

Council Meeting Minutes September 10, 2018
9:30 AM to 10:30AM,
VHB, Inc. offices, 100 Great Meadow Road Suite 200, in Wethersfield, CT.

Council Members present: Rista Malanca, Bob Dickinson, Joe Hickey, Bill O'Neill, Bruce Donald, Marlon Pena, DOT Transportation Planner for Anna Bergeron, Laurie Giannotti

Council Members on the Phone: Lois Bruinooge, Jamie Lintner, Stacey Stearns

Council Members Absent: Michelle Eckman

Members of the Public Present: Aaron Budris, NVCOG; Richard Lutz.

Members of the Public on the Phone: Paula Burton, CT NEMBA; Kim Bradley SECT chapter, NEMB; Bill Boles –NEMBA Staff. Kate Rattan, SCCOG; Eugene Nichols, DPH; Charlie Taney – NRVT, Jim Kulpa – VHB, Inc.

Call to Order Bruce Donald called the meeting to order at 9:37.

Designation of Secretary for this meeting Rista Malanca will be the secretary for this meeting

Acceptance or Revisions to Agenda Rista Malanca asked that the discussion of Rail Road liability be added to the agenda along with the discussion of wayfinding signage for greenways along State roads.

Bruce Donald also added the discussion of the Norwalk River Valley Trail and a presentation by Susan Smith, the new Executive Director of Bike/Walk CT.

Adoption of Minutes – NA no mins taken at last meeting due to DOT presentation.

Chairman's Report – Bruce Donald reported that the Ribbon cutting for the Cheshire piece of the FCHT was a huge success with more than 250 people in attendance, including Commissioner Redeker.

He also reported that the Southing piece of trail is almost 100% designed and DOT announced that they will be designing the Plainville section of trail in house, which is the last piece of the FCHT to be built.

Correspondence – Laurie Giannotti –

The Shoreline Greenway Trail will be having a Ribbon cutting on September 22nd.

Thursday Town officials who are part of the Airline State Park Trail will be meeting to view an American Trail Webinar. This is not open to the public, but a great collaboration of these Towns.

Deep is working on the extension for the CT Trail Census funding.

CT DOT & Bike/Ped Advisory Comm. –DOT report, Anna Bergeron – Anna Bergeron was not in attendance, Marlon Pena was attending in her place. Marlon discussed DOT's position on wayfinding signage along State routes. DOT's traffic engineering's position that these signs would be considered clutter and a safety hazard.

Bruce Donald agreed, that we do not want to place signs in areas that would cause a safety concern, but thought a blanket prohibition of these signs was unnecessary and noted that there already are signs on State Roads for the East Coast Greenway.

Aaron Budris, noted locations of wayfinding signage for other Greenways throughout the State and said he would be willing to work with the State on a case-by-case basis for the location of wayfinding signs for the Naugatuck River Greenway, but without signage on state roads, wayfinding would be ineffective to get people to trail heads.

Bill O'Neill thought it would be more of a safety hazard to not have signs and have people looking for trailheads.

Rista Malanca suggested that maybe not every trail in the State get a wayfinding sign, but the trails that have been designated by the Council as Statewide significant Greenways should qualify. She also noted that signage for wine trails, state parks and farms are allowed; Greenways are also a destination and should be treated similarly. The State is currently spending significant amounts of money on Greenway, presumably because they recognize the benefits associated with Greenways, people need to know where the greenways and trail heads are so maximum benefits can be realized.

Bruce Donald suggested setting up a meeting with the CT Greenways Council and DOT's Traffic and Engineering Department to discuss further. Marlon agreed to set up a meeting.

Marlon also noted that 40 Towns were awarded the Community Connectivity Grant.

Legislative Report - Laurie Giannotti noted that there was considerable support for the Rec Trails money that was recently approved.

Bruce Donald is actively looking for a legislative sponsor to help get the funds raised by the Greenway License Plates to come to the Council and not to the General Fund.

Railroad liability continues to be an issue with many projects throughout the state, namely in FHCT in Plainville and with the NRG from Litchfield through Thomaston. Rista Malanca will contact Attorney Beth Critton, who was instrumental in getting current legislation approved, to see if she can provide any guidance or suggestions on how best to handle this.

Old Business –

CT Recreational Trails Program – Oct 31 is deadline for proposals. – Laurie Giannotti gave a brief overview of the number of proposals previously submitted that are still interested. She will begin initial review of proposals as they are submitted. At this time, a subcommittee is not necessary to review the proposals; however, depending on the number submitted a subcommittee may be created to help review the proposals.

The Council will hold a special meeting in **November 19** to review all proposals.

Trail Symposium October 25th – publicity is critical! Registration will go live this week. Will look into getting AICP CM for attendees.

New Business

Norwalk River Trail is tabled until next meeting due to time constraints

Public Q&A

Kate Rattan noted that the SECOG Bike/Ped Plan has started. Kim Bradley from SECT Mountain Bike Association offered assistance to engage the mountain biking community.

Susan Smith, Executive Director of Bike/Walk CT gave a brief presentation to introduce herself and update the Council on the work Bike/Walk CT has been doing.

Next Meeting – Tuesday October 9, 2018 at VHB in Wethersfield.

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 11:10