



City of Shelton Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes for August 3, 2022

This meeting was held virtually. Video recording is posted on the Conservation Commission's YouTube channel:

Members Present: Tom Harbinson (Chair), Bill Dyer, Jim Tate, Ed McCreery, Tom Wilson. **Absent:** Sheri Dutkanicz

Also Present: Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Chairman Tom Harbinson.

Meeting Minutes: **Ed McCreery made a motion to approve the July 6, 2022 meeting minutes. Seconded by Tom Wilson. All were in favor.**

Natural Resource Manager Report: Teresa Gallagher reported the following:

Mile-a-Minute Vine: MAM can grow up to 6" per day and 27 feet per year. The infestation at Trombetta Woods is under control. A much larger infestation is centered along the Eversource powerlines that run between Daybreak Lane and Partridge Lane, impacting at least thirteen different private properties. The infestation is the most dense where Eversource crews removed evergreen trees in late 2019.

An informational flyer was mailed to all the residents of the neighborhood and several landowners reached out to Teresa Gallagher, who visited their properties and pulled out much of the MAM. The landowners felt that the MAM infestation along the powerlines was not their responsibility. Where the infestation has spread to other areas, those landowners are interested in working to eliminate the vine. Many of the homeowners are elderly and do not have the means to remove MAM. Ideally, Eversource would take some responsibility for the situation in their easement area. It looks like the towers are going to be upgraded to monopoles within a few years, so perhaps strategies to control MAM can be part of their conditions of approval from the CT Siting Council.

Control is by preventing the plant from going to seed, since it is an annual that dies each winter. The vines are just starting to go to seed now, and those seeds can

be carried by birds. The vines are also being attacked by introduced MAM weevils, which slows down the growth rate.

Trails Committee Report: Bill Dyer summarized the Trails Committee meeting held prior to the Conservation Commission meeting. For details of that meeting, read the Trails Committee meeting minutes. The Committee sent a letter to the Connecticut Siting Council regarding the Eversource Rebuild Project through Shelton Lakes. Mayor Lauretti and John Anglace both sent letters of support. Tom Harbinson noted that the Trails Committee is not a true subcommittee because its members are not all members of the Conservation Commission, and it would be more appropriately formalized as an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by BOA. Tom Harbinson asked Bill Dyer to provide him with a list of members to refer to John Anglace.

Shelton Canal: Ed McCreery reported that the project is temporarily on hold pending interest of the last property owner on Canal Street. The engineering process has not advanced.

Encroachment issues: Tom Harbinson brought up an encroachment on City open space forwarded to him and Teresa Gallagher by John Cook. There is lawn and part of a playset on City property. Looking at historical satellite photos, the lawn area has been there for many years and probably was part of the previous farm field. Teresa Gallagher responded that these types of encroachments have been occurring all over the City. Conservation has no enforcement authority and is limited to sending letters asking for compliance, which has not been productive in the past. She would prefer that the Board of Aldermen set up a procedure similar to that which they set up for the Anti-Blight Program, which seems to be very successful. Members agreed that a procedure to enforce these encroachments would be preferable, but wanted a letter sent to the homeowner asking them to stop mowing the open space area. Ed McCreery thought the letter should state that the City would hire a surveyor to pin the line, because if they try and remove a surveyor's stake, that is breaking state law and easily enforceable. Teresa Gallagher noted that the homeowners at the end of Mayflower Lane removed a survey stake after the City surveyed the line, and they were not fined. Tom Harbinson said he would reach out to John Anglace.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher and should be considered in draft form until adopted at the next meeting.