

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
January 11, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Tuesday January 11, 2022 via teleconference. Attending were chairman Bruce Donald, Paula Burton, Bob Dickinson, Stacey Stearns, Lois Bruinooge, Anna Bergeron, Jay Annis, Bill O'Neill, Delia Fey, Brian Wilson, Laurie Gianotti, Jim Kulpa, Andrea Gartner, Gillian Carroll, Kimberly Bradley, Cathy Hagadorn, Dan Buckley, Judy Miller, Clare Cain, Kevin Sullivan, Gene Nichols, Marty (? Town of Vernon), Rista Malanca, Tim Malone, Bill Boles and Gwen Marrison.

Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:05.

Adoption of Minutes: Gwen moved and Stacey seconded the adoption of the November 9, 2021 minutes. Approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates: Bruce will talk with Bike Walk CT to discuss their legislative priorities so that they and the CGC will be on the same page. Bruce said if CGC members have new initiatives to raise, please tell him. Many projects will break ground this year. DOT is having staffing problems. Could be a problem when more federal money comes in and it has to be implemented. For the Rec Trails Program there were over 60 applications totaling about \$22 million applying for the \$3 million available.

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported that DOT is reading the lengthy new infrastructure bill. Funding will be competitive and DOT is in the process of hiring a grant writer. She thinks DOT will get \$8 - \$12 million more for the Community Connectivity Program.

Correspondence: Laurie talked to three entities regarding applying for greenway designations: Norfolk Greenway (submitted) and the towns of Groton, Ledyard and Branford (inquiries). Laurie introduced Andrea Gartner, Exec. Dir. of the Norwalk River Valley Trail. Judy Miller introduced Dan Buckley, new director of the Shoreline Greenway Trail.

Old Business:

1) License plate fund: Still no response from DEEP about how the funds can be used. Bruce said he thinks funds will be moved from DMV to the greenways fund twice a year.

2) Need to bring back the trail symposium. CGC could possibly use the funds in the greenways fund to hire someone to organize it.

Bill O'Neill asked if the money in the license plate fund is being tracked and if the plate availability is noted on license renewals. He also noted that last month's CGC minutes say that the new brochure is ready and that DEEP is looking for funding to print them. He feels money for printing is available and that process should get underway. Car dealerships are a good place to put the brochures. Brian Wilson said he doesn't think the pamphlet is ready to be printed and will get a quote from a printer and report to the Council next month. Brian said the DEEP is tracking the funds but they are not accessible to the CGC yet.

3) CT Trail Finder/Census: Kim Bradley reported: 1) an annual report was given to Laurie and Anna which focused on grant requirements. 2) Trail Finder exceeded goals. Posted 114 active trail systems.

Working with South Central CT Council of Governments to get trails on site. DEEP managers are helping. 3) Census: 2021 survey closed and information being compiled and counts being calibrated for a 2021 report. 4) Finder and Census are supporting the Airline Trail Master Plan 5) implemented fee for service program 6) working on a multistate grant focusing on using trail data for economic development. Other states are interested.

New Business: Discussion of Recreational Trail Program Grant Applications

Serving on the subcommittee were Bill O., Rista, Lois, Paula, Laurie, Anna and Brian. Bruce thanked them. Bruce said the review process was difficult. This round had the most applications ever. All highly ranked proposals were discussed. Middle and low ranked applications were not. Points were awarded. Will discuss with DOT if any projects might receive funding through DOT. DEEP projects take up \$800,000 of the \$3 million fund available so the CGC has \$2.2 million to award.

Rista reported that this is the third time she has served on this subcommittee and is the hardest year. Even the medium and low ranked projects are good. The scoring was cut and dried. Only looked at high ranking projects. Looked at how can make the most impact across the state. Looked at the project budgets to see if can fund part of the project so can spread the money across projects. Educational component was important as was CF&PA's use of resources in many towns. Also looked at DEEP's proposals and can't compare scores but thinks they all ranked high. Tried to fund as many projects as possible and spread across state.

Lois: said this was most difficult grant round she has participated in. The objective scoring divided the projects into high/medium/low categories. The high category alone left \$4 million unfunded. Construction is very expensive.

Bill O: thanked Laurie for providing the template.

Paula: wanted to give enough to projects to make them worthwhile.

Bruce: there are opportunities for other funding for projects not receiving funding.

Gwen: thanked the subcommittee. She reviewed all 63 applications and the subcommittee's recommendations and commented that CF&PA's request is funded at 100% (\$457,100) and is for 8 separate projects. Feels CGC does not need to fund 8 projects from one entity because goal as stated by others is to spread funding around. Suggests removing \$122,000 funding for the creation of a database of privately held land on which blue blazed trails are located (project includes travel expenses and legal fees for drafting agreements). Also suggests removing \$60,000 under Task 8 for a flashing signal and crosswalk because note on application next to that item says, "This specific budget item is a great candidate for DOT funding". (Attachment E Revised). Funding to CF&PA would still be \$275,100. Also suggested decreasing funding to Kent Land Trust by \$10,000 because three separate projects are being funded. Also suggested that the grant awards are too heavily focused on greater Hartford (four of 13 projects are in greater Hartford – Wethersfield, Goodwin, Vernon and Windsor). Suggested decreasing \$148,000 funding to Wethersfield to \$100,000 because this is a design-only application and because too much emphasis on greater Hartford and eliminating \$240,000 funding for Windsor for same reasons. This would free up \$480,000 and suggests funding \$200,000 Naugatuck River Greenway Trail project in downtown Waterbury which is a distressed municipality, connects the riverfront and could be good use of an industrial area, \$280,000 for Wallingford project (640 feet of trail to connect Main Street with existing trail along river) and \$2,023 Friends of Pachaug State Park project for a short trail to educate public about early successional forest.

Bruce: CFP&A has a match of \$433,00. To fund another project would have to cut \$300K from CF&PA.

Rista: there were other good projects that didn't score high enough to be considered. Need to be fair and objective, keep integrity of the process and not pick favorites.

Laurie: the first rankings were derived by applicants checking the boxes on the applications. Preliminary scores put on Google Drive. Subcommittee read all proposals. Some errors changed the scores.

Gwen: was not aware that scores changed after application materials were provided to CGC members and asked what the final scores were for the Windsor project (155) and Naugatuck River Greenway (Waterbury) project (153). Feels this is a close enough score to fund the Waterbury project instead of the Windsor project.

Bruce: said projects are not weighted in greater Hartford.

Gwen: repeated request to decrease funding of 8 CF&PA projects. Bill O agreed.

Bruce: CF&PA is receiving a match so CGC funding will equal \$1 million to them. Who else will give them money? Bill O said CF&PA said they receive funding elsewhere.

Gwen repeated opinion that there is too heavy a focus on greater Hartford. Bruce said it's not an issue of regionality. Paula said Willimantic is an example of a distressed community that is receiving funding.

Stacey: integrity of the process is important. Council needs to be able to back up its rubric and all should know the process is fair.

Lois: CGC has been using the same rubric for three grant rounds. It is weighted in favor of certain types of projects such as state lands. Thinks rubric should be reviewed to emphasize other kinds of projects.

Rista: the current process doesn't address regionalization.

Rista moved, seconded by Paula, to accept the subcommittee's recommendations for funding the 2022 RTP and send the recommendations to DEEP. Yes: 10 (Bill O. left the meeting before the vote), No: 1 (Gwen).

The recommendations are:

1) UConn	Trails and Active Living Programs	\$220,510
2) CFPA	8 Projects	457,100
3) Coventry	Nathan Hale Greenway	350,000
4) Thompson	"More than Train Wreck"	16,000
5) Danbury	Trail Routing Plan	40,000
6) Windham	Air Line Trail	86,525
7) Ledyard	Tri Town Trail Phase 2	112,000
8) Kent LT	3 Projects	116,600
9) Canton	Farmington River Trail Ext.	140,000
10) Wethersfield	Hartford to Wethersfield	148,000
11) Goodwin	Trail expansion	150,000

12) Vernon	Hop and Hockanum River trails	161,600
13) Windsor	CT River Trail	240,000
	Total	\$2,238,335

DEEP Projects will receive the remainder of the funding in the amount of \$801,543

Anna: urbanized areas usually get more funding because they have the staff to apply for grants.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: February 8

Meeting adjourned at 11:05.

Submitted by,



Gwen E. Marrion