

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

The regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Tuesday March 8, 2022 via teleconference. Attending were chairman Bruce Donald, Bob Dickinson, Stacey Stearns, Anna Bergeron, Jay Annis, Brian Wilson, Laurie Gianotti, Andrea Gartner, Dan Buckley, Clare Cain, Marty from Town of Vernon, Aaron Budris, Kimberly Bradley, Emily Wilson, Jeremy (?), Jennifer Carrier, Delia Fey, Cathy Hagadorn, Marc McCarthy, Kate Rattan and Gwen Marrison.

Call to Order, Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:04. He noted that a quorum is not present.

Adoption of Minutes: Tabled until the April meeting because of no quorum.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates: Bruce testified at the legislature about HB 5291 (more funding for the Rec Trails Program) and about SB 129 (tax abatements for landowners who give conservation easements for trails). Clare explained that this bill would allow towns to enact a tax abatement for landowners who allow "terrestrial" trails on their land. It is not a mandate for towns. DOT is asking the legislature to give the DEEP ability to protect railroads from liability if their corridors are used for trails. The CCROG Hartford area gap study is beginning. Bruce and Eric Hammerling met with Commissioner Dykes and said the RTP needs more funding and mentioned that DEEP's \$700K in projects came off the top of the \$3 million pool allocated to the program. Not sure if more funding is on the Bond Commission's next agenda. The 12-town Air Line Trail committee met. ECGA is working on federal funding guidance document. Bike Walk CT had a call to discuss SB 4 re emissions and other environmental issues. There might be a \$500 voucher to purchase e-bikes that cost less than \$2,000. Commissioner Dykes said SCORP will start again (federal report allowing DEEP to get federal funding).

Projects:

Plainville 1 – to bid in late 2022  
Southington 3 – delayed to 2023  
Moosup Valley – construction to start in 2022  
Columbia – Willimantic River bridge - delayed

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported about a request for a mural along Route 44. Those are under a DOT committee's purview. A five-year capital plan was released by DOT. The Plainville to New Britain FastTrack connection is on that plan. Community Connectivity Program round 4 granted awards to 12-17 towns.

Clare Cain: Trails Day registration is open.

Correspondence: Laurie – will discuss under greenway nominations.

Old Business:

1) License plate fund: Brian said rack card information was given to DEEP staff for graphic design. He will ask when it will be done. Some social media posts have been done.

2) CT Trail Finder/Census: Kim said Laura Brown is now working for the City of New Haven. Emily Wilson is stepping in and helping transition the program to UConn's CLEAR program. The 2021 census data is in the portal. There are 136 active trail postings on Trail Finder and 240 in development. She is working with 90 organizations, and is working on the Air Line Trail management plan. She will meet with DEEP to see how they can support SCORP and answer DEEP's questions about state park usage. She is launching the CT Trails Learning Community, a way for trail managers and users to network. Next meeting is March 23.

3) Greenways Day: Friday June 3. No location yet. Bruce said a committee is needed to plan it. Former award recipients can be found on the CGC website.

4) Trail Summit: At the meeting with Commissioner Dykes and Mike Lambert they asked about it because they think it's a good idea. Bruce asked the council members to think about what we should do. He will bring it up again next month. Dan Buckley said he's willing to help.

New Business: Discuss and vote on greenway designations:

Bruce asked if we can vote on them because even though there is no quorum two members emailed that they are in favor. Gwen said in her opinion we can't vote by email and that our process is governed by state statutes. Bruce said he knows of other groups that vote by email and he will check with them on why they can do that.

Laurie summarized the applications:

1) Norfolk: Mountain Express Greenway. It meets the criteria, develops access for those with disabilities, uses an existing railroad bed. It is not constructed yet.

Gwen asked why towns nominate corridors that don't exist yet. Laurie said giving the corridors the greenway designation helps towns improve their scores when they apply for RTP funding. Also gives recognition to intent to keep corridors open. Laurie mentioned that greenways are not only trails, they can be wildlife or river corridors or a ridgeline. She recommends looking at the map on the CGC website. Gwen said she would like the CGC's focus to be broader to incorporate more of these lesser-known types of greenways.

2) Groton – two nominations: one for a section of the Tri Town Trail and one for the Cross Town greenway. Both meet the criteria. Ledyard's section of the Tri Town Trail is a bike/ped corridor. Kate said it is blazed and cleared and she is going to meet with the mayor of Groton to discuss further expansion.

Cathy said Audubon talked about what it means for a trail to be accessible, and it doesn't always mean being paved. In environmentally sensitive areas crushed stone could be used, for instance. Laurie said that Lois B. has a way of doing an accessibility assessment which can be put on signs so people can decide if the trail is right for them to use. This is done on the Air Line Trail.

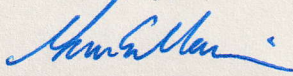
This is Laurie's last meeting. Bruce thanked Laurie for being a breath of fresh air and an institution. Laurie said she is proud of having been a part of this group and hopes to see people out on the trails. Gwen told the group about her experience leading a grant in Bolton and that whenever she had questions for Laurie she was always cooperative, helpful, pleasant to work with and found ways to make things work, not to find obstacles.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: April 12

Meeting adjourned at 10:25.

Submitted by,



Gwen E. Marrion