

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
March 9, 2020

VHB, Inc. offices, 100 Great Meadow Road, Wethersfield CT 9:30

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, March 9, 2020 at the offices of VHB, Inc. Present were chairman Bruce Donald, Jim Kulpa, Joe Hickey, Anna Bergeron, Bill Champagne, Bob Dickinson, Charles Tracy, Elizabeth Brown, Stephanie Stroud, Paula Burton, Lance Hansen, Brian Wilson, Lois Bruinooge, Laurie Giannotti, Rista Malanca, Laura Brown, Mark Jewell, Susan Smith and Gwen Marrion. Participating by phone were Jennifer Carrier, Beth Merrill, Delia Fey and Eric Hammerling Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:35.

1. Call to Order and Welcome: Bruce.
2. Designation of Secretary for this meeting: Gwen.
3. Acceptance of revisions to agenda. None.
4. Adoption of minutes of February 10, 2020 meeting: Bob moved, seconded by Bill, to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Chairman's Report

- New Haven: going to be re-bid
- Southington: still in permitting. Possibly 9-12 months out.
- Moosup Valley: in design
- Pomfret (Air Line Trail): construction just beginning.
- Air Line Trail Master Planning is starting. Elizabeth Brown from the National Park Service said her office is giving technical assistance to Thompson.
- Laurie is retiring. Paperwork for her replacement has been submitted. Not sure what the salary level will be.
- After Bike Walk CT's legislative reception a good bike/ped safety bill was proposed which includes a provision to protect funds received from Greenways license plates. Laurie researched the status of the fund. DMV is collecting the funds. For the FY 2017-2018 there was about \$2,000 in the account and possibly \$2,600 for FY 2018-2019. Susan Smith of Bike Walk CT added that there are 10 co-sponsors of the bill.
- Eric Hammerling: explained Raised Bill 5477 which enables towns to pass an ordinance to provide a tax abatement to landowners who permanently protect greenways on their land.
- Bonding for recreational trail program: waiting to see if legislature approves it.

6. CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna Bergeron reported.

- David Elder was promoted to Assistant Director.
- Community Connectivity grants are underway. 80 grants were approved.
- Still working on trail maintenance program.
- It's possible that DOT will budget \$145,000 for Trail Finder program. Goal is to have a central clearinghouse for all CT trail data. Charlie Tracy talked to CCROG about their support for the project and got a good response. Discussed that website could be self-

sustaining through advertising so that it doesn't have to be funded through a state agency's budget.

7. Old Business: Potential turned back CRTP funds.

There is \$195,300 remaining. Trail Finder program was discussed. The program is funded through June 30. Funds would be used for salaries, launch of the program and outreach to trail managers to complete the data for 80-100 trails. Bill asked if could be expanded to include wayfinding signs along highways so drivers can find trails. South Windsor's request of \$400K was discussed and whether \$35K would help. Laurie tried contacting the town unsuccessfully. Joe would like the funding granted by the Greenways Council to accomplish something tangible. Bruce agreed that he likes putting funds toward a benchmark such as a feasibility study. Bill noted that the South Windsor trail fits into the Master Plan and could attract other funding. Mark Jewel said he is not comfortable with a request for both planning and design. Should finish planning then request funds for design. . Killingly's request was discussed. Funding would be for design of Phase 5 and 6. Charlie Tracy noted that DOT's commitment of \$145K to the Trail Finder program is based on DEEP's commitment to add funding. Bruce moved, seconded by Bill, to allocate \$159,808 to the Trail Finder program and to hold the remainder of the funds. The motion passed unanimously.

8. New Business:

- National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Stephanie Stroud explained that it is a free planning program that can help with design, community engagement and other activities. Currently working on projects in Bridgeport, Thompson, Newtown and with the Trail Census program.
- Governor's Tourism Conference: Bill asked if someone could attend the April 29 event
- Bill asked if anyone else was aware of the possibility of \$70 million becoming available. He heard this at the Bike Walk CT reception.

9. Public comments

- Beth Merrill, Executive Director of the NRVT, introduced herself
- Bill said he has been working on updating the map of the Charter Oak and other greenways east of Hartford and 10,000 of them will be printed and distributed.

10. Next meeting: Monday, April 13

11. Adjournment: 11:04

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion