

City of Shelton, Conservation Commission
Minutes for Regular Meeting of Wednesday October 4, 2006 at 7:00 P.M.
Minutes should be considered a draft version until approved by CC at their next meeting.

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Call to Order

Present: Tom Harbinson, Chairman
Bill Dyer, Commissioner
Hank Lauriat, Commissioner
Jim Tate, Commissioner
Joe Welsh, Commissioner

Absent: Ed McCreery, Commissioner

Also Present: Teresa Gallagher, Conservation Agent
Marianne Chaya, Clerk

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harbinson called the meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes of September 6, 2006

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to approve the minutes from the September 6, 2006 regular meeting. SECONDED by Commissioner Dyer. A voice vote was taken; all were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Public Portion

Joe Nechasek, 25 Waterford Lane

I would briefly like to speak about one agenda item, which is the Henry Mileski, 33 Murphy's Lane. I also have a separate topic I would like to share with you. I am a resident of the Waterview complex, which shares a corridor between the Mileski property and a road called Warwick. I know Tom is very familiar with the fact that this a bit of a shared relationship. When you leave Murphy's Lane you go to a road labeled Warwick. To the west of that is an open space corridor that people do not enter. There was an agreement between the developer of Waterview and you all and zoning regarding the little open space corridor. I believe that the City of Shelton owns Warwick but the agreement says that the Waterview Association will maintain it and plow it. Is that pretty much 95% correct?

Chairman Harbinson responded that he is not sure what P&Z's approval was.

Mr. Nechasek said that some time ago there was an unexpected series of events that resulted in my household being contacted by John Anglace. The Mileski item came to the Aldermen for reasons that are difficult to explain. We began a discussion of what the family had intended and our understanding was that they had intended to prepare a driveway and a garage. There is a very attractive wall between Warwick and their property and we were very concerned. I can simply tell you that our Board and our Association has no particular issue with the adjustment that is proposed between the open space and their private property. We do have a little concern that they might put a driveway that would bust through the wall or something like that. There is another concern which I guess is outside your jurisdiction; which is that the driveway is already done. It looks as if you are acting on something that is pretty well finished. I understand that the garage is intended and the house has been expanded a number of times. We are concerned that the additional expansion of the home is actually for people who are not members of the family.

Conservation Agent Gallagher asked if you are saying that the driveway is already done?

Mr. Nechasek said pretty much. It depends on what you call a driveway. If you call a driveway a dirt path but maybe they plan on paving it. It has been many months since we were aware that cars drive on that path to the side of the house from the front of the house.

Chairman Harbinson said that when we get to this item you could talk further on this subject.

Mr. Nechasek added, I would like to raise one issue on your agenda and your on-going work. I have mentioned this to Tom but it's something that I feel strongly about. I find that one of the most attractive sites in the area is the view of the Housatonic River going north on Rte. 110, roughly from the golf complex up to Southbank. It has bothered me a great deal that all standing trees are heavily infested with heavy vines. It is a very difficult space and when we had a town concern of the clearing of the trees across from the townhouses, but I have an obsession with ailanthus, which runs rampant. I have to travel on Route 25 and the State has almost literally given up maintaining sides of roads compared to neighboring states and Europe. This area is a very difficult space with a steep drop-off and there are questions of ownership in regards to who maintains and approves this. My contention is that, why lose the standing trees to choking vines if they could be cleared. In a conversation with Tom, he said well maybe you want to protect the view of the road for boaters on the river, but I think that's a kind of questionable argument and you have the Southbank area. (TH Note: My comments have been to protect the view "toward" the road, not "of" the road) If someone would give me a license, I would take my sweeter saw and cut a few vines down the trail in that little public park. The rest I think would be difficult. This may not be a priority for you but I just wanted to say I think it's an extremely attractive area and it would really open it up and you wouldn't be taking anything down.

Commissioner Tate said that if we have someone who would like to take over Southbank and cut the bittersweet vines, we would be happy to write you a letter to give you authorization to do that.

Mr. Nechasek said I would do that and explained that these vines grow quickly and that the only way to handle it would be to remove the vine completely, by the root. If you were to just cut it annually it would re-sprout.

Agent Gallagher suggested that if this project gets to be more than Mr. Nechasek can handle it could become an Eagle Scout project.

Conservation Agent Report

Conservation Agent Gallagher stated that this is item i on the agenda:

Ecklund Garden (proposed native species garden on Oak Valley Road)

Girl Scouts Leann Misencik and Jessica Solotruk provided pictures of the Ecklund Garden and stated that they also took measurements for the areas that we want to work on. They are identified as areas A, B & C. We propose to gently rake the area so that the Bonita ferns and Asters can flourish. We also have obtained prices from Twombly Nursery for some of the proposed native Connecticut plantings. One of the Girl Scout leaders said they have been informed that there is some money available from the City budget. There is a line item in the budget for Girl Scouts community service projects in the amount of \$5000. We would like to tap into that.

In area A we propose to gently rake it out to expose the ferns that are already there. We would like to plant Bloodroot, which is a very pretty native plant and compatible with ferns. In area B we would clean up the garbage in that area. We also would do some plantings and rake out the brush and sticks. In area C, which is a very small area we propose to do plantings and weed the area. We also would like to make some little signs to show the name and explanation of each plant.

Their leader said that they found some interesting old artifacts at the site. They found a set of skeleton keys near a toolbox that had rusted out along with files, hinges. Jim Tate said that they could bring the items to the Historic Society for review.

The Commissioners said that Agent Gallagher would write a letter of support.

Commissioner Dyer MOVED to authorize the Girl Scout Troop to proceed with the proposed project for the Ecklund Garden to create a native species garden. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. A voice vote was taken; MOTION PASSED.

Commissioner Tate mentioned that Planter's Choice, a wholesale nursery in Newtown might have some plants at a competitive price and they should check it out, especially at this time of year. Tell them you are buying them for the City of Shelton.

The Girl Scout leader asked about the goldfish pond. If one of the girls wants to make a proposal for plantings we have a feeling there might be a liner in there of either cement or plastic. Could we remove it?

Commissioner Tate stated that if you were removing something inorganic, such as a piece of plastic, we don't have a problem with it. If it were cement you probably wouldn't want to get involved with that at this time.

Agent Gallagher suggested that if this pond is holding water and you wanted to do some plantings you might want to consider wetland type of species.

Commissioner Tate asked that if they encounter any metal pieces around to let us know and we can contact Parks and Rec. to remove them.

Review of P&Z Applications for Subdivisions and/or Development

Upper Canal Street Master Plan

Chairman Harbinson stated that Agent Gallagher has posted some video and photos on-line. It has been forwarded to Jason Perillo, who is on the downtown sub-committee.

Aspen Ridge, Commerce Drive, Bridgeport Avenue

Commissioner Lauriat mentioned that the Commissioners who are on the Land Trust would recuse themselves if there are any votes and that they are going to be an intervener.

Chairman Harbinson reported that P&Z approved the SDA to be a PDD and approved the basic development plans. They still need to approve detail development plans. To my knowledge, the I/W Commission has not approved it. They only submitted a conceptual plan to I/W. There were a couple of comments made by P&Z members referring to us on the Conservation Commission and our efforts to preserve the property as open space. I will just say that they were ill informed. We did make our commentary about the application for development and we made our commentary in response to an Aldermen request regarding the acquisition of the property. I know that at the last BOA meeting they had an executive session portion on their agenda that mentioned this item.

Vistas at White Hills, Maple Ave/East Village

Chairman Harbinson stated that Agent Gallagher updated us with some pictures of the stone wall and the reseeded of the embankment that we talked about last month.

Commissioner Lauriat said that referencing his email correspondence regarding the pull-off parking area, I am against that. About 100' away there is a lot of parking area. I say, rebuild the wall, get them to scrape up the gravel they put in for a driveway, and put down some of the topsoil that they have stockpiled and replant it. By the way, when you stand on East Village looking in there is a home on the right and on the left of the temporary driveway. They planted a long line of trees on the border of the home on the right that borders the open space.

Commissioner Tate asked what the approved plan or the end condition supposed to be?

Commissioner Lauriat said that they were supposed to put it back the way it was.

Chairman Harbinson stated that he does not know what the P&Z conditions are in the approval. We need to get that information. Our advice was to put that area back as a meadow and put the stone wall up to prohibit access.

There was discussion regarding the area on East Village Rd. It is a narrow, very busy road that is supposed to be widened and there is no indication that it will be done any time soon. The best access to French's Farm seems to be from Grandison off of Village Rd. rather than East Village.

We need to find out what the conditions of approval were from P&Z regarding the open space area so that it can be monitored.

Henry Mileski, 33 Murphy's Lane (request to modify conservation easement)

Agent Gallagher stated that this request came from Henry Mileski and it was forwarded to P&Z.

Chairman Harbinson said I dug up some old emails on this from once before. To give you some history, Henry Mileski lives on the corner of where Murphy's Lane makes the bend at Warwick, which goes into the Waterview Landing. He was the developer that got a PDD approved called Miles View, gave some open space and didn't follow through with the application, and then Waterview Landing was constructed. When Waterview Landing got constructed there was a conservation easement put on his lot. It was to protect the stone wall along the Warwick road frontage. I wonder if it relates to the pipeline that is in the area. (Pipeline direction was detailed). Given that line, I wonder if that was on the outside of that easement; it might have been like a construction easement, not a conservation easement. As I understand it, when it first came to us the easement wasn't on file on the land records.

Commissioner Tate asked what does Mr. Mileski want to do?

Chairman Harbinson said that back in 2005 the Board of Aldermen had tabled this item at their meeting and asked the Conservation Commission for an opinion. We discovered that the conservation easement had never been filed on the land records. Mr. Mileski is asking for a modification to the conservation easement. Chairman Harbinson explained what a conservation easement is to Mr. Nechasek.

Agent Gallagher said that Mr. Mileski wants to add a second garage. He already has a garage on one end of the property and above which there is, from what residents tell us, an apartment that is occupied by a non-family member.

Commissioner Dyer asked, it's the driveway that is the issue; not the garage. Correct?

Agent Gallagher said yes.

Chairman Harbinson said I don't see the hardship of why he needs to have the conservation easement modified to have more garage space. He can add more garage space to the existing garage.

Commissioner Tate MOVED to write a letter to Planning & Zoning, carbon copy to the Board of Aldermen and Mr. Mileski, regarding the request by Henry Mileski to modify the conservation easement on his property of Warwick/Old Coram Rd, that we would deny said relocation of the conservation easement of parcel Y/parcel X, as we do not see the hardship in terms of needing to add a second garage. The existing garage can be modified to add space, which would create less impervious surface and less infringement on the adjacent open space. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. A voice vote was taken; MOTION PASSED.

Mr. Nechasek asked how the Commission would respond if he has altered his property. Chairman Harbinson said that if he has already put in a driveway then we would contact the zoning enforcement office for P&Z to review for any action. We are only an advisory board.

Any Pending

None

Moment of Remembrance for Co-Chair Harriet Wilber

Chairman Harbinson said I wanted to put this item on the agenda at this spot because Harriet always did the communications. I got involved in this Commission because she encouraged me to get involved. The City has lost a great person who had a great impact on this town. My dad worked with her back in the 70's on this Commission. When I drive by the Bridge St. Post Office on my way to work in the morning and I see the flowers there, I remember she and Mary Beth Banks doing the adopt-a-garden program. Despite her health challenges she would keep it watered. I would like to have a moment of silence to remember Harriet and all her good work to the City and this Commission.
(Moment of silence observed)

Commissioner Lauriat pointed out that now the Commission is in need of a person to fill the vacancy. Chairman Harbinson said that as long as he has been on the Commission there has always been a Co-Chairman. Consider at the next meeting appointing Co-Chairs.

Communications

Chairman Harbinson reported on the following communications:

- i. City website – some of the errors have been fixed. Rudy Skowronski has been very good at doing any updates as needed.
- ii. Email policy – seems to be working well with the video and photos posted on line.
- iii. Clear-cutting of parcels – Commissioner McCreery forwarded the ordinance to the BOA for action.
- iv. HVA Informational Cruise Grant – Agent Gallagher reported that the application is already in. This is for a grant for river cruises on the Housatonic River and invite City leaders and land use board members. We wrote a letter in support:

September 18, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

The Shelton Conservation Commission strongly supports the *Housatonic River Cruise for Tomorrow* proposed by HVA because it reinforces our own efforts to enhance Shelton's Housatonic River Greenway, as identified in our 1993 Open Space Plan. Our Commission is currently in the process of updating this plan, and will be putting much more emphasis on the river. We will be emphasizing visual corridors, ridge-top preservation, public access and water quality along the river (HVA has provided us with critical support as we investigate the water quality of a major tributary, the Far Mill River).

One barrier to further progress in Shelton has been a lack of awareness by many Shelton residents about the Housatonic River, which is typically "out of sight, out of mind." Many residents who have lived here for years have never been on the river, and only see glimpses of it from the highway. Those who do get out on it are surprised by how scenic it is. HVA's efforts to get people out on the river, particularly those people involved in land-use decision-making, and to educate them about it, deserve support.

Sincerely,
Teresa Gallagher

Conservation Agent Report (cont'd)

Conservation Agent Teresa Gallagher reported as follows:

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- i. Ecklund Garden – Girl Scout Troop 512 presented proposal – see page 4.
 - ii. Girl Scout Riverkeepers at Far Mill River
- (tape stopped at this point) Tape 1, Side B
- iii. Pine Rock Park – meeting report – one bright spot was when Gil Pastore passed around pictures of the bags of trash the Girl Scouts picked up from the area. Police have been enforcing the parking laws. They have given out 43 City ordinance tickets, 27 infractions (State violations), and about a dozen cars were towed. The area that people can park at legally is on Ojibwa Trail. The Association said that they wanted to put some “no littering” signs by the water. I suggested they talk with Stratford, since they own the land. Regarding the Pearl Bach open space area, the Association would like to put in some benches; one is already ordered and on the way. There is a nice view of the river. Dan Allen, of the Association, wants to make a path to the benches, not really handicapped accessible, but good enough for elderly people to use. Chairman Harbinson suggested they make a presentation to the Commission for the proposal of the use of the open space area and we will review it.
 - iv. Miscellaneous Complaints – Commissioner Lauriat asked if any of the Lane Street complaints were taken up with the police department? Agent Gallagher said that she and Chairman Harbinson had a meeting with the police regarding the ATV’s in the area. Commissioner Lauriat said that when he met with two police officers it amazed him that they did not understand the difference between City open space and Land Trust property. Chairman Harbinson said that the video Agent Gallagher has that shows fire rings on the Land Trust property should be shared along with a memo to Chief Hurliman stating that while some of the garbage and activities are on City Open Space to keep in mind that some of the activity observed is on Shelton Conservation Land Trust property, which is private entity and is not City open space and should be treated separately. Commissioner Lauriat stated that he emailed his request that when the Open Space Plan Update is done that a dissertation of the difference between open space and Land Trust.
 - v. Camping areas – the Girl Scouts no longer need an area because the Land Trust voted to allow them to use the campsite. I am still waiting to hear back regarding the Boy Scout Jamboree from Russ Shimer. Chairman Harbinson suggested to contact the Mayor because he may know of someone else that is involved in this Jamboree or with Steve McKeon.

- vi. Open Space Trust Account – the person in Finance (Kathy) is the one I need to get the information from, has been out ill. Chairman Harbinson asked Agent Gallagher to touch base with Rick Schultz to see what should be expected to come in for fee-in-lieu-of for tracking purposes.
 - 1. Agricultural Land Preservation Fund – this exists in name only; there is no money in it.
- vii. Project Safe Trails
 - 1. Signs – I have a map noting all the locations and I am in process of installation.
 - 2. Mapping – update on GIS system – I have been working with Regis. I took the old plan and compared it with what he did, which was that he got a list of the map/lot numbers from the Assessor's office and entered it that way.
- viii. AMC Trail Building & Maintenance Standards – AMC stands for Appalachian Mountain Club. They oversee part of the Appalachian Trail, the trails in the White Mountains and a lot of other trails in the Northeast. They have this really good book – Trail Building & Maintenance. This excerpt I am handing out is in regards to signage. I would like to see for the Commission to adopt their measures. They have a lot of experience in high-class trails and there is consistency in the whole system. For instance this will tell you on the blazes that are put on the trees how many inches they are, what kind of paint you use, how frequently you put the blazes, etc.

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to adopt the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Trail Building and Maintenance Standards as our standard for trail construction in Shelton. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. A voice vote was taken; all were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Discussion:

Chairman Harbinson pointed out that we are in a more urban environment rather than they are in so there has to be an understanding that if we adopt this as our standard we may have a need for different type of signage if necessary. This is a good guide.

Commissioner Lauriat said you've seen the signs on the Blue Dot. Every couple of years they have to be replaced because they get torn down. I think they take them to hang on their wall at home.

Agent Gallagher said that fortunately we get the Eagle Scouts to come through for us.

- ix. Open Space Marking – Commissioner Tate brought a cap that you would put on the end of a piece of rebar. The cap could be any color and could be stamped with City of Shelton/Open Space/Conservation

Easement, or whatever we want on it. It will be driven on the rebar and would be pretty hard to take off. Depending on the application it could either be flush or maybe 18" off the ground.

- x. City Composting System – we don't have any place for grass clippings. We used to but the private company that was hired to come and empty the bin at the Transfer Station and no one used it, so they got rid of it. The thing about grass clippings is that compared to leaves it is a much bigger deal. They release a huge amount of nitrogen very quickly. The best management system for grass clippings is to leave it on the lawn. We shouldn't encourage people to pick up their grass clippings and put them in piles because they leach out into the Long Island Sound. There is a nitrogen problem in the Long Island Sound. Chairman Harbinson suggested that Agent Gallagher do an article regarding this for the Shelton Life publication. The leaf composting is done next to Elizabeth Shelton and it is not known if they make use of it for various fields in the City.

Trails Committee Report

Commissioner Dyer reported as follows:

Bridge at Silent Waters Dam

The bridge over Silent Waters Dam is done and they are ready to ship it to us. We do not have the foundations in place. You have met with the Mayor and he said he is all for it. Dean has volunteered to go out dig the holes but we need to get a vendor to put up the foundation design. We do have the detail designs and I met with Sandy Nesteriak and Bob Wilcox (purchasing).

Commissioner Tate asked if when you talked with the Mayor, did he offer any assistance of a contractor in the City that could help?

Commissioner Dyer said that in August when they met there were none that could attach this to. We would have to get three quotes. Today Bob Kulacz has been formally brought into this project.

Commissioner Tate said that last time he thought we used Nagy and that could be one of the quotes. He offered to help Commissioner Dyer to move this process along.

Boardwalk at Lane Street - Leaf Grant

We built a section of the boardwalk (photos shown). We now know the length of the bolts, the number of boards, but we are still a bit up in the air about the materials.

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Commissioner Welsh said that after reading the minutes of the I/W Commission regarding the materials, it sounded like they didn't want any pressure treated materials at all. They wanted us to use something green. From the Land Trust point of view we would like to see green materials but we also need to be realistic and you can't have something that rots away, plus what is the standard along the entire Rec. path? I have been in contact with John Cook and I did tell him that there is a MSDS for the copper. It's tough to find arsenic treated wood. The copper is a little more environmentally friendly. That is all Housatonic Lumber sells. Regarding the framing materials we would prefer to do something green (environmentally friendly) if feasible.

Commissioner Tate asked if the ECA readily available pressure treated that we get at Home Depot, is that going to be ok with the Land Trust?

Commissioner Welsh answered that it may be ok with the Land Trust but it doesn't seem to be ok with Wetlands. I was advised that we go to the Wetlands meeting and present the MSDS and say that we looked into other alternatives. Trex doesn't have support beams or posts that go down for a foundation type material.

Commissioner Tate said maybe I don't understand but, the amount of pressure treated wood, there are playgrounds all around the U.S. that built out that. Fresh pressure treated wood obviously is not good because it leaches the copper out of it. After about 6 months or a salt-water bath you can leach out a lot of the surface treatment of that copper or arsenic, or whatever it is. I think those protections easily could be done and that's a good "green" practice. I don't think it's really practical not to use a pressure treated wood because there is really no other cost benefit or cost relationship until the market starts to reject that totally and you have a new pressure treated product come in that's reasonable in price or available. I think you are kind of stuck with structure of pressure treated material. Also, for replacement, if it gets damaged or whatever else, you are still able to replace it with like material. There has been very little feedback that the product hasn't worked well. There are so many applications for it within the town for past projects.

Commissioner Dyer said that every deck is made with it and some are where there are their water wells are located.

Commissioner Tate said that there has not been any correlation unless you really abuse it by dust and cutting, but I have never heard of any problems. I have worked on some very sensitive systems and have not had any problems. When talking about the decking issue, it might be a little expensive but there is the Atlantic white cedar. It can be heavily damaged under a lot of use. You wouldn't use it where you would take vehicles across on a routine nature. In the shade

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the cedar holds moisture and it would moss up on you and become slippery. Pressure treated can do the same thing but as pressure treated gets leached out it becomes a fairly rough surface product. They usually use a heart wood of Southern yellow pine, it's naturally a hard wood, where Atlantic white cedar is a soft wood. It is beautiful but it is more expensive.

Commissioner Dyer said that the cedar is slightly less than the pressure treated wood. We met with the President of Housatonic Lumber and he said for our purposes the cedar would be fine. As long as you treat it with water sealer every few years you would be ok.

Commissioner Welsh said he thinks it would be easier if the City had a standard wood used. From the Land Trust point of view I need to do what they recommend and I forwarded the pictures to John Cook who said he would forward it to his Commissioners. Ideally we would like to do it all out of pressure treated wood because the copper doesn't have adverse impacts to the wetlands and aquatic life.

Agent Gallagher said that every time you have to repair this you would be disrupting the wetlands.

Chairman Harbinson said that it would be best to use something that has a longer life and less maintenance. Why don't we have them put some type of letter of comparison of the alternatives and indicate that the copper based pressure treated material is more appropriate to use.

Commissioner Dyer said that their alternative was the Trex decking.

Commissioner Tate said I part company with you there. My personal opinion is that Trex has not been out long enough. In it's form it has been proven to be a stable material. I don't know what chemicals react with this material and over the years the product has had to be revised many times. When it was first put it out it used sag when the sunlight hit it. Now they've mixed it with other materials and they have solved that problem. I have history with pressure treated wood for over 30 years and I don't have any bad results. I can't tell you with all honesty it is better, the proven record is not there. It hasn't been in application long enough and it is very expensive. Besides, later on if repairs are needed you may not even be able to get the same material for replacement.

Commissioner Dyer said that the pressure treated wood is less than \$1/ft. The cedar is a little over a dollar, maybe 10-15% more. The Trex is about \$2.25/ft.

Agent Gallagher said I used to work in a copper mill and did the environmental stuff. Copper for people and mammals are not toxic unless you have a huge amount of it. It is very toxic to aquatic species. However, they have shown that

copper in a real world environment, the bacteria suck it up out of the water from the dissolved form and make it unavailable very quickly. In reality you think there is all this copper in the water, there isn't. It's taken right out of the water and the fish and every body just fine.

Commissioner Welsh said that they use it treat the reservoir.

Commissioner Dyer said that this will take hundreds of man-hours to do it and I don't want to re-do it if it's going to rot out in less than 10 years.

Commissioner Tate said that it will not rot out but you may have failure at some points and there will be maintenance needed.

Agent Gallagher volunteered to go to the Wetlands meeting to talk about the copper issue.

Tape 2, Side A

Need Specification for Rec. Path design study RFP

We need help. We have the money; we need to get an architectural study.

Sycamore Street

We still have not done anything about that. The Mayor even wrote a memo saying that they need boulders at the end. Agent Gallagher said that it is on Dean Cawthra's list.

Plan of Conservation and Development

Open Space set-aside of 15%

Chairman Harbinson reported that we sent the letter to P&Z asking them to up the percentage of open space set-aside for subdivisions. They have not gotten back to us as of yet.

Ensure public access to Housatonic River (CRRA Plan from 2001)

No report as of this time.

Scenic Resource Inventory

Chairman Harbinson said that this was mentioned in our Plan of Conservation and Development. I would like to get the public involved to find out where they think there are scenic resources in town and get that input to us. It got me thinking about this when I got an email from Sandy Nesteriak saying that they are looking for articles for Shelton Life. Since Shelton Life is mailed to all the residents, if we could have some sort of text in there stating that we are updating

our Open Space plan and looking to inventory all the scenic resources in town – what do you like about the community in terms of scenic vistas or a neighborhood pocket park, or a field that you really find attractive, etc. We, as a group of 6 really can't discern what every scenic resource is in town and what is valued by every neighborhood. Maybe this would be a good way to get this out to the public for input. They could contact Agent Gallagher through email at conservation@cityofshelton.org.

Commissioner Lauriat shared a story about two individuals that maintain a section of the Blue Dot Trail.

Open Space Plan Update

Statement of Purpose, General Outline

Chairman Harbinson said that Agent Gallagher had emailed the outline draft to date and asked if everyone had a chance to look at it.

Commissioner Lauriat said that since this Open Space Plan Update is going to be for the general public you really have to include more than just a reference that there is Land Trust property. You have to explain to the ordinary mortal who is going to read this what you are talking about. Another thing you might want to do is to try and explain what you are going to do with the open space.

Chairman Harbinson pointed out that for the most part the open space is going to remain in its natural form. Some open space can be used as active recreation areas or agricultural uses.

Commissioner Welsh commented that one day you are going to get to a point where the invasive species and vines are going to attack some of the larger trees and you would have to go in there to do some maintenance to maintain the quality of these open space parcels for optimum wildlife habitat.

Agent Gallagher said that she would be putting in a section on management of the City Open Space, which is not in the existing plan.

Chairman Harbinson pointed out that when they gave the presentation of the Wiacek property to the BOA to show why that property was important to acquire, it was for a multitude of purposes. While it is open space it may not be intended to just sit as an open field.

Agent Gallagher said that in the plan there is a section titled Provide for Current and Future Recreational Needs in Public Open Space. It has different types; passive recreation, new ball fields, etc. as directed by the Board of Aldermen and Parks & Recreation.

Quality of Life – Executive Session

Commissioner Dyer MOVED at 8:58 P.M. to go into Executive Session to discuss possible land acquisitions, inviting the clerk, Marianne Chaya, to stay for the session. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED at 9:22 P.M. to come out of Executive Session. SECONDED by Commissioner Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Harbinson reported that the only decisions made in Executive Session was to authorize Commissioner Dyer to work with a surveyor on one of the properties to ascertain its location so that we can do a title search.

Comments By Members

Commissioner Lauriat said that along side his property there is an enormous collection of red oaks. We've been there 20 years and some years at this time of year there it's like walking on a bucket of ball bearings. Agent Gallagher said that it's cyclical. It doesn't really have anything to do with the weather. All the oak trees become "in sync". Most years are kind of average crop and then one year there will be no acorns. The year after that there will be a million acorns. The theory is that they do that on purpose, as much as a tree can do something on purpose. The year that there are no acorns there is famine. All the predators of the acorns die out and the next year there is a bonus of acorns.

Commissioner Welsh said that there is an invasive plant symposium next Thursday at the Mountain Side Resort in Wallingford. I will try and bring back some helpful information.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Tate. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:25 P.M.

Next Regular Scheduled Meeting: November 1, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Conservation Commission
2 tapes are on file in the City/Clerk's office