

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
February 8, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Tuesday February 8, 2022 via teleconference. Attending were chairman Bruce Donald, Paula Burton, Bob Dickinson, Stacey Stearns, Lois Bruinooge, Anna Bergeron, Jay Annis, Bill O'Neill, Brian Wilson, Laurie Gianotti, Jim Kulpa, Andrea Gartner, Dan Buckley, Clare Cain, Marty (? Town of Vernon), Rista Malanca, Bill Boles, Bill Champagne, Eric Lindquist, Christine Bannish, Aaron Budris, Laura Brown and Gwen Marrison.

Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:03.

Adoption of Minutes: Bill O. moved and Bob D. seconded the adoption of the January 11, 2022 minutes. Approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates: Bruce spoke with CTF&P. One item DOT said will be on their list of legislative items is to review railroad liability. Has been an issue for 10 years. The MDC suit re municipal liability didn't include railroads. Might affect the Griffin Line where there is one carrier but the lease lapsed in 2021. The question is whether that line should be pursued as a trail and the issue of liability affects that decision.

Projects:

Plainville 1 – to bid in late 2022

Southington 3 – delayed to 2023

Moosup Valley – construction to start in 2022

New Britain Bee Line – going forward

Danbury to Brewster – Bruce met with WESCOG

Thompson – trying to get funding

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported that there is a new round of grants under the Community Connectivity Program. Also there is a new rural community grant program which will give \$5 million over three years. Towns must apply to the COGs first. Doesn't know the definition of "rural". Trail projects are eligible.

Christie Bannish – works with a group trying to unify five Massachusetts groups and interested in working on connections to the Northampton to New Haven corridor. Asked how to work with DOT.

Correspondence: Laurie talked to Joe Hickey about the Norfolk Greenway proposal.

Old Business:

1) License plate fund: a rack card is drafted and ready to print. Bill asked to see a draft and where the \$1,500 funds are. Bruce said the DEEP is not sure. He will talk to Commissioner Dykes about it. Rista asked if there is an electronic version that can be shared. Laurie thinks it is only in hard copy form now. Rista and Bill both know people who could design it.

2) CT Trail Finder/Census: Laura Brown reported: 1) 123 approved trail systems are posted. 32 are out for review and 47 are under development. 2) 2021 data report will be out soon. 3) Kim is launching trail chat group. MA is interested. If anyone is interested in the CT Trails Learning Community please go to CT Trails Learning Community Survey

https://uconn.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eWj0OhuklMpiAGq. Next phase is to get badges for trailside services.

Bill O asked about the scope of CCROG's Greater Hartford gap study. Tim Malone reported that it includes Bloomfield south to western Hartford and to East Hartford. Possibly also Tariffville.

3) Rec Trails Program Update: Bruce said the process needs to be revamped. Some CGC members felt shut out and the matrix needs updating. Wants to form a committee to discuss with DEEP. Bruce will send an email asking for volunteers to serve on the committee. Brian expressed concern about doing this because Laurie G is retiring soon and it might be better to wait until the new person is settled. Lois said we should meet soon to outline the issues while they are fresh in our minds. Paula and Bill agree.

Gwen asked why the DEEP projects totaling \$800K had to be granted off the top of the \$3 million pool of funds approved by the Bond Commission. Bruce said \$150K had to be granted and the enabling legislation doesn't say DEEP can't take funds off the top. It's a gray area. Legislators have not been funding state parks so DEEP needs funds. Bill wondered why the CGC can accept DEEP requests for funds without proper applications from the DEEP. Bruce said they did apply. Bill asked how these projects made it into the "highly ranked" category? Paula said this should be discussed at a future subcommittee meeting. Rista reminded that the CGC can only recommend grant awards to the DEEP, we can't control their decisions. The subcommittee told the DEEP that there is an application process. DEEP reduced its request and CGC asked them to consider alternate sources of funding. Bill said he understands that CGC is advisory but still thinks DEEP should submit full applications the way other applicants do. Brian Wilson said the enabling legislation is black and white in allowing the CGC to fund state agency projects. He offered to do a presentation on current DEEP funding needs. Said infrastructure needs are big with no funding. DEEP was told to earmark high priority trail projects for the RTP funds. Bruce said the relationship between the DEEP and CGC is not adversarial. Laurie contacted all applicants and a press release will be forthcoming.

New Business: Planning CT Greenways Day Friday June 3: no one volunteered to lead. Bruce will send an email asking for volunteers and venue ideas.

Fall Trail Summit: Lois said it is valuable but wonders if the CGC has the horsepower to do it without Laurie (retiring soon). Feels we need a DEEP staff liaison. Bruce said to think about who could organize it. Rista suggested to Bruce that he ask Commissioner Dykes if there is a way to focus the Trail Symposium on legislators and discussion of needs for funding.

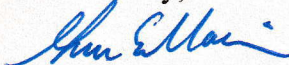
Gwen signed off at 10:07.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: March 8

Meeting adjourned at 10:25.

Submitted by,



Gwen E. Marrion