City of Shelton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
August 2, 2017

Members Present: Tom Harbinson (arrived at 7:13 p.m.), Bill Dyer, Pat Gadjosik (arrived at 7:17 p.m.), Joe Welsh, Jim Tate, Sheri Dutkanicz

Absent: Ed McCreery

Also present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm by Bill Dyer.

1. Meeting Minutes: Sheri Dutkanicz made a motion to approve the July 5, 2017 meeting minutes. Seconded by Jim Tate. All were in favor.

2. Trails Committee Report. (Tom Harbinson arrived at 7:13 pm). Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting held immediately before the Conservation Commission meeting. See the Trails Committee meeting minutes for more information.

3. Applications for Development.
   a  Pearmain Estates, PZC #17-09, 6-lot subdivision on 10.6 acres.
   Commission members reviewed a draft alternative plan showing two building lots (including the existing house), with the remainder of the property shown as open space to be purchased by the City. Jim Tate noted that the commission already went on record stating the property should preserved as open space if possible, so there was no need for further comment. It was up to the Mayor and Aldermen whether the open space purchase would be made.
   b  Rubber Dump at Mountain Laurel Ridge Resubdivision PZC #16-16 Independence Drive, Two lots on 3.5 acres. (Pat Gadjosik arrived at 7:17 p.m.). Bill Dyer said that he heard the City was removing the material and would charge the landowner. Jim Tate asked what the Conservation Commission should be doing to ensure the property was cleaned up so the neighbors wouldn’t need to keep looking at the piles. Teresa Gallagher noted if the City becomes actively involved with the cleanup, it may be exposed to long term potential liability for any hazardous material found on site. The reason the City would not accept the property as open space during the original
subdivision was to avoid that potential liability.

Jim Tate asked Teresa Gallagher if she should be getting involved. Teresa Gallagher said that many departments were already involved: Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Urban Blight, and the Mayor, not to mention the CT DEEP. She said that previously she had witnessed clean fill being placed on rubber and immediately notified the DEEP. The DEEP responded by contacting the developer and the developer’s engineer, who both denied this occurred. This satisfied the DEEP and they did not investigate further. Jim Tate said he would make some inquiries about the status of the cleanup.

4. **Communications – Encroachments:** Teresa Gallagher sent a certified letter to a property owner on Doe Place regarding unsightly materials being stored near the Paugussett Trail that were about 75 feet over the property line into the open space.

Jim Tate asked her to look at another encroachment off of Walnut Tree Hill Road. Teresa Gallagher responded that there were many encroachments all across the City, but she generally takes no action unless it is having a significant impact to one of trails since she has no enforcement authority. She has recommended that the City implement an enforcement procedure similar to what the Board of Aldermen created for the Anti-Blight program, a system which seems to work well, and has spoken about this previously to Aldermen John Anglace as well as the Mayor’s assistant Jack Bashar.

Commission members had a discussion about encroachments involving structures Vs. lawn areas in the open space. Teresa Gallagher noted that, from a conservation perspective, major lawn areas have a greater negative impact on the environment than structures like playsets or sheds. People are treating these areas with fertilizers and pesticides, especially insecticides for ticks, which are broad spectrum insecticides. And there is more stormwater runoff from lawns, leading to impaired water quality and worse flooding.

Jim Tate asked Teresa Gallagher to compile a visual of these encroachments. She responded that she did that several years ago and shared with the Commission members. Sheri Dutkanicz said she had saved the email from 2011, but the link to the slideshow was no longer effective. Teresa Gallagher said she would try to find that visual on her computer. Jim Tate said it would be interesting to see what those encroachments from 2011 look like today.
5. **Executive Session:** At 7:46 p.m. Sheri Dutkanicz made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential land acquisitions. Bill Dyer seconded. All were in favor.

The commission came out of executive session at 8:30 p.m. No decisions were made, but commission members agreed to review the obsolete “Quality of Life” list of properties.

6. **Comments by Members:**

   a. Pat Gadjosik said it was her last day on the commission.
   b. Bill Dyer said that two great Trails Committee members were moving from Shelton.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

*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.*