

Connecticut Greenways Council
Minutes of Meeting
May 10, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the CT Greenways Council was held Tuesday May 10, 2022 via teleconference. Attending were chairman Bruce Donald, Bob Dickinson, Stacey Stearns, Jay Annis, Clare Cain, Aaron Goode, Kimberly Bradley, Emily Wilson, Cathy Hagadorn, Paula Burton, Bill Champagne, Barbara Collins, Bill O'Neill, Anna Bergeron, Brian Wilson, Lois Bruinooge, Aaron Budris, Rista Malanca, Gillian Carroll and Gwen Marrion.

Call to Order and Welcome: Bruce called the meeting to order at 9:06.

Adoption of Minutes: Paula moved, seconded by Stacey, to approve the minutes of the April 12 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report and Legislative Updates: The legislative session ended. Bills that passed include e-bike rebates focusing on low to medium income users, phasing out fuel-using buses and using electric ones and \$6 million for the RTP. Bruce said thanks are in order to the members of the Environment and Transportation committees. He will ask Eric Hammerling if pressure is needed to get the State Bond Commission to meet so that the funds are released. Clare agrees that pressure is needed. Brian clarified the timing and allocation of the funding over three years. He also reported that \$51.5 million was dedicated to park infrastructure (\$21.5 million federal, \$30 through state general obligation bonds). This has to get on the bond agenda also. Brian said DEEP is starting to determine the priorities of projects. Anna asked that since DEEP took a large sum out of the \$3 million in grants that the Council just approved and now there will be \$51.5 million coming to DEEP would DEEP consider giving the money back to the Council to give to projects that couldn't be funded? Paula said some of the DEEP projects were not capital improvement projects so they might not be eligible for the next round of grants. Bruce said he wants the DEEP to do the projects that they took the money for, but Anna's idea is a good one and it wouldn't hurt if Brian asked DEEP. Paula and Brian then discussed whether funds can be used for planning and design. The next round of grants will alleviate the pressure on DEEP to look to the RTP for funds to help with its \$250 million in project needs.

Projects:

- Capitol Region Council of Governments gap analysis will kick off this month
- Simsbury – town has a line item in its budget for the last piece of the trail in Tariffville
- New Haven (Yale to Longwharf) – scheduled completion December 2022
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – to bid 2022
- Bruce is pursuing talks regarding a Brewster NY to Danbury trail
- Bruce met with a bike/ped group in Greenwich to talk about a potential connection to Stamford
- Jay Annis reported that a consultant was chosen for the design of the Still River Greenway north to south

CT DOT and Bike/Ped Advisory Committee: Anna reported that DOT selected a new study for the Essex Airline Trail to Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. It will be a loop trail through Portland and Middletown across the Arrigoni Bridge. The River CCOG will administer the study with DOT assisting. There are 17 new Community Connectivity projects. May 20 is Bike to Work Day. DOT encourages staff to participate.

Correspondence: Brian Wilson: Bruce asked about the status of the contracts for the new RTP projects. Brian said DEEP is circulating them internally. Brian said interviews are underway for Laurie Gianotti's replacement. He also said he is trying to hire Laurie to serve in a temporary role to help the new person. Many DEEP people are retiring, especially in Eastern CT (60% of the supervisory staff in Eastern CT).

Old Business:

- 1) License plate fund: Brian Wilson said DEEP is working on a rack card and he will circulate a draft when it's done.
- 2) CT Trail Finder/Census: Kim said there are 185 trail systems are on the website, up from 100 in December. Emily is working with DEEP to coordinate so everyone is using the same data. 50 state park trails are included. They are also working with the HealthQuest program, and she contacted CT Tourism to ask them to include Trail Finder info in their materials
- 3) Greenways Day: Friday June 3 at Poquonnock River Walkway in Groton. Thank you to Paula for her efforts at organizing the day. She said the site is near Bluff Point State Park and there is a nearby rain location if needed. Gwen offered to buy a gift for Laurie Gianotti and asked Council members to contribute \$10 toward it.
- 4) Trail Summit: Rista said she feels this should be held because it is valuable and she offered to help plan it. Bruce suggested asking DOT and DEEP officials to be involved with planning it. Kim agrees that having people from different perspectives in the planning process is important. Rista suggested a possible location could be the former UConn branch in Torrington which is now an arts center. Has a trail nearby and would show the connection between art, outdoor recreation and economic development. Bruce will send an email to Council members to set up a planning committee meeting date.

New Business: None.

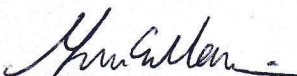
Public Comment:

- Bob D attended an AARP Senior Driving course and was pleased that there was an emphasis on drivers sharing the roads with cyclists and walkers.
- Rista said she saw an ad encouraging families to count the number of motorcyclists they see as they are driving as a way of creating an awareness of pedestrians and cyclists and fostering the idea of creating space for them.
- Bruce thanked all Council members and expressed his appreciation for their work.

Next Meeting: June 14 9:00.

Meeting adjourned at 10:11.

Submitted by,


Gwen E. Marrion