

CONNECTICUT



GREENWAYS

Council Meeting Minutes February 11, 2019

9:30 AM to 10:30AM,

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

Council Members present:

Bill O’Neill, Bob Dickinson, Joe Hickey, Stacey Stearns, Bruce Donald, Anna Bergeron, Laurie Giannotti

Council Members on the Phone:

Rista Malanca, Michelle Eckman, Jamie Lintner

Council Members Absent:

Lois Bruinooge

Bruce Donald
Tri-State Coordinator,
East Coast Greenway
Chairman

Lois Bruinooge
Executive Director
Last Green Valley

Bob Dickinson
Appalachian Mtn. Club

Michelle Eckman
Director of Education
CT Audubon Society

Joe Hickey
CT Forest & Park Assoc.

Jamie Lintner
Eversource Energy

Rista Malanca
Naugatuck River
Greenway
Vice Chairman

Stacey Stearns
CT Horse Council

William D. O’Neill
East Coast Greenway
Past Chairman

Laurie Giannotti
Ex-Officio
CT Dept. of Energy &
Environmental Protection

Anna Bergeron
Ex-Officio
CT Dept. of
Transportation

Members of the Public Present:

Tim Malone – CROG

Matt House - COREC

Holly Parker - WCOG

Jim Kulpa – VHB

Paula Burton - NEMBA

Members of the Public on the Phone:

Laura Brown – UConn Extension

Gene Nicols – Department of Public Health

Kate Rattan - SECCOG

Call to Order 9:32

Acceptance or Revisions to Agenda – accepted with no revisions

Adoption of Minutes – January minutes approved. Joe Hickey/Bill O’Neill

Chairman’s Report – Bruce was at VHB on Friday and checked out trails projects around the state via a spreadsheet. East Coast Greenway is still parsing what they want to do with New Haven and the Vision Trail. An agreement has been signed and is on the desk in New Haven, the project had been stalled for six years (Long Wharf to Water Street). The federal money would revert this fall if not used. Jim is reviewing the old plans and they should stand up. Michelle wondered whether sea level rise will impact the project? Bruce stated that it’s at a reasonable elevation higher (this project) and they are infiltrating storm water as best they can. Jim mentioned that the city is also doing a resiliency exercise. Bruce will follow up with New Haven about sea level rise.

Joe mentioned that the second issue is that when you get to West Haven, the trail runs into a heavily developed area. How will that be handled? Bruce agreed that it’s an issue.

West Haven and Milford are two of the largest gaps left in the state other than the Merritt Parkway. Bruce is convening a meeting in the spring with Milford about where the trail will go.

Bruce wants to invite SCCCOG to the Greenways Council meeting and explore if they will do a study.

The Hartford-Windsor river walk project is planned to be completed in 2020. Both of the Hop River bridge replacements will be done this year (Columbia and Willimantic).

Correspondence Laurie said that of the contracts, five are in the pipeline of the 19 total, they’re all moving along. Most of it’s out of her control. Nominations are open for new Greenway Designations. We have one so far. The deadline is April 26. The press release from DEEP is going out this week.

CT DOT and Bike-Ped (BP) Advisory Committee – Nothing new to report from last month. They are trying to schedule an active transportation meeting (Tom will meet with the Commissioner). Letters went out to the 80 towns for the Community Connectivity funding, and they are working on agreements now. Tony Lorazetti at the UConn Technology Center offers RSAs to towns for free.

Legislative Report –

- Eric Hammerling sent an email (he is out of state at meetings) about testimony for Bill 7058 – Establishing a Greenways Account needing to happen by Wednesday (in person or submitted). It's going before the Transportation Committee. CFPA is supporting it and the bill should reflect the fix that went into the LIS license plate. Laurie shared the language for the LIS license plate. It's being proposed that the Attorney General's office use that verbiage for the Greenways plate. It's not a lot of money from the plates, approximately \$30,000. Bill noted that the driver is the branding, not the money, but we want the ROI too. Bruce said we could publicize that the money is going to Greenways and then more people will get the plates. Subaru America is already asking people to get a Greenways plate. Rista said that even if the money doesn't go to larger trail projects we could use it for unified mapping or other projects to promote greenways, including signage and things that support our big investments. Laurie said that historically we had a Greenways Small Cap Grant that had a \$5000 limit. Tim said it's worth fighting for the plates, and establishes a precedent. We could also build up the fund for a couple of years and then provide matching funds for TAP projects to help towns that can't afford the match.
- Bruce and Eric are working with the people that sponsored the Rec Trail Bonding in early March.
- February 20th – date the Governor's budget will be released.
- SB 775 – Creation of a Central Connecticut Loop Trail – it's the airline trail south through Middletown and connects to the Farmington Canal Trail. It cuts off a huge section of the ECG too though. Tim said there are many issues with it. Discussion was on the process and other funding sources that might help this project.
- HB 5254 – Tim said this bill establishes a conveyance on conservation of land. Towns can establish funds for brownfields, farmland, forest, open space, etc. It's on properties over \$150,000. Kate said Bozrah was named as a potential beneficiary, one concern is with property availability.

Old Business –

- Greenways License Plate – covered under legislative
- Funding Sources Committee – will set up in a few weeks
- CGC Status Report on Appointments – Laurie passed out the list of who's term is expired. We also have a few openings. No one has gotten a letter yet to be re-appointed or appointed into an open seat. All could also be replaced by the Governor. There are supposed to be 11 sitting members on the council.
- Outreach/Promotion - Ongoing
- CT Recreational Trails Program – covered .

New Business –

- Greenways Day May 31 – need to plan it. August 3rd is the Hartford Marathon Trail Day with a race from Providence to Hartford on trails. Greenways Day is May 31st, the weekend of trails day. Charlie Tanney and the folks from NEVT were thinking about hosting something. Maybe we could host something on the Hartford side of the river. When is the opening date for Bolton Notch? Perhaps coordinate with that?
- October 13 – Rotarians of the four towns will hold a ribbon cutting in Charter Oak Park in Manchester to celebrate the 20 mile loop that was created.

Public Q&A –

Holly was reading about opportunity zones, many are in Connecticut to invest in low-income communities. Trails could be included as part of other transportation infrastructure. Tim mentioned that it has to have 7-10% ROI to get funding and its hard to charge a fee for trails/transportation infrastructure.

Tim said that CROG partnered with DPH on a CDC grant promoting complete streets through trainings and demo projects. Maybe we could do a training around it at Greenways Day and our October event. Bruce is going put a list together of people doing similar stuff.

Laura Brown and a group at UConn Extension are looking at doing something similar with an educational marketing campaign. It's a trail related blast each month (Trail Tuesday) and they also want to set up a list serve and do some hands-on training, including pop-up days. The group is also doing street sheets and adding outdoor recreation to the food and other resources listed.

Next Meeting – Tuesday March 11

Adjournment 11:12 AM