

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
April 13, 2020
Via teleconference due to coronavirus

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, April 13, 2020 via Zoom teleconference. Participating were chairman Bruce Donald, Jim Kulpa, Anna Bergeron, Bob Dickinson, Charlie Tracy, Paula Burton, Lois Bruinooge, Laurie Gianotti, Beth Merrill, Bill Boles, Jennifer Carrier, Delia Fey, Eric Hammerling, Kate Rutan, Aaron Buderis, Tim Malone, Eric Lindquist, Stacey Stearns, Gene Nichols and Gwen Marrion. Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:40.

1. Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions: Bruce welcomed Paula Burton to the Council.

2. Adoption of minutes of March 9, 2020 meeting: Approved unanimously.

3. Chairman's Report

- Construction on the Air Line Trail crossing project is beginning. Seven crossing, two tunnels, three bridges. A \$5.2 million project. Will be a boon for Eastern CT.
- Work is progressing in Tarriffville. Will connect the center of Tarriffville with the Bloomfield Greenway. Part of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.
- Phase 4 in New Haven will be re-bid.
- Events: everything through this fall is cancelled.
- Legislation: the last Bond Commission meeting could not be completed because of technology problems. Funding for the Recreational Trail Program was not on the agenda. Eric said it is hard to know where priorities lie due to the virus crisis. Perhaps the trail program funding will be put on the Bond Commission's meeting scheduled for May 29. RFP for the program? Laurie said DEEP managers are speaking positively about parks and possibly an RFP could be issued.
- Laurie is postponing her retirement due to the chaos with the virus and wanting to make sure the grant program is run efficiently.

4. CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna Bergeron said there are no project updates. Will know by July 1 if \$150,000 for Trail Finder program gets funded.

5. Old Business:

- Laurie said contracts for the turned-back RTP funds the Council approved at the March meeting were approved.
- License plate program: no news
- Events: Laurie suggested combining the Greenways Award day (June) with the Trail Symposium (October). Paula said it's nice to have the award program outside, Charlie said it might be possible to combine the trail symposium with a Massachusetts group in 2021 for a larger event. Paula said she thinks the Mass. Event is hiker-oriented and the event should be aimed at all trail users.

6. New Business:

- Charlie Tracy said the Trail Census is about to release new data showing that more than half of trails with counters reported more than a 100% increase. 5,000-10,000 more users in March. More families using trails. Still River Greenway was closed because of failure to maintain social distancing standards. Trails that have commuter use also show an increase.
- Gwen expressed concern about closures of parks due to failure to social distance and suggested the Council take a role in the messaging about social distancing on trails to try to prevent trails from being closed. She feels it would be good visibility for the Council to publicize a statement about trail usage. Beth said yard signs based on those used by the National Parks Service were put up in Fairfield County. Wilton put a message out that was well-received. Paula said there are more inexperienced trail users going out without maps and there is more garbage. Stacey said there are a limited number of trails for horseback riding. Horses “distance themselves naturally” but people don’t and more crowded parking areas results in difficulty for equestrians to find parking for trailers. Paula said messaging should cross over among all types of users. Bruce will send a draft statement.
- Bob reported that some towns and cities are closing streets for people to walk on (Boston and Cambridge) and that has been successful.
- Delia asked how to get the word out?

7. Next meeting: Monday, May 11

8. Adjournment: 10:30

Submitted by

Gwen Marrison