

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
November 9, 2020
Via teleconference due to coronavirus

A regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Monday, November 9, 2020 via teleconference. Participating were chairman Bruce Donald, Laurie Gianotti, Bill O'Neill, Stacey Stearns, Richard Lutz, Anna Bergeron, Eric Hammerling, Kate Rattan, Paula Burton, Travis Counsell, Aaron Budris, Lois Bruinooge, Bill Champagne, Jennifer Carrier, Kim Bradley, Bob Dickinson, Jim Kulpa, Delia Fey, Mark Moriarty, Tim Malone, Gene Nichols and Gwen Marrion.

Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:34.

October 12, 2020 Minutes: Bob moved to approve, Paula seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates

- Putnam crossing project is going well. Bridges delayed a week or two.
- Jim Kulpa reported:
 - New Haven: low bid was higher than allowed
 - New London: low bid also higher than allowed
 - Ansonia: out to bid
 - There is a shortage of shipping containers so shipments are being held until containers are 100% full. Causing delays in steel and finished products, three to six months. Asphalt and concrete still available because locally produced
- Bruce said that in the past bids were lower than caps but now buying power is reduced
- Hoping for a December meeting of the Bond Commission
- Laurie said Mason Trumbull (DEEP) and Garrett Eucalitto (DOT) spoke regarding working collaboratively on trails

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported that the third round of Community Connectivity grants is underway. Award letters will be sent to towns in mid-December. Around 45 applications received, maximum \$600,000 per project. About \$5 million available. Hope to fund 10-11 projects. The threshold for projects was raised so that town could do bigger projects and those that show "equity for all users" get higher points on application. DOT AGs are meeting with UConn representatives this week regarding the Trail Finder project.

Correspondence: Laurie reported that she had a conversation with the Town of Manchester re designating the trail as an official greenway.

Old Business

- Awards procedure: Gwen reported that she, Stacey, Rista and Laurie developed a set of guidelines which were distributed to the Council. Summary:
 - Change format of awards away from a specific name (i.e. "Transportation Award") to something like, "Greenways Council Award, presented to _____ for promoting the value of greenways to healthy living".
 - Number of awards should be between five and eight

- An Awards Subcommittee should be established
 - Nominations to be submitted on a standard form
 - Nominations to be submitted to Awards Subcommittee by February 28
 - Nominations will be acted on at the March meeting of the Council
 - The person who nominated the recipient must notify the recipient of the award
 - Awards ceremony should be held in June to coincide with Trails Day.
 - Ceremony location should change year to year.
 - Greenway designation applications can be accepted at any time as long the Council is able to vote on them prior to the award ceremony.
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Date and location of ceremony were discussed. Having it on Trails Day creates a conflict for those involved in other Trails Day events. Holding it on the Friday before Trails Day makes sense. Pomfret Station and Trumbull two possible locations for 2021. 4:00-6:00 p.m. better for professionals. Horses need light so don't have it too late. A vote on the guidelines will be taken at the January meeting.

- CT Trail Finder/Census Update: Kim reported that she is new Trail Coordinator. She met with the contractor who worked on similar programs in Maine and Vermont and also met with DOT. Bruce said DOT asked him how many people are using trails to see if they should increase the width of the Farmington Heritage Canal Trail. This is an example of a good use of trail data.
- CT Rec Trails Funding: possible Bond Commission meeting Dec. 11.
- Greenways License plate fund: Bill and Bruce are working on getting the existing \$9,000 released. State Parks Div. of DEEP can release the funds but Tom Tyler wants details on how the Council will use the funds. Council used to have a small grants program. Eric asked when the \$9K came in and is there is more in the fund? Laurie said \$9K is all that came in. Once the revenue was redirected to general fund, Council stopped advertising the license plate. Bill said we should find out where the money is going now if someone buys a plate. Laurie said the fiscal division told her the money goes into the DEEP's general fund and we can ask to have it released upon telling them how it will be used. Bruce will circulate a draft of a suggested small grants program to submit to Tom Tyler.
- Bolton Tunnel Lighting: Laurie met with Marissa P at DOT and she will reach out to Bike Walk Bolton.
- Promoting inclusivity and diversity: Stacey said we should continue the conversation. Laura Brown updated the list of resources. Four videos in English and Spanish have been created to address barriers to trail accessibility and comfort while using trails.
- US 1-A Corridor: Kate spoke with representatives from CCOGs and Bike/Ped Advisory board. DOT is not taking on the task of the designation. Bruce met with NY State DOT and they are not knowledgeable about why the connection is important.
- New Haven to Providence Guide: send info to Bruce. Gwen mentioned Bruce is the guest speaker at the Bolton Land Trust's Walk of Thanksgiving on Saturday, November 28. Bruce will speak about Rochambeau's march through Bolton during the American Revolution.

New Business:

- Review of CGC meeting time and day. One member has a standing professional meeting that conflicts with Monday morning meetings. Some members have conflicts with an earlier time due to getting children to school. Bill said VHB would accommodate an 8:00 a.m. start. Bruce will send a poll to members to find what time works best.

- Review of Council mission, roles and responsibilities: Bruce will write a paper covering topics such as who our DOT and DEEP liaisons are, funding, legacy of the Council, who administers funds, role of the Council and how to function after Laurie's retirement.
- Trails Symposium 2021: no discussion

Other:

- Bill complimented Bob for getting South Windsor to begin designing the cross-town trail

Public Comment

- Travis Counsell introduced himself. He is the new Executive Director of New England Mountain Bike Association. He is from VT, lived in HI and worked for another bike/ped non-profit. He is an advocate for all trails and accessibility.
- Eric discussed Bill 5477 to be discussed during the next legislative session which authorizes municipalities to abate real estate taxes on land that contains 1) a greenway, 2) a trail under 100 feet wide or 2) an easement for a trail corridor.

Next meeting: January 11, 2021

Adjournment: 10:51

Submitted by

Gwen Marrion