

Bike & Trail Committee Meeting
April 17, 2024, 7:00 P.M.
Community Center Meeting Room, 8 Simpson St, Newtown, CT 06470

Minutes

These minutes are subject to approval by the Bike & Trail Committee (BTC).

Attendees: Brad Accettella (via internet), Glenn Boyle, Geordie Elkins, Frank Pitrone, Charles Zukowski. Absent members: Logan Adler, Jim Bernardi, Barney Molloy, Robert Morris. Public attendees: None

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Bernardi made a motion to approve the March 20th meeting minutes with minor clarifications to be discussed later in this meeting, seconded by Mr. Pitrone. All in favor.
Motion passed.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Mr. Zukowski showed two maps to clarify March's minutes regarding the meeting with the Aquarian representative and the trail leading from Collis P Huntington State Park (CPHSP) through the Centennial Watershed State Forest (CWSF) toward the Newtown Forest Association's (NFA) Greenleaf Preserve. He pointed out the Huntington Ridge Trail (HRT) already exists, connecting CPHSP with Equestrian Ridge Rd. The proposal discussed with the Aquarian person was to connect from HRT to the NFA Greenleaf Preserve. Mr. Zukowski reported that the Watershed committee did not approve the trail connection because its rules only allow pedestrians on their trails and there is no enforcement mechanism to prevent non-pedestrians entering from the NFA property, which does allow non-pedestrian use.
- Mr. Zukowski reported the Castle Hill development was narrowly approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission and the ruling has been appealed by the NFA, on account of water runoff concerns under the proposed building plan, which NFA believes will impact the Nettleton Preserve.
- Mr. Zukowski did not find any updated Pootatuck Watershed Plan (PWP). He noted that this draft plan includes the BTC greenway project and the PWP may continue the trail to Lake Zoar.
- Mr. Zukowski noted the February 15, 2024 presentation about the 2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD2024) is now posted on the Newtown website. ([POCD24](#)). He noted there is neither a draft document nor a timeline available for further approval or completion of the document on the website.
- Mr. Zukowski noted that he met with the First Selectman, who is supportive of the BTC and expressed interest in participating in hikes.
- Mr. Zukowski reported that some progress has been made on the Oakview Trail tree removal; a portion of the large tree has been removed, possibly enough to allow a mower through.
- Mr. Zukowski reported that the Borough of Newtown is moving forward with the Sugar St sidewalk, adding to the pedestrian network. Money was allocated and a request for proposals to build the sidewalk from the old police station toward residential neighborhoods was issued.
- The chairperson noted that the Sandy Hook pedestrian bridge was removed. There was discussion about the possibility of replacing this with one farther upstream.

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- Mr. Zukowski noted that there was an informational Brownfields session held at NewSylum on April 5th, where state and local officials, including Newtown's First Selectman, spoke on the work being done to convert brownfields into usable, mixed use, residential and open space properties. He noted that the proposed connection with the Housatonic Rail Trail has been hampered by the Batchelder brownfield site.
- Mr. Zukowski reported the April 6th trail event which began at the Mulliken preserve on Alberts Hill Rd explored a paper road between Valley Field Rd N and Valley Field Rd S. He distributed a map showing the hike's route. A large part of the hike was along the old railroad bed, through town open space.
- Mr. Zukowski clarified the impact of his planned sabbatical. He believes he will still be able to chair BTC meetings through the fall.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Al's Trail Project Status – Mr. Elkins reported that the grant contract has been signed. Openings exist for BTC members to join the Steering Committee, which is expected to meet monthly for about an hour to provide guidance to the consultant. The Jeniam foundation is going to participate. Mr. Zukowski showed a map, which clarified the March minutes description of the Greenway plan, which is to create a Greenway from Fairfield Hills to Sandy Hook. The connection may or may not overlap Al's trail. There was a discussion, which included "Al's tree" and Reed School, about where the southern terminus of Al's trail should be.
- Grant status update - There are no known changes. There was a discussion about the NBLA trail improvement grant.
- Paper Road Status Update – No change.
- Minor Trail Reroute Status. There are no known changes.
- Interaction and cooperation with other organizations is ongoing. BTC members are supporting Newtown Earth Day, 10 – 4 on April 27th.
- Fund raising – No changes reported. Mr. Boyle reported the Trail account (a sub-account of the Parks & Recreation Department) had a balance of \$5,912.78 as of April 4, 2024. [n.b. Donations to BTC can be made by making the payee "Town of Newtown, CT" with a memo entry of "Trails".]
- Next Trail Maintenance / Review – Mr. Zukowski showed maps of the proposed May 4th trail review area. There was general agreement to meeting at 09:30 at the end of Stone Bridge Trail (which T intersects Rt 34), at the southern edge of the Lower Paugussett State Forest (LPSF). The plan is to explore trails along the western edge of the LPSF leading to residential streets such as Paugussett Rd and Leopard Dr.
- POCD24 status – See chairperson's report above.
- Deep Brook Farm update – There are no known changes.
- Pootatuck Watershed Plan – See chairperson's report above.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Trail deterioration from dirt bike use – Mr. Elkins reported receiving a call concerned about trail deterioration caused by dirt bike use in The Nature Conservancy property. The BTC

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recommendation is that the property owner be contacted.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Bernardi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pitrone. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully submitted by Glenn Boyle, Secretary