

Bike & Trail Committee Meeting
November 15, 2023, 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: Logan Adler, Jim Bernardi, Glenn Boyle, Geordie Elkins, Barney Molloy, Charles Zukowski. Absent members: Brad Accettella, Dan Evans, Robert Morris. Public attendees: Tracy van Buskirk

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Ms. Van Buskirk reported that NBLA was awarded a grant for improvements in the Cherry Grove Farm Preserve area. Now that siting issues are resolved, quotes can be requested and the project can moved forward. She also encouraged BTC to include opening the trails opposite Dickinson Park on the south side of Deep Brook Rd. in Town open space on their trail review and maintenance schedule.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Zukowski had a correction to the October 18th minutes - under New Business, Butterfly Trail, the beaver dam is actually on Sandy Hook Brook. Mr. Adler made a motion to approve the October 18th meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Bernardi. All in favor.
Motion passed.

CHAIRPERSONS' REPORT

- Mr. Zukowski reported that the POCD consultant showed they would contact interested parties in preparation for the presentation of the draft 2024 document but BTC has not yet been approached for input.
- Mr. Zukowski reported that the First Selectman Elect is interested in BTC's activities and the expectation is that he will have time after settling into the new position to be updated.
- Mr. Zukowski reported that the November 4th trail review was attended by four BTC members, who found that the Cherry Grove Farm Preserve trails were in fairly good shape. A connection to Beaver Dam Rd., which would allow passage to other open spaces, was noted. The NBLA representative showed the wet area where a grant funded culvert crossing is planned. It was not passable in hiking boots. The group also noted that the posted private property signs near the northern border of adjacent Town open space were not on the border with Town property, they were significantly inside Town property. He also reported that the group went to the southern end of White Oak Farm Rd to see if a connection to the trail BTC walked in April starting from the Malbie/Dug Hill Rd. area could be reached. The group walked part way and could see where the trail was, but stopped on account of thick barberry growth. The group noted a trail could be opened to connect the Town open spaces by clearing the invasive plants.
- Mr. Zukowski reported the group then went to the Deep Brook Farm tour arranged by NFA. There was discussion about the trail possibilities if NFA is successful in acquiring the property.
- Mr. Zukowski offered BTC congratulations to Mr Molloy on his successful election to the BOF. Mr. Molloy thanked the group and noted it was OK to belong to both groups and intended to continue being active with BTC.

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OLD BUSINESS:

- AI's Trail Project Status – Mr Elkins reported that the grant has been by both the Legislative Council and Board of Finance. The State is in the process of making minor contract revisions and when the final document is received RFP's will be issued. There was a discussion about the need for a public meeting(s) to publicize the plan and to solicit input from Newtown residents.
- Grant status update - There are no known changes.
- Paper Road Status Update – There was discussion that the paperwork for the Castle Hill project straddling the decommissioned Reservoir Road's portion of the historic Rochambeau Trail has been sent to the Inland Wetlands Commission for review.
- Monitor Hill Rd trail reroute approval is still pending.
- Interaction and cooperation with other organizations is ongoing. It was noted that the President of the NBLA attended this meeting. There was discussion about following up with Reverie Brewing.
- Fund raising – No changes reported.
- Trail Maintenance / Review – December's trail maintenance / review will begin Saturday morning at 09:30, December 2nd, meeting at Warner Pond (Rt 34 between Old Mill Rd and High Rock Rd). The primary purpose of this activity will be to review and map the surrounding trails. The suggestion for the following event on January 6th is the Butterfly Trail, which ends in Treadwell Park.
- POCD24 status – A presentation by the selected consultant is expected and we plan to follow up on our five page input, which is expected to be included in the final document.
- Deep Brook Farm update – There was discussion about where the negotiations for NFA's acquisition stand.
- BTC Facebook page – Mr. Elkins and Mr. Adler are in the process of handing off administrative responsibility to Mr. Adler.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Approval of future meeting dates – Mr. Molloy proposed future meeting dates through March 2025 be at 7 pm on the third Wednesday of the month. Mr. Bernardi seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. For 2024, the dates are: Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 15, Jun 19, Jul 17, Aug 21, Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 20 and Dec 18. For 2025, dates approved were Jan 15, Feb 19 and Mar 19.
- Trail List – Mr. Adler reported he wants to create a list of Newtown trails by neighborhood, with notes showing things such as acceptable use, date of last BTC visit, etc. Discussion ensued.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Ms. Van Buskirk commented on the apparent connectivity from Head O Meadow parking lot to Town and NFA properties.

ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Elkins made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Messrs. Adler and Bernardi. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.

Respectfully submitted by Glenn Boyle, Secretary