

City of Shelton, Conservation Commission  
Minutes for the Special Meeting on Thursday January 15, 2009 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, Vice-Chairman  
Hank Lauriat, Commissioner  
Jim Tate, Commissioner  
Ed McCreery, Commissioner

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

## A. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harbinson called the meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:05 p.m. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## B. Approval of Minutes

**Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to approve the minutes from the December 3, 2008 Regular meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

## C. Shelton Lakes Recreation Path

Review proposal from Jim Swift for design drawings of Phase 3A& B and preparation of Inland Wetlands permit.

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported as a result of all the activity of trying to get money pumped back into the economy the town was asked for some potential “shovel ready” plans. We offered Phases 3A & B, which is the part from the power lines

to Wesley and Lane Street extension. We will need an inland wetlands permit. Jim Swift, the design engineer for the development that was done that adjoins the open space, has all the information needed for this permitting process. He agreed to use his proprietary data for the purpose of expediting the process. Jim gave us a proposal for \$4950 to layout the route, do all the engineering design and to flag the centerline. He also agreed to go before the Wetland Commission on our behalf for the permit application.

The first thing I need is for approval from the Conservation Commission to authorize the expenditure. I would then prepare the necessary document for Purchasing.

The Commissioners discussed the dollar limit on waiving bids from the State versus the City, noting the City would prefer 3 quotes.

Chairman Harbinson commented that the requirement should be waived due to the fact that Jim Swift already has much of the data needed and the cost per linear foot is comparable. Vice-Chairman Dyer said that it works out to be about \$1 per linear foot.

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve the expenditure of \$4950 from budget item #001-1300-414.30-23 (Other outside services), for the purpose of the design of the Recreation Path Phase 3A & B and the acquisition of the Inland Wetlands permit. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat.**

Discussion:

Commissioner Lauriat commented that he thought what you wanted was us to approve Vice-Chairman Dyer going after whoever you go after; to have us accept a single bid.

Vice-Chairman Dyer said no, he just wanted approval of the funds.

Chairman Harbinson said he felt it would be more appropriate to say that in light of the expertise and data Jim Swift has, it should be enough to request approval to waive the bids in light of the special circumstances for professional services.

**Vice-Chairman Dyer withdrew his motion and Commissioner Lauriat withdrew his second.**

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to request the Commission approve award the contract to Jim Swift, Professional Engineer, for \$4950.00 for the purpose of preparing the design drawings for Phases 3A & B for the Recreation Path, and preparing, submitting and administering the approval process from the Inland Wetlands Commission for a permit through the path area. If necessary, the Board of Aldermen or Board of A&T waive bids in light of the proprietary data that is available for the design engineering. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. A voice vote was taken; all were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

Vice-Chairman Dyer reported that it would take two months to do this work and would be in line for the "shovel ready" project.

## **D. Trails Committee Handout**

Vice-Chairman Dyer handed out copies of the report created by Trails Committee member Terrance Gallagher. It is as follows:

January 15, 2009

Mr. Thomas Harbinson, Chairman  
Shelton Conservation Commission  
54 Hill St.  
Shelton, Connecticut 06484

### **Re: 2008 Shelton Trails Committee Summary**

Dear Tom & Conservation Commissioners,

2008 was a great year for Trails and Greenways in Shelton. A number of important milestones were achieved which resulted increased use and enjoyment of Shelton open spaces by residents and visitors. As our trail system becomes more established we saw an increased need for operations and maintenance on our existing trails, as well as significant new trail construction.

### **Major Highlights in 2008:**

Phase 1 of the Shelton Lakes Recreation Path is finally open as of December 13th! Phase 1 runs from Pine Lake to Route 108 at Nells Rock Road. There is on-going work to finish the path; timber bollard installation, HC ramp at Meadow St, remove rocks and trees along edge, guy wire relocation, fence, signs, etc. The new granite bollards with the new logo look great and we are seeing a lot of use on the Path, even in winter. We anticipate that warmer weather in spring will bring a lot of new traffic.



**1 Ribbon Cutting to open RecPath on Dec. 13, 2008**

We received the CFP Award of Merit at their annual meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>. This was a totally unexpected honor that was due to Shelton's on-going long term commitment to establishing trails, greenways and preserving farms and open space.

We opened up three new trails; Boehm Pond Trail on Far Mill St., Birchbank Mountain trail on Birchbank Mtn. Rd., and Far Mill Trail behind ASF Sports on River Road. This added 2 to 3 miles of new trails in the northwest, west, and south sides of the City. These neighborhood access trails implement a number of goals outlined in the Open Space Plan.

The Conservation Commission formally appointed Lynn Reid and Richard Skudlarek to the Trails Committee in January and they have been welcome active additions in organizing activities and work parties.

Use of the Red Barn at Nells Rock Road is working well for storage of supplies and materials. We had cleaned out the Barn and repaired the doors in September, prior to accepting delivery of the granite bollards. We received a welcome Christmas present when Michelle in Building Maintenance assigned a contractor who was doing community service to re-roof the Barn in December.

### **Disappointments in 2008:**

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**2 McCallum Enterprises closed off public access to the Housatonic River in November opposite Riverview Trail**

We lost public access to over 1000 linear feet of the Housatonic River at the Ousatonic Dam on Canal Street in October. McCallum Enterprises installed an 8' high chain link fence topped with barbed wire at the Canal Lock as part of their on-going efforts to fill in the canal and build condominiums directly on the river. As you know this issue is on-going with FERC following the public outcry over the closing. Hopefully this public access to the Housatonic River can be restored this spring.

We also lost our first DEP Grant application in March for \$76,000. The State Greenways

Commission actually scored our application highly, but decided to award the grant to other towns because we had not finished spending all of our previous money from the 2004 Consolidation Grant. The previous grant money had actually been spent on RecPath Bridge #3 at Silent Waters, but the reimbursement paperwork had not yet been submitted to the DEP due to some outstanding expenses. We have learned our lesson and completed spending our 2004 Grant amount, and then submitted our 2008 Recreational Trails Grant for \$73,150 by September 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been told by the DEP that we should be notified about the grant award sometime in January.

The City did not get road millings from the Huntington St. re-paving project in August due to a mix-up in the contract documents. This was unfortunate because we had hoped to use that material as base for sections of the Recreation Path, which would have saved the taxpayers considerable construction costs. Hopefully, the City can improve the bid documents for the next road milling project.

**Work Parties:**

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Volunteers have contributed over 700 hours of their valuable time to plan, construct, and maintain trails and open spaces this year. These efforts have provided significant benefit to the citizens of Shelton, and saved the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars if the work had to be done by paid staff.



**3 Shelton Trails Volunteers at Riverview Park in November**

The Trails Committee organized 18 regular work parties this year with typically 4 to 8 volunteers. There were also a number of smaller events of 1-4 volunteers doing selected work (painting trail blazes, fixing kiosks, clearing, etc.). Typical trail parties consisted of clearing, installing drainage, removing debris, and building facilities. Some of the major improvements this year were the new Curtis Brook Bridge designed by Bob Wilkins on the RecPath, Ecklund Native Species Garden on Oak Valley Road, Silent Waters Canoe Launch, replacing the vandalized bollards at Abby Wright parking lot with a new gate, and construction of three new trails listed previously.

We had a number of new volunteers come out and help on trail projects particularly Jim Taradine, Pete Conway, Cliff Albright, and others. Randy Szkola of Hilltop Gardens was also kind enough to donate his time rough grading the Lane St. entrance for the RecPath following our inland wetlands permit approval. This is the first time that a private contractor has volunteered machine time to help build a portion of the RecPath, and it was greatly appreciated.

While we did create three new neighborhood trails, much of our work this year was maintenance on the existing trail network. As noted above we have had to

repair vandalism at some of the sign kiosks, but most of our trails seem to be staying vandal free as people use them more and more. The RecPath entrance at Pine Lake seems to be a persistent problem, and we have an on-going issue with graffiti there. Hopefully the City can come up with a better program to clean graffiti in 2009. A hydraulic lift was added to the Gator this year, which has been a big help in moving millings, rocks, and mulch. We also bought a large garden cart that has been useful moving mulch and tools. We also purchased a new Stihl clearing saw and hedge trimmer, which have been useful with briar removal along the power lines.



**4 Volunteers using Gator to place millings on the RecPath at Nells Rock Road (Greenway House).**

### **Public Involvement:**

We did a number of things to encourage resident to use Shelton's open spaces and trails and volunteer to maintain them. There have been increased efforts to encourage public use of Shelton's greenways.

We distributed over 250 CFPA brochures and over 750 trails maps prior to National Trails Day in June. A new logo for the Shelton Lakes RecPath was created by Peter Stockmal, and 83 tee shirts with the logo were printed up for sale and to give to trails volunteers.



**5 New Shelton Lakes RecPath Logo Post at Pine Lake**

Lynn Reid has been e-mailing work party notices out to all who have signed up as potential volunteers. A number of nice articles or letters to the editor were also printed in the papers. Terrance Gallagher has prepared a number of Flyers for upcoming events that were printed and posted in the sign kiosks.

Teresa Gallagher prepared a nice color brochure for the Shelton Lakes Greenway, and close to 5000 copies have been distributed since August. Teresa's *Shelton Trails* website has had a number of new enhancements and

additions this year, as has her open space blog. The blog contains video, photos, and aerial mapping from the RecPath Grand Opening in December. More notices about upcoming work parties or hikes were printed in the newspapers in year's past.

The Trails Committee led a series of 6 popular guided hikes this year. The response from participants has been very positive, and more hikes have been requested. Our only limiting factor for additional hikes seems to be our own personal time commitments.



**6 Guided Hike along the Land Trust Meadow off Lane St. in October**

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The Trails Committee also assisted the Shelton Land Conservation Trust with their booth at Shelton Day. Teresa Gallagher wrote a very nice article for the December issue of Shelton Life regarding the Shelton Lakes Recreation Path, Ecklund Garden, Jimmy Floods fishing platform, and other open space enhancements that are on-going.



7 Lynn Reid and Richard Skudlarek assisting the Land Trust at Shelton Day

Members of the Trails Committee have also spoken publicly in strong favor of extension of the Riverwalk downtown along the top of the Housatonic Riverbank at SEDC's public hearing, commented on drafts of the Open Space Plan Update, and spoken in favor of the Open Space Plan at the Planning and Zoning public hearing.

The Trails Committee has also had strong support from various civic organizations and partners including the Shelton Land Conservation Trust, the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association, and the Housatonic Valley Association.

### **Business Activities:**

Bill Dyer and Tom Harbinson have each spoken with the Shelton-Derby Rotary on the Shelton Lakes RecPath and trails. Terrance Gallagher has coordinated with the SEDC and Valley Chamber of Commerce on the RecPath opening.

Some of the local businesses that we have purchased services, or supplies from this year include: Sound Construction, Swenson Granite, PRMC, LLC who installed the bollards, Civitellas Printing, Martinka's, Allegra Printing, Orange Fence Co., Home Depot, Sears, Huntington Hardware, Housatonic Lumber, Carroll's Home Supply,

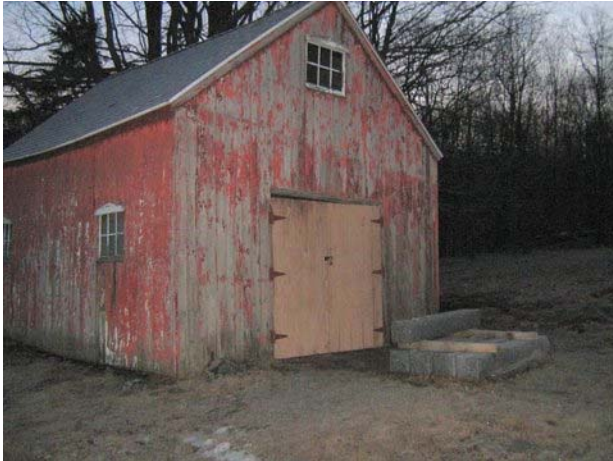
We would also like to thank Victoria Lown of William Raveis Real Estate for providing bottled water for the Trails Day Bridge to Bridge hike. We would also like to thank Randy Szkola of Hilltop Gardens for volunteering his machine time working on the Recreation Path.

### **2009 Goals:**

The Trails Committee has a number of goals for 2009, and some of the major goals are:

1. Construct Phase 3C of the RecPath from Lane St. to Wesley Drive. The boardwalk and a portion of Phase 3 through the Land Trust Meadow are already built. This would encourage access to the Huntington Center end of the greenway. We hope to have this done by June 2009.
2. Hosting the Connecticut Greenways Conference in Shelton on June 5, 2009, if possible. This would bring substantial state-wide attention to Shelton's trails, open space, and farmland preservation programs.
3. Construct the Paugusset Trail from Indian Well State Park to the cul-de-sac on Mayflower Lane, and from the Wiacek Open Space to the Turkey Trot Trail at Constitution Boulevard. We plan to have the first section cleared by March 2009. The total Trail should be opened by Sept. 2009.
4. Encourage the City to complete the Right of Way acquisition for the Shelton Lakes RecPath. The timetable for this is currently dependent on negotiations between the Mayor and the property owners.
5. Prepare the Red Barn as the maintenance depot for secure storage of the Gator and other equipment by May 2009. The Echo Hose EMS

has purchased their own Polaris after their use of our Gator for emergencies and we need to find a new home for our equipment this coming year. The Trails Committee and Building Maintenance Dept. have upgraded the doors and roof on the Red Barn this year in anticipation of that move. We will need to fix the windows, and install some type of alarm in the building this spring.



**8 Red Barn after new roof and doors were done.**

6. Explore the use of the Greenway House (aka The White House) at Nells Rock Road as a central maintenance facility, community garden, nature center, parking, etc. use in the center of the Shelton Lakes Greenway. The goal would be to have an evaluation in place by August 2009.
7. Other options for trails in 2009 include possibly restoring the historic bluff walk at Riverview Park (behind the baseball diamond), adding trails at the Klapick property, The Big Loop in the White Hills, the UI Connector off Nells Loop Trail out to Buddington Road, continuing to support better access to the Housatonic River and the Riverwalk downtown.
8. Improve the system of attracting and retaining volunteers. Add two new members to the Trails Committee. Set work party dates 2 months in advance, and post notices in newspapers and kiosks for better lead-time. The goal is to start this in January 2009.
9. Lead 4-6 public hikes, host 18 work parties, and write 6 articles for newspapers and magazines in 2009.

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10. Purchase a folding canopy for Shelton Day and other events. Get a trailer and hitch for the Gator to improve access for other trails maintenance. Improve drainage at various spots along the RecPath.



9 Teresa Gallagher's map showing Long-Range Plan for "Big Loop" Trail in White Hills



10 Scenic views from the RecPath of the Land Trust

Meadow off Lane St.

We would like to thank the Conservation Commission for your continued support of our efforts to make Shelton's Open Spaces more accessible to the public. Significant progress was made in 2008, with new neighborhood trails and particularly in making portions of our greenways handicapped-accessible with Phase 1 of the RecPath, and the Hope Lake fishing pier. We would also like to thank all the volunteers who came out and donated their time, skills, tools and talents for the benefit of everyone. We'd also like to thank the Mayor, Sandy Nesteriak, Teresa Gallagher, Board of Aldermen, Parks and Recreation, Bridges and Highways, Inland Wetlands, Planning and Zoning, and Michelle over in Building Maintenance for their help and assistance this year. Hopefully we can make 2009 even more productive.

Yours truly,  
The Shelton Trails Committee

Bill Dyer, Chairman  
Bob Wilkins  
Lynn Reid  
Andy Cable  
Terrance Gallagher  
Richard Skudlarek

## E. Shelton Lakes Brochures

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to approve spending of \$775 for Allegra Printing for 5000 copies of the trails brochure. The expenditure is to come from 1300-414.80-40. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

## F. Shelton Canal

Closure of public recreation areas status: Denied by FERC; McCallum has submitted request for rehearing.

Agent Gallagher said that at this point there is nothing for us do right now. We are waiting to hear if FERC is going to grant it. We officially can't comment because we are not an intervener. In the past they did put our comments on line and did refer to our comments when they justified their denial for McCallum. You may wish to decide to send something.

Chairman Harbinson reported that the Housatonic River Estuary Commission has sent a response regarding all of this activity, which is pretty much in line with our concerns and comments.

Agent Gallagher commented that she has typed up some comments and have some pictures.

Chairman Harbinson said he thinks he knows who took the pictures for the historic documents from a study and is going to try and contact her.

Commissioner Lauriat and the Commissioners commented about his feelings of the fish ladder.

**Vice-Chairman Dyer MOVED to authorize Chairman Harbinson to coordinate efforts with Agent Gallagher and the Assistant City Council to respond to FERC regarding the issues at the Shelton Canal. SECONDED by Commissioner Lauriat. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

## G. Open Space Plan of 2008

Agent Gallagher reported that she emailed available dates to Rick Schultz. Commissioner Tate commented that he would only want to meet with P&Z if they were all available (or a majority).

Vice-Chairman Dyer said he was amazed after reading both newspaper articles about this that they did not point out the fact that the 15% open space set aside is in the 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development that P&Z has approved. The Commissioners commented that they are available to meet with P&Z to answer questions.

Chairman Harbinson commented that all the open space questions should be addressed in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Chairman Harbinson stated he would contact Rick Schultz regarding a meeting date and then email everyone.

## H. Invasive and Native Species

### 1. Klapik Farm grant application to remove invasive species

The grant application has been submitted and since Commissioner Welsh is not here tonight he can make his report at the next meeting.

### 2. Ecklund Native Species Garden

Agent Gallagher reported that we received the \$2500 grant money today for purchase of plant material. We are going to look into having a deer fence installed to protect the plants. Our plan is to try and make a bio-diversity island.

## I. Comments By Members

Commissioner Tate brought up the project he is involved with at Long Hill Elementary School. Right now the BOE is concerned with security at all the school properties and is considering having the contractors wear badges. They also are considering having the construction access from the back (Long Hill Cross Roads). There is a 30' ROW adjacent to the DaSilva property and he wondered if the Commission might want to leave it as a trail. He suggested having Agent Gallagher go out there to evaluate it.

## J. Adjournment

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, February 4, 2009.

**Commissioner Lauriat MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Dyer. MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:40 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya  
Clerk, Conservation Commission