City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
April 5, 2017

Members Present: Tom Harbinson, Bill Dyer, Sheri Dutkanicz, Jim Tate, Pat Gadjosik, Ed McCreery (arrived at 7:18 pm), Joe Welsh (arrived at 8:05)

Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:18 pm by Tom Harbinson.

2. Meeting Minutes: Bill Dyer made a motion to approve the March 1, 2017 meeting minutes. Seconded by Pat Gadjosik. 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. (Ed McCreery arrived at 7:18 pm)

5. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update: Tom Harbinson said he attended the Planning and Zoning public hearing scheduled for March, but other items on the agenda left no time to discuss the POCD. The hearing was extended to April 26. He began reviewing the plan, but there were so many errors, grammatical issues, and outdated information that he gave up. He felt the plan was not professionally done.

   Jim Tate: Let’s make sure that people know we do not endorse the plan. Exhaust internal communication first, but if it’s ignored, then let the public know. That’s our obligation.

   Ed McCreery: Compare this process with the one that generated the 2006 POCD. Tom Harbinson: Right…there have been no efforts to hold public workshops to determine what residents want. No outside consultant was hired. The Board of Aldermen did hold a workshop for which members of Conservation and Planning & Zoning were invited. The only members of P&Z who attended were Jimmy Tickey and Frank Ozak. It’s a substandard plan.

   Committee members agreed the plan was development-centric that seems too reactionary to recent development proposals and needs balance. Also, the update in the form of an addendum is confusing because the addendum contradicts the main
body of the plan. Normally, an “update” is created by modifying the original document, not by attaching an addendum. The open space set-aside requirement for subdivisions is an example. The 2006 plan states that the City’s goal is to increase the set-aside to 15%, which the addendum removes that goal. If someone does not read the addendum, they will think the 15% goal is still valid.

Tom Harbinson noted that all the new high-density residential development done using the PDD mechanism has not been subject to the open space requirements of traditional residential development rules. These apartments may have recreational facilities such as swimming pools, but that’s not for the greater community.

Ed McCreery responded that there was a court case in which the open space set-aside rules were determined to be for the greater community and not specifically for the residents of the new development. A swimming pool does not meet that residential open space need. PDDs are being used to avoid the open space component.

Tom Harbinson and Teresa Gallagher will draft a letter from the Commission making these points. It will say in bold letters that whatever nonstandard mechanism is used for high-density residential development, it must provide an open space component or payment in lieu of open space.

6. Executive Session. **At 7:55 pm, Sheri Dutkanicz moved to go into executive session to discuss potential land acquisitions. Seconded by Bill Dyer. All were in favor.**

Joe Welsh arrived at 8:05 pm. The Commission came out of executive session at 8:25 pm. **Ed McCreery made a motion to seek authorization to obtain an appraisal for a parcel located near a drinking water supply in the Far Mill River Greenway that is threatened with potential development. Bill Dyer seconded the motion. All were in favor.** Bill Dyer will speak with the Mayor.

7. Comments by members:

Pat Gadjosik said she thought the new building where Kyles used to be downtown is horrible. Sheri Dutkanicz agreed and said you come over the bridge from Derby and you can’t see Shelton. It’s sad. Sheri Dukanicz said there was a well written letter in the Huntington Herald regarding over development in Shelton.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 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.*