

Bike & Trails Committee Minutes
April 17, 2019
Town Hall South, 3 Main Street, Newtown

MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BIKE & TRAILS COMMITTEE.

Present: Brid Craddock, David Siroky, Gavin Arneth, Dan Cragin, Charles Foster, Ken Kerin, Greg Ritzinger.

Also Present: Mark Lurie (Conservation), Linda Hess (Parks and Recreation) and three members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER—7:07

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept the minutes of the 3/20/2019 was made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Ken Kerin. **Motion passed unanimously.**

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

- Earth Day:-- On April 27 we will have a booth at the middle school on Queen Street. Brid Craddock invited committee member to participate Brid unfurled a large banner identifying the “Bike and Trails” committee which would be display at our Earth Day booth and at our other events to help publicize our activities and recruit volunteers
- “Save Al’s Trail” –Work on Al’s Trail is scheduled on National Trail Day, June 1. We plan to work from 9am to 1pm, however, there was some discussion about extending the work day to 3pm. That will depend upon the number of volunteers we get. A memo dated 4/15/19 regarding our intent to work on Al’s Trail was sent to the Conservation Commission and the Office of the Selectman, attention Dan Rosenthal. No reply has been received.
- Workshop on Trail Building: --Paula Burton will conduct a training session on May 30 from 6:30 to 8:30 at the ground floor meeting room at 3 Main St. Committee members are encouraged to attend.
- Fruit Trail Reawakening:-- Parks & Recreation will hold its annual Fruit Trail Reawakening event at Fairfield Hills on May 4 & 5 from 10am to 5pm. Volunteers are needed to help with this project. Committee members who participated in prior years said it was an enjoyable event.

OLD BUSINESS

Communications with DEEP -- Each year a number of hikers get lost in the Upper Paugussett state forest. We want to alert DEEP about the need for improved signage in this forest. Mark Lurie indicated he has been in touch with the forester who has oversight over the forests in our area and will alert him about this issue. Letter from this committee and letters from Fire Chief Halstead and Emergency Management Director Maureen Will are to be sent to several representatives of DEEP.

AARP Grant.—Dan Cagin reported that an application for an AARP grant to construct a trail between Nunnawauk Village and the new Senior Center at Fairfield Hills will be not be submitted this year. We will discuss this proposal with the leadership at Nunnawauk so we can be well positioned to submit an application in the next grant cycle.

“Save Al’s Trail” Initiative—We discussed ways to publicize this project and to recruit volunteers using the town website, press releases and our booth at the Earth Day event. Dan Cagin showed the committee a “Save Al’s Trail” card he designed which can be reproduced and handed out at our Earth Day booth.

Volunteers need not be Newtown residents to participate. Everyone will be required to sign a waiver to participate. An adult’s signature is needed for those under 18. The form will also contain emergency contact information.

The committee identified some work that might be done prior to the June 1 work day. Mark Lurie suggested arranging with the town crew to do some pre-work on heavy brush and trees. Charles Foster has a brush hog that he could use if the town crew was not available. Mark also indicated he could pre-build the foot bridge off-site and have it installed on our Work Day over part of the trail which is often muddy. Peter Cloudas cautioned the committee that the easiest location to install a bridge over a water course is not always the best. We need to be aware of potential damage from flooding and high water. Water course crossings require multiple approvals prior to any planning or work.

Mark identified 5 possible areas of trail work and suggested a team leader be assigned to each. The 5 areas are: installing a foot bridge over a muddy trail segment, laying stepping stones in Tom’s Brook, rerouting a section of trail, clearing the trail to the highway, and doing work under the highway overpass. Mark Lurie, Greg Ritzinger, David Siroky Charles Foster and Peter Cloudas offered to be leaders for the 5 work areas. Volunteer workers will be informed of working conditions and assigned to individual work teams based in part upon their reported level of fitness to the task.

Participants will be asked to bring hand tools (loppers, clippers, saws, rakes). Our committee also identified additional sources of tools that could be made available on our work day.

Brid pointed to the highly successful “Still River Greenway” project in Brookfield which appears similar in many respects to our section of Al’s Trail. The results are quite impressive. We should contact Brookfield to see how they did it.

NEW BUSINESS

- Eversource. Brid informed the committee that last week a crew of about 25 volunteers from Eversource worked with chainsaws and other equipment to provide a full day of work on NFA property. She felt we should contact them to see if we can arrange for them to do some work for us later this year.
- ‘Bike Friendly Community’—Gavin Arneth informed us that the *League of American Bicyclists* has a process for designating “Bike Friendly Communities” (BFC). The application form and a listing of CT. towns that have achieved the BFC designation are available on their web site. Along this line Mark Lurie indicated that in the interest of safety, we should check with local police and get information on accident hotspots involving bikers and hikers on town roads. Dan Cragin volunteered to contact town emergency services to obtain accident hotspot data
- Brid mentioned that having a large paper map showing Al’s Trail and property ownership and recorded easements on land that the trail crosses would help focus our committee discussions. Dan Cragin said he will check on providing one using town GIS mapping.
- Grants.—Brad Accettella has been in communication with Zoe Kirkos with “People for Bikes” about a newly available grant specifically for bike parks and pump tracks. The cycle for this grant opens in mid June.
- Communications—Greg Ritzinger volunteered to publicize our committee’s three events in local newspapers. (The Bee, Voices, and The Patch) through the distribution of a press release. Board members volunteered to promote the events via multiple social media platforms.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Charles Foster. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 8:37

The next meeting is on MAY 15, 2019

Respectfully submitted, Ken Kerin Acting Secretary