jim Tate noted past problems with shallow backyards like the one for lot 2,
future homeowners inclined to expand their small yards into open space areas. Mr. Grasso offered to construct a split rail fence along the property line between Open Space #1 and Lots 1-4. Jim Tate recommended that Open Space #1 be kept private since it is mostly wetlands and there is no public access value.

Bill Dyer asked why the Conservation Residential District (CRD) doesn’t work? Mr. Grasso responded that under a CRD, he can’t get more units than a conventional subdivision.

**Ed McCreery made a motion to send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission endorsing the proposal with the following conditions:**

1. **The new road will be privately owned.**
2. **The disturbance area for the detention basin will be well-delineated prior to construction in order to minimize disturbance.**
3. **Open Space #1 will remain privately owned and protected by a conservation easement.**
4. **A split rail fence will be installed along the property lines between lots 1-4 and the open space before a CO is issued.**
5. **Open Space #2 will be deeded to the town as Public Open Space except for the two buffer strips located to the north and south of lots 9 and 10. Those areas will remain protected as private open space.**
6. **There will be no cutting of trees in Open Space #2.**
7. **The stone walls on the east boundaries of lots 9 and 10 will be protected by an easement.**
8. **Local access of new residents of the subdivision to Open Space #2 will be granted between lots 7 and 8.**
9. **A split fence will be installed between lots 9-10 and the open space.**
10. **The applicant will consider minimizing the area to be cleared to the rear of lots 11 and 12 to provide a buffer between the new homes and existing neighborhood.**

Sheri Dutkanicz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

A.J. Grasso noted that there is a large barn-like garage that needs to be removed from the property, and that he would like to see someone reuse the garage rather than destroy it. He overheard the conversation about the Trails Committee needing a new storage barn and offered this one. He could have it dismantled and brought to the site. The City would need to provide a foundation and reassemble the building, probably a total cost of around $11,000. The garage is about 40x50 feet and may have been built around the 1930s or 40s. Jim Tate and Bill Dyer agreed to go look at the structure.
Shelton Canal Locks: Ed McCreery made a motion to add the a discussion of the Canal Locks to the agenda. Seconded by Tom Harbinson. All were in favor. Ed McCreery continued to say he attended a meeting at the Shelton Locks with representatives of the Shelton Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and McCallum Enterprise, the owner of the hydroelectric facility. SEDC was seeking permission from McCallum to access the property for the purposes of studying and possibly repairing the locks. They would like to regain functionality of the first two locks. McCallum’s rep said they had full support from McCallum. The initial study will be very limited in scope, intended to generate a laundry list of tasks.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 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.