

**TOWN OF CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016  
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 7:00 P.M.**

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**Members Present: Bill Sherman, Bob DeVlyder, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins-White, Jodee Heritage, Doug Noble and Jackie Sima.**

**I. Call to Order**

**Chairman Sherman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.**

**II. Roll Call**

**Ms. Heritage called the roll. Members in attendance were Bill Sherman, Bob DeVlyder, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins-White, Jodee Heritage, Doug Noble and Jackie Sima.**

**III. Determination of Quorum**

**Chairman Sherman determined enough members were present for a quorum. All seven Commission members were present.**

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

**All present recited the pledge of allegiance.**

**V. Acceptance of Minutes of Regular Meeting of the November 9, 2016**

**Chairman Sherman called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2016 meeting with no corrections.**

**Moved by Ms. Sima. Seconded by Ms. Heritage. Motion approved 6-0-1 with Ms. Collins abstaining.**

**VI. Approval of 2017 Meeting Dates**

**Commission members reviewed the 2017 meeting dates; meeting have been scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month.**

**Chairman Sherman mentioned that he would not be available for the January and April meetings due to scheduling conflicts.**

**Ms. Simone made mention of an error in the list of meeting dates– the December meeting should read 2017 and not 2016.**

**Based on the need to have Chairman Sherman present at the first meeting in January, members agreed to change the January 11 meeting to January 18, 2017.**

**Motion: To approve the 2017 meeting dates changing the Wednesday, January 11, 2017 meeting to Wednesday, January 18, 2017 and the December meeting will be held in 2017.**

**Moved by Mr. Abdifar. Seconded by Ms. Heritage. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.**

**VII. Communications**

**Chairman Sherman noted there were no communications.**

**VIII. Calendar – Events**

**Chairman Sherman noted there were no events on tonight’s agenda.**

**IX. Unfinished Business**

**Renaming Dime Savings Property**

**Chairman Sherman said that he and Bob DeVlyder did meet and since (the Commission) met last; he explained we kind of reviewed the resubmitting of the proposal to the town council. He said he hasn’t actually had the chance to do that yet but he and Bob did meet to go over that (resubmitting) and discussed doing that in further detail.**

**Ms. Heritage requested that when it (the renaming) is resubmitted to the council that you let us (Commission members) know so some of us can attend (the meeting).**

**Ms. Sima commented that information needs to be prepared regarding the property; access; signage, etc. in case the council asks questions – we need to be ready (to answer questions).**

**Ms. Simone stated there is no immediate access and that goes back to the discussion about maintenance plan; she explained there is still the item about getting the property surveyed and that priorities needed to**

be established and the maintenance plan needed to be adopted and all town departments needed to be onboard with the plan.

There was discussion about access to the property.

Ms. Simone explained that before the property can be surveyed the maintenance plan needs to be adopted; noting that the surveying that area will be very expensive.

Ms. Sima commented about the status of the maintenance plan and length of time its taking to move forward (to get it approved).

Ms. Simone explained in general the process in which it takes to get the maintenance plan reviewed and approved as well as the need to consider other town project priorities. She said we are waiting on planning committee and town council.

Chairman Sherman stated this Commission wrote to the town council in July 2016 reminding them to bring (this item to the table) but apparently there's still no action.

Mr. Noble asked if we should contact Bob Ciccolini and Michael Milone directly and have them come to one of our meetings – so they can hear and be part of the conversations.

Ms. Simone explained it's not held up with them - we've all been on board at the staff level – it's at the town council level.

Mr. DeVlyder talked about the Dime Saving Bank and that the property was foreclosed on; he asked about why they didn't have access to the property from the road. He said they are just looking to rename the property.

Ms. Simone commented about the status of the property's access and at one point there was a suggestion about a naming contest and inviting people out to the property – it was suggested that we hold off on people going out there if there is no clear cut access way now that they've lost the Water Company property - so there's no way for people to find their way to the property.

Chairman Sherman said we'll work on resubmitting the renaming proposal as discussed and keep this item rolling forward.

**X. New Business**

**1. Boulder Knoll; Agricultural Use**

**Chairman Sherman said this item was talked about a bit last time and Bob had some questions so it's on the agenda.**

**Ms. Simone said the questions that were asked of her relative to the friends of Boulder Knoll and how much acreage they have – according to their agreement they have two acres and they also have access to the barn area for storage.**

**Ms. Simone said the second question was which portions of the property are eligible for agricultural use as far as the state easement and the town's own management plan – that's the Jackson property – the Bellville and Larson properties; there's also the Williams, Morin properties (owned by the town). She commented briefly about the properties limitations.**

**Ms. Simone reviewed briefly the process the town followed to advertise the properties and potential uses; not having access to water on the site limits agricultural use.**

**Mr. Noble, who is a Yale employee, commented about the limited space Yale has for agriculture and they have a group of students that have a small farm – given the opportunity (to use the Cheshire land) – they could have more space for farming; and maintain the space they use.**

**Ms. Simone said she didn't know where the town is at with trying to expand agriculture use; but that may be a good connection. She said she'd look into it.**

**Chairman Sherman asked when the last request for use proposal was.**

**Ms. Simone said she knew there was a request in 2009; then the listing was removed from the state website because of issues; so it hasn't been for a number of years.**

**Mr. DeVylder commented about his concerns about the condition of the property and its maintenance; he said in his opinion the property is a mess.**

**Chairman Sherman said he thought the role of this Commission was advisory group to the town council; it was important for us to elevate it (their concerns) to them; he said part of the challenge is the maintenance plan that has been a priority; so perhaps it's up to us to write another letter.**

There was additional discussion about the agricultural use of the property and the property's lack of maintenance and appearance.

Ms. Simone said she'd follow up on the approved uses of the property and report back to the Commission.

Ms. Heritage suggested that when we go to meet with the town council and talk about the Dime Savings renaming; that we can all take a trip out to Boulder Knoll and take a look at it; if we're all there it may be the time to say that we want to give the council a heads up that the Commission would like to make them aware of Boulder Knoll.

Ms. Heritage said she thought it would send a strong message to the council if we all came as a group to say that we want to see a couple of these things move forward along with the maintenance plan; she suggested maybe we make a list of things we want to touch on.

Mr. DeVlyder said he wanted to just get the Dime Savings Bank renamed.

Ms. Heritage since we've never had a chance to be in front of the council (they should bring up items); agreeing that the naming of Dime Savings is a top priority.

Chairman Sherman said he'll see if he could get us on the town council meeting agenda.

## 2. 2017 Goals and Projects

Chairman Sherman asked for ideas for 2017 –projects or goals that anyone has thought of.

Mr. DeVlyder said the renaming of the Dime Savings Bank property is a priority.

Ms. Heritage offered up the suggestion of a campaign called Hike Cheshire and have a #HikeCheshire photo campaign and say go do your favorite hike in Cheshire or a place where you like to walk on our properties and then send a picture, or hashtag or selfie; we could post them on the website and give a gift certificate to a business in town (to the best submissions). She said she thought it would be fun and get people thinking about hiking in the spring; she said maybe it could be coordinated with Earth Day (April 23).

Ms. Heritage said she didn't think the campaign would take a lot of effort on the Commission's - she said if we wanted to do a campaign we could get it out there a month out to advertise. She talked about a few possibilities on how the project could be undertaken.

Commission members agreed the idea was great. They discussed the past distribution of seedling trees by a local organization on Arbor Day.

Ms. Simone said she'd see what was available as far as budget for the project.

Ms. Collins-White suggested the idea of working with schools and getting kids in the schools more involved with environmental issues – maybe in terms of recycling or environmentally friendly ideas – she said she thought starting to get kids involved at a young age (would be good). She said details still needed to get worked out - maybe promote the idea through social media – she just wanted to see more involvement at the youth level so they'd maybe become more environmentally friendly.

Mr. Abdifar suggested something the Land Trust did – we did a 30 properties in 30 days' program; he said they could have articles about town properties; maybe they could have someone who had more knowledge of the properties write articles and post them on Facebook or the website – it would be an online article that people could read on the website then have a couple of hikes on some of the properties.

Chairman Sherman said have something like the “property of the month” feature.

Mr. Noble said so with that he had an idea - maybe at the entrance of the trail they could have a QR code or scan information on your phone showing information, a map and history of the trail or property; he said they could provide history of the property (i.e. former buildings, barns or bridges on the site, etc.).

There was discussion about Mr. Noble's idea – having people scan to retrieve property information; there was discussion about how to make the technology work, the use of maps, natural features on properties, etc.

Chairman Sherman stated some of these ideas are absolutely wonderful and more reasons for the town council to get on board with adopting the maintenance plan so we can move ahead – these are things that

perhaps can get them excited about saying yes (to adopting the maintenance plan).

Mr. Noble said his second idea is about having a trail connection from Cheshire High School and the canal trail. He noted he is on the Canal Trail Board. Mr. Noble said he was talking to Bill Costello who runs a running race in the spring and they thought this was something for us to looking into so there would be a trail connection (so high school students could have some place to run besides around town).

Ms. Simone explained there were wetland considerations and that a bridge would be needed for crossing to the trail; and there were cost considerations and the need for emergency services to access the area; she said there had been a lot of discussion with other departments about this idea.

Mr. Noble commented about a grant from the state – he said for the canal trail the current administration is giving money left and right for this; so if there's money allocated for this sort of thing they should grab it while they can.

Ms. Simone said more information about funding and access would need to be investigated since she didn't have lot of information available.

Chairman Sherman thanked Commission members for their ideas. He noted that if they wanted items added to the agenda in the future to just let him know.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

Chairman Sherman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm. Moved by Mr. Abdifar. Seconded by Ms. Heritage. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Respectfully submitted by:

**Carla Mills**  
Recording Secretary