

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
March 9, 2021
9:00 a.m.
Via teleconference due to coronavirus

The regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Tuesday March 9, 2021 via teleconference. Participating were chairman Bruce Donald, Laurie Giannotti, Stacey Stearns, Paula Burton, Aaron Budris, Bill Champagne, Kim Bradley, Bob Dickinson, Cathy Hagadorn, Bill Boles, Claire Cain, Jay Annis, Lois Bruinooge, Gene Nichols, Rista Malanca, Delia Fay, Bill O'Neill, Anna Bergeron, Matthew House, Jim Kulpa, Laura Brown and Gwen Marrison.

Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:01.

February 9, 2021 Minutes: Rista moved to approve, seconded by Paula and the motion passed unanimously.

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna spoke about the Transportation and Climate Initiative. It is receiving negative publicity for being a "gas tax". It will mean an increase in gas prices to fund transportation related programs intended to reduce greenhouse gases and climate initiatives. An MOU has been signed by a few New England states. The Community Connectivity program funded ten new grants. Former DOT Commissioner Jim Redeker has joined Fitzgerald & Halliday as a senior strategist.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates

- New Haven Phase 4 – construction might begin this year
- Southington: missing DEEP signoff on the bridge over the Quinnipiac River and a small land acquisition
- Plainville: design more than 35% done. DOT working on getting land on Town Line Road for parking
- CCROG asked DOT for \$450K to do final study of some remaining portions of the ECG in greater Hartford – Tariffville Center, two sections in Bloomfield, western Hartford, around Pratt & Whitney. University of Hartford is excited about the possibility of a trail going through their campus.

Jim Kulpa:

- Hop River Trail in Manchester: Under review by SHIPO because of possible adverse effect on historic bridge. Advertising possibly in 2023. Piers and abutments damaged and soils not suitable there.
- Ansonia: Riverwalk construction to begin by April 1
- Pomfret: resurfacing of bridges being advertised for bids
- Hartford Riverwalk from Hartford boat house to Windsor Meadow Park: in design.
- Meriden: Research Parkway multiuse trail
- New Britain: Stanley Loop Trail – in design, out to bid later this year
- Bee Line toward Plainville: Phase 1 advertised for a consultant soon, Phase 2 (funded by this Council) to design soon
- Moosup Valley: in final design phase
- Watertown: segment of Steel Brook Greenway: advertised for a consultant, will connect with Naugatuck River Greenway

Gwen asked what the sources of funding are for all of these projects, since this Council formed a subcommittee to look into sources of funding. Bruce said funding comes from a number of sources such as Let's Go CT, LOTCIP, Federal TAP, DEEP Rec Trails, Community Connectivity and the COGs which are "gatekeepers" to bringing in funds. Bruce will send around a chart he has that shows how the projects are being funded.

Correspondence: Laurie said the DEEP did a press release on nominating greenways. Nominations due April 20.

Legislative Initiatives: Bruce reported that the Governor's budget has \$3 million for the Rec Trails Program but it's not on the Bond Commission's agenda yet. Reviving the greenways license plate program is still tacked onto the safety bill. Still waiting to hear from DEEP about the \$9K in the greenways license plate fund.

Old Business

Awards: Stacey reported that the subcommittee met and has recommendations which will be posed to the Council in April. A venue for the awards ceremony was discussed. Rista suggested Franklin Plaza in Torrington. Jay suggested the band shell in Brookfield which is near the Still River Greenway. Laurie asked them to forward to her information about who from those towns would handle the logistics i.e. podium, chairs, parking, rain plan.

Rec Trails and NRTP funding: Laurie reported she is waiting for OPM to release bond funds and working with DOT on alternate funding sources. The subcommittee on alternative funding met. DEEP is moving toward opting into the federal program. Laurie encouraged looking for alternate funding. So far state funds have out-performed federal programs. The Council should look to diversify sources.

Trails Symposium 2021: long discussion about whether to hold it. Examples were cited of other groups holding events and with current vaccination rate, situation could be ok for in-person symposium. Requires a lot of work and Laurie cannot be the point person because 1) she is going to retire at some point and someone needs to fill the roles she has played and 2) her first priority has to be running the RTP if funds are released. Some discussion about hiring an organization to run it. Bill suggested looking for a sponsor. No decision.

Bolton Tunnel lighting: DEEP is getting designing engineers on board and looking for funding. Responsibility for maintenance and bills not settled yet.

Review of CGC mission, roles and responsibilities: Laurie asks everyone to review the prior Five Year Plan to refresh memory of what the Council's goals are. Goals are broader than looking for funding and for multiuse trails. Bruce said he has served as chair since 2014 and asked if it is time for someone else to serve as chair or co-chair. No decision.

CT Trail Finder/Census Update: Kim reported that she is finishing the 2020 data reports. Funding for the Trail Census ends in the fall so she is looking for other funding. Working on interactive portion of website. Bruce spoke with Rep. Rosa DeLauro's Chief of Staff who said he is interested in getting trail data.

New Business - None

Public Comment: Bob reported that the Bike Film Festival was good. Bill Boles said that the Trail Finder in other states is a great resource and he looks forward to having it available in CT.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:00

Adjournment: 10:24

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion