

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
September 14, 2020
Via teleconference due to coronavirus

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, September 14, 2020 via teleconference. Participating were chairman Bruce Donald, Deputy DEEP Commissioner Mason Trumbull, Bob Dickinson, Paula Burton, Laurie Gianotti, Bill O'Neill, Lance Hansen, Stacey Stearns, Richard Lutz, Cathy Hagadorn, Jennifer Carrier, Anna Bergeron, Kim Bradley, Kate Rattan, Bill Boles, Eric Hammerling, Delia Fey, Monica Stokes, Aaron Budris, Jim Kulpa, Bill Champagne, Laura Brown, Lois Bruinooge, Jay Annis, Rista Malanca, Sam Gold, Timothy M (?), Ron (?), Clare (?) and Gwen Marrison.

1. Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:33.

2. Remarks by Deputy DEEP Commissioner Mason Trumbull: Mason noted the large increase in use of all types of state-owned outdoor recreation areas since the beginning of the pandemic. He hopes that more state resources will be dedicated to maintaining them, and said he has observed excellent teamwork at the DEEP so far.

Bruce said that the Council's highest priority is receiving funding for the Recreational Trails Program.

Eric said Mason has great energy and enthusiasm for and is committed to outdoor recreation and hopes the \$3 million for the RTP will be on either the October or December Bond Commission agendas.

National Recreational Trails Program

Laurie reported that DOT, DEEP and Federal Highway Administration talked and after that the DEEP decided not to re-join the federal program because it is unknown how the program will be structured. It could be under the old format or have a new one which would mean new procedures to comply with. The goal now is to opt into the program in September 2021 when there is a possibility of a 75% increase in federal funding. Laurie suggests forming a task force to brainstorm ideas for how to get funding for trail projects. Bruce noted that the Council can raise funds.

Eric asked if the DEEP will open an RFP for trail projects under the RTP, which would be beneficial because if the Bond Commission approves funding it takes time for organizations to put together proposals so it would be good to have the proposals ready if funding is approved. It would also demonstrate the need for funding. Laurie said the DEEP does not have a plan to issue an RFP at this time. Mason noted that the DEEP has to balance getting this item on the Bond Commission agenda and getting push back from other agencies for issuing an RFP early. Bill asked if showing a backlog of need sends a positive message to legislators. Mason suggested that stories showing increased use of trails and additional need can be sent to DEEP at any time.

3. Adoption of July 13, 2020 Minutes: Bill moved, seconded by Paula, to approve and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Chairman's Report

- Plainville: Bruce spoke to DOT designers and this is moving forward. Possibly going to bid late 2021.
- Crossings project in Putnam going well.
- Reports from Jim Kulpa:
 - Ansonia extension of Riverwalk - city is working on dam safety permit
 - Trumbull - Pequonnock River trail in construction
 - New Haven – out to bid
 - Pomfret – hope most of construction done this year
 - Moosup Valley State Park (joint project CT and RI DEEPs in Sterling CT and Coventry RI)
 - Southington – permits in for review
 - New London TAP grant – Conn College to center of town – advertising for bids, possible start date April 2021
- Bill O'Neill reported that Manchester received funding for the section of trail between Hartford Road and Manchester Community College

5. CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported that there is more funding in the Community Connectivity Program and towns have been informed of this. Projects can be up to \$600K. Applications are due in mid-October and awards will be made by the end of the year.

6. 2020 Awards – Should the number be limited? Paula encourages more diversity in what kinds of trail projects receive recognition, i.e. a portion of the Appalachian Trail is in CT, towns and land trusts have trails on their land. Laurie asked board members to send her their top 10 nominees and Laurie will compile a list for the award ceremony.

7. Correspondence: Laurie talked to someone from Manchester about nominating a new greenway there but it was not done in time. The Mill River in New Haven could be designated next year. Ron from the Mill River trail organization added that the trail was a grassroots effort to give access to the Mill River and a possible extension to Cheshire and connections to the Farmington Canal and Quinnipiac Trail.

8. Old Business

- Greenways Celebration Oct. 1: Those who nominated award winners must let them know.
- Greenways License plate fund: Laurie found where the \$9K sits but doesn't know if the Council can use the money because it comes into DEEP funds. Bruce suggested that Council members think about small projects (i.e. \$2K) that could be done with the funds.
- US 1-A Corridor: no report
- New Haven to Providence Guide: send info to Bruce
- CT Trail Census: Laura Brown reported data is being collected via counters at 20 sites. Covid impact reports will be on website. Data is also being collected via a QR-code based survey. About 1,000 responses received. Charlie Tracy retired. Trails 101 videos are being produced and should be ready at the end of September.

9. New Business – Promoting inclusivity and diversity on CT's greenways. Stacey met with Latino Outdoors and learned that people of color don't always feel welcome on greenways.

Asked what the Council can do to promote inclusivity. Amy Hernandez offered to speak to the Council on this topic.

10. Public Comment - None

11. Next meeting: Monday, October 12, 2020

12. Adjournment: 11:00

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion