

Connecticut Greenways Council  
Minutes of Meeting  
January 13, 2020  
VHB, Inc. offices, 100 Great Meadow Road, Wethersfield CT 9:30

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, January 13, 2020 at the offices of VHB, Inc. Present were chairman Bruce Donald, Laurie Gianotti, Jim Kulpa, Joe Hickey, Paula Burton, Anna Bergeron, Rich Lutz, Bill Champagne, Valerie Amsel, Linda Anderson, Matthew House, Paul Kovacs, Bob Dickinson, Charles Tracy and Gwen Marrion. Participating by phone were Michelle Eckman, Lois Bruinooge, Laura Brown, Aaron Boudris, Kate Rutan and Jamie Lintner.. Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:39.

1. Call to Order and Welcome: Bruce.

2. Designation of Secretary for this meeting: Gwen.

3. Acceptance of revisions to agenda. None.

4. Adoption of minutes of November, 2019 meeting: Joe Hickey moved, seconded by Bob Dickinson, to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Chairman's Report

- Laurie Gianotti is retiring in April. Bruce said he is "heartbroken". Laurie said after 18 years in the position she is ready to help trails and greenways in other ways. DEEP is looking to fill the position and she is helping with the transition. She will attend Council meetings as a member of the public if the Council wants her to. She is proud of the legacy she is leaving with the Recreational Trails Program. Joe Hickey complimented Laurie and said she has always been "motivated to get things done".
- Trail bonding: there is a gap in recreational trails funding in 2020. Bruce talked to CTF&P regarding getting back on the federal trails program (problematic because time consuming and difficult to administer) or possibly being on a parallel track with it. A meeting is scheduled with Federal Hwys, DOT and State Parks.
- Legislative reception: Jan. 30 11:00-1:00. Sue Smith of Bike Walk CT is sponsor.

6. CT DOT Bike/Ped Advisory Comm.: Anna reported that there is a new deputy DOT commissioner. DOT is still in "debt diet world". The Community Connectivity program is running well in many towns and is 100% State funded. She sees bike/ped amenities being integrated into design plans. CT Trail Finder Program: would be a unified trail guide for all trails. DOT's interest in the program is for trails that can be used for multi-modal transportation. DOT can't do this project internally but might be interested in being a partner, possibly with UConn, to get GIS expertise and student help.

Charles Tracy: believes there is a need for a clearinghouse for all trail information. UConn's CLEAR program possibly a place to keep the data. Many users are out of state so this presents tourism and economic development possibilities. Laurie said that having UConn involved broadens the perspective of the Council beyond state parks and DOT. Bruce suggested possibly finding funds to create a pilot program. CT Trail Census has submitted an application to

the Council for funding. Bill Champagne is collecting trail maintenance agreements from towns that have multiuse trails in them.

Laurie attended a meeting of the River COG which is looking at possible connections with the Farmington Heritage and Air Line trails. Good turnout at the meeting. The group is seeking funding for design. Mountains and highways present obstacles so a feasibility study is needed.

#### 7. Old Business

- Potential turned back CRTP funds: Laurie had circulated a chart showing funds turned back (about \$400K) and projects that could possibly be funded (\$1.6 million). Bruce's top three choices are CT Trail Census, Killingly because they are working on another section and New Britain because the engineering team is a known quantity. Council members would like to review the material before discussing. Laurie will set up a Google site for viewing the material. There is no open RFP because the legislature has not funded the program. Another opinion is a preference to put funding toward trails, not a UConn program. It was asked whether the funds should be spread out among a number of programs or focused on projects that can be funded entirely? Spreading it out might not give enough for projects to be done but it depends on the project, i.e. \$50K can go a long way toward putting stone dust on a trail or hiring summer crews for trail maintenance. Bruce reminded Council that the Recreational Trail Program exists to fund smaller projects, those that don't connect or aren't a DOT project.

#### 8. New Business

- Ellington Trails group: explained their programs. They are an ad hoc committee of the Town of Ellington receiving some funding from the town. Goals are to manage and develop trails, promote them and use them for outdoor education. Have held successful events on some of the properties. Said they could do a lot with small grants.
- Gwen reported that she spoke with Dave Buckley who said there is discussion about repairing the section of the Hop River Linear Trail immediately north of Freja Park in Bolton. The repair work is not tied to a decision about how to deal with the dam at the north end of the pond.
- Charles Tracy distributed a CT Trail Census report for 2019.

10. Public comment: None.

11. Next meeting: Monday, February 10

12. Adjournment: 11:00

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion