

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
June 8, 2020
Via teleconference due to coronavirus

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, June 8, 2020 via teleconference. Participating were chairman Bruce Donald, Bob Dickinson, Charlie Tracy, Paula Burton, Laurie Gianotti, Aaron Budris, Bill O'Neill, Gene Nichols, Bill Champagne, Lance Hansen, Jim Kulpa, Stacey Stearns, Richard Lutz, Cathy Hagadorn, Jennifer Carrier, Beth Merrill, Eric Hammerling, Susan Smith and Gwen Marrison.

1. Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:36.

2. Adoption of minutes of May 11, 2020 meeting: Bob moved, seconded by Beth, to approve. Motion passed unanimously with no changes. Bruce discussed clarifying the discussion held at the March 9, 2020 meeting regarding the disposition of the remaining \$35,000 in the RTP funding following Gwen's comment that no minutes showed how the funds were used. Bruce read an email exchange with him, Laurie and Gwen that showed that the funds were given to New Britain to augment an earlier grant for the Beeline Trail. Paula said COG asked her where those funds were used. Bruce said the grant to New Britain should have been in the minutes. Today's minutes explain where the funds went and at the July meeting a vote will be taken to approve today's minutes which will document the trail of funding.

3. Chairman's Report

- Bruce submitted to the East Coast Greenway Alliance the following shovel-ready projects: Charter Oak in East Hartford, Air Line Trail (maintenance and paving), Quinnebaug River Trail phases 5 and 6, Tarriffville phases 2 and 3. Bob suggested adding the South Windsor Cross Town Trail.
- The CT Outdoor Recreation Association has met with DEEP Comm. Katie Dykes to talk about issues regarding reopening and trail use. Eric said it's a good partnership and encourages groups to become members of CORA. (no cost).
- Eric said \$3 million for the RTP still needs to be acted on by the Bond Commission. Eric keeps in touch with DEEP to keep it on their request list. He would like DEEP to authorize an RFP for the RTP program even before the Bond Commission acts. DEEP appears noncommittal at this point. Laurie said it appears DEEP is waiting for the Bond Commission to act. CFPA is helping DEEP to get back into the Federal Highway Administration grant program. Bruce said CORA also asked Katie Dykes to support getting back into the federal program.
- There might be an in-person meeting of the CT EGCA on June 25 at Steve Mitchell's horse farm.
- UConn students did an excellent presentation on the possibility of putting lighting in the tunnel in Bolton on the Hop River Trail.
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4. CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: None

5. Other reports:

Bill Champagne reported that he is working to establish a U.S. Bike Route 1A which could create economic development opportunities. It runs from New London to Stonington to Westerly

RI. No plan to extend it to Hammonasset at this point. Laurie asked if the DEEP State Parks Division should write a letter of support for this concept. Bill said good idea and he will forward it.

Jim Kulpa reported:

- Ansonia: portion of the Ansonia River Walk – ROW and permit phases are close to being done
- New Haven: south portion of Farmington River Heritage Canal – close to being re-bid
- Southington: final design is in
- Moosup Valley State Park Trail: going into final design
- Columbia and Coventry (Hop River Trail): going through NEPA to make sure standards are met in case federal funding is used
- Trumbull: Poquonnock River Trail: construction to start soon
- East Haven: Shoreline Greenway Trail: will meet with the consultant soon

Correspondence: Laurie reported on re-entry into the Federal Highway National Recreational Trail Program and she will send an item about CORA and alternatives to visiting state parks when they are too full

6. Legislation: unlikely the legislature will meet again in 2020. The transportation package that was passed included funding for the Recreational Trail Program but it now has to be put on the Bond Commission agenda and it is unlikely they will meet over the summer. Susan Smith said there will be opportunities in 2021 to pursue requests under HB 5324.

7. Old Business

- Six people volunteered to work with Laurie on the October awards event.
- CT Trail Finder: Charlie reported that he has spoken with a number of organizations and 16 have expressed support including the DOT, Dept. of Public Health and the CT Office of Tourism. He thinks it will be launched by Trails Day 2021. A survey is being mailed next week. It will be similar to the Maine Trail Finder. April and May data is being reviewed now and there will be a Covid-19 impact report soon. There have been at least 50 responses to the QR code. He is sharing data with DEEP and CORA.
- License plate fund: Laurie is still trying to find who at DEEP has authority to release the funds.

8. New Business:

- Air Line Trail Condition Report: Bruce wrote to the DEEP re the condition of the trail. Bruce gets emails every week about the problems. Volunteers have sent photos. Bruce feels there should be more consistency in maintenance.

9. Public Comment

- Laurie expressed sadness that this weekend's usual Trails Days activities have been mostly cancelled due to the virus. She mentioned how there have been some good stories including CT Audubon's video promoting trails. She complimented Eric on his good video postcards.

- Laurie asked the Council to consider writing a letter to DEEP stating that many people are using state parks which are being maintained with very small staffs. Eric said the DEEP state parks budget is “the most efficient in the nation”, meaning they do the most work with the least amount of funding. Bruce will write a letter to DEEP.

10.. Next meeting: Monday, July 13, 2020

11. Adjournment: 10:41

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion