

Greenways Council Meeting Minutes January 14, 2019

9:30 AM to 10:30AM,

VHB, Inc. offices, 100 Great Meadow Road Suite 200, in Wethersfield, CT.

Council Members present: Michelle Eckman, Bob Dickinson, Joe Hickey, Bruce Donald, Jamie Lintner, Anna Bergeron, Laurie Giannotti

Council Members on the Phone: Rista Malanca Lois Bruinooge,

Council Members Absent: Bill O'Neill, Stacey Stearns

Members of the Public Present: Matthew House – COREC, Paula Burton, CT NEMBA, Charlie Taney – NRVT, Julie Dupont Woody - Avalonia Land Conservancy, Richard Lutz.

Members of the Public on the Phone: Bill Boles –NEMBA Staff, Eugene Nichols, DPH;, Jim Kulpa – VHB, Inc.

Call to Order 9:30

Minutes were approved from the last meeting

Michelle E volunteered to be meeting secretary.

Chairman's Report - Bruce

CTRP

Laurie did incredible job on the CTRP review. We didn't fund all that we would have liked but we funded crucial projects like CT Trail Census, CFPA and getting more projects in the pipeline.

Link is still on DEEP website and list of awards is on PR. Not on Rec Trails site but will be soon

DEEP didn't take their admin cost cut. Had just under \$200K we were able to use from last cycle.

New political slate.

Bruce is having lunch w S. Smith of Bike-Walk CT. Should try for another rec-trails grant again.

Active Transportation Plan (not Bike-Ped Advisory anymore). DOT asked Bruce to be on that board.

JH - very important that we get an idea of how diverse DOT and Gov Office interests. Mass transit, energy are their interests that we know of right now. Hope it is broader than that.

Finances are going to be very constrained. Bruce is going to push our work.

We should try hard to get our people at as many events and meetings as possible especially when the commissioner is going to be there. For instance, the New Britain Gap Mtg. Community and advocacy support is critical when it comes to funding.

Correspondence - Laurie

Grant related mostly.

A lot of highly ranked proposals didn't get funded. Most people understood we were in a tighter spot because the demand was high.

Contracts - Laurie working on today. Hope is to grantees in the next week or two. Then hopefully in two months (an optimistic estimate) on when contracts go out. Hopefully before construction season. Hope for mid-March. Once Laurie's part is done, it is out of her hands. Grantees must remember that the paperwork has to be completed and back to DEEP ASAP. Then it goes to AG's office.

CT DOT & Bike/Ped Advisory Comm - Anna

Nice send-off for Comm. Redeker on Monday.

Joseph Giulietti started 1/9. He has expertise in rail. Brainstormed with engineering and came up with 10 safety projects. Strictly focused on places that need safety improvements. Active Transportation Plan is up on the website and approved by former Comm. Redeker.

Steering Committee invited to Bike-Ped committee. Might do listening sessions about the plan. Respond to comments about the plan.

80 DOT construction grants have been awarded and funded. Towns have 3-5 years to construct. A few revolved around trails.

Toll study - not sure if the \$10mil that Malloy awarded for the study is going to remain. The bonded funds aren't in the bank yet.

Legislative session started a month early. Budget session. Will continue to June. DOT has many vacancies.

We have to keep a careful watch on Let's Go CT and CT Connectivity Project so we can help them remain intact.

Legislative Report - Bruce, Eric

Bike-Walk CT, Transport Hartford, CFPA, NEMBA

Let's make sure we all talk to each other; what is on our legislative agenda.

New senate Environment chair - Christine Cohen. Mentioned trails in her remarks. House Chair Demico who is supportive to authorize bonding for greenways. Pushing for reauthorization for bonding for rec trails and greenways. Recommendations for Lamont - should support \$3-5mil for bonding.

Making sure funding from license plate doesn't get sucked into General Fund

Railroad Liability Act - We want railroads in the general protection for recreation use legislation.

NEMBA - EBikes was big topic in 2018. Funding for rec-trails is a high priority in 2019..

Parks passport program. Built into the program was a \$2.6mil in the first year and \$5mil second year would go to “surplus” - General Fund. This is not sustainable.

New Business

Matthew House - COREC and CT state member of NOHVCC. Interesting in establishing a council of trail user groups alone because lack of communication. Different ways we can help each other. Goal - Coordinated communication across user groups. Laura Brown of UConn would be happy to help even though she doesn't rep a user group. CT Greenways is happy to help make connections but isn't going to be the home for this. Have a rep from CT Greenways participate.

Matt clarified that he does not represent users of ATVs on streets or illegally on state or private property. But it's not going away. How do we deal with it more realistically and be more accommodating to legal motorized users?

NEMBA - It is possible to have better communication, there is opportunity there.

Liability issues - Potential for legislation for state and municipality lands to reinforce liability issues. As well as private land. If the land is used and is not paid for that use, it is donated. Then the liability is not on the land owner. If it is paid use, then it is landowner liability. All trails have this.

Motorized vehicles beat up the trails. Fat bikes. Snow mobiles. It can work well together but in some places it doesn't. We should talk about this.

One motorized trail in CT. Patchaug Forest Trail. Only allows dual sport motorcycles. ACOE allows ATVs, and mtn bikers ride at Thomaston Dam.

What uses work well together in the same area? Fat bikes, snow mobiles, ebikes, mountain bikes, etc. There is a lot of common ground in terms of liability issues.

EH - Perhaps a subcommittee or taskforce of CT Greenways Council. User group subcommittees as a part of CT Greenways Council. Subcommittees can advise us on what is going out there. A helpful perspective for us as we work with legislators.

Appointments to CT Greenways Council

We have a number of slots that have expired including Bruce's. Four year appointments.

There are 4 potential spots to be re-upped by new Governor. Speaker of the House spot is Chair.

Those of us who want to stay on, must draw up a letter to send to the Governor to ask to be re-appointed. Bruce has a template we can use. NEMBA will be asking for a spot. COREC will be asking for a spot.

Two vacancies that we know of right now.

Review of Roles & Responsibilities - Laurie and Bruce

Five year plan now expired but duties of the council still the same. Every year we have to be reminded of these roles and responsibilities per the statute.

Council reviewed and no questions were asked by members.

Outreach/Promotion of the CT Greenways Council - Bruce

We have the ability to write grant proposals.

If we did that, may have to hire a part-time ED, which we are allowed to do.

In November, we talked about a brainstorming meetings and putting together a working committee to have these kinds of conversations. New funding sources, new sectors who could be a part of this Council. **Bruce will send around an email asking if any of us want to be a part of that subcommittee. Michelle & Rista are interested.**

There is trail money around; we should be asking for money to do more.

Public Comment

NRVT and CAS - giant thank you - so thrilled to get those grants. CGC believes in partners and trusts them to get stuff done.

Julie Dupont Woody - Avalonia Land Conservancy. Great Oak Greenway in Ledyard. Just got open space watershed acquisition. 250 acres. 5 miles of existing of woods roads and single track trails. Still need to raise a lot of funds but it is moving forward. Will create the largest trail system in SE CT. The adjacent developer is building in open space that will expand on that open space. Clean ups going on. Wetlands. Bridges.

Next Meeting: March 11, 2019 at VHB in Wethersfield.

The 2019 meeting dates are:

April 8

May 13

June 10

July 8

August – no meeting

September 9

October 15

November 12

December – no meeting

Event Dates:

May 31 - CT Greenways Day

October 24 - CT Trails Symposium

Adjourned 11:00AM