

**Bike & Trails Committee (B&TC) Meeting
May 15, 2019
Town Hall South, 3 Main Street, Newtown**

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

Present: Gavin Arneth, Brid Craddock, Geordie Elkins, Ken Kerin, Greg Rintzinger, and Dave Siroky.

Also Present: Mark Lurie (Conservation) and two members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER – 7:02

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept the minutes of the 4/17/2019 as submitted was made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Dave Siroky. **Motion passes unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paula Burton presented a map of Newtown to the committee that was produced by WestCOG. She noted that it was a first draft and asked members to look for missing elements or data should be added to future versions. The map can serve as a planning tool. It includes open space, trails, and road. Bridle Trails are missing, but they may be easements on private property and may not be public information. Brid asked if we could get an electronic copy from WestCOG. Paula thought so. It would be nice to have the map so that we can use it. NorthwestCOG has a comprehensive trail map for Litchfield County. Ideally, we would like something similar for Newtown.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- **Newtown Forest Association Meeting-** June 13th board meeting at Holcomb Hill. Brid, Geordie, and Peter will attend the meeting to ask NFA about working with the committee to clean up the Knotts Preserve along Al's Trail. There is substantial tornado damage. It may be possible to have a workday with a crew from Eversource.
- **Invitation to Brookfield Still River Greenway Committee**
Brid contacted the committee (They are disbanded and only meet ad-hoc) and they will get a call back. We would like to visit and look at how they did the work under I-84 overpass. We may need to do something similar for Al's Trail. They got the grant because they kept asking. That is the key to state grants.
- **Summary of Activity Report Feb. 20 -April 30, 2019**
Brid drafted a summary of B&TC activities to submit to the office of the First Selectman to keep him up to date on our activities.
- **Letter to DEEP**
Brid drafted a letter about lack of adequate trail makers and signage at Upper Paugussett State Forest and asked for improvements. Is it possible to come up with a type of sign with a QR Code that can help people locate themselves and get themselves out?

NEW BUSINESS

Reports From Sub-Committees:

- **Communications**

Greg did the press releases for the June 1 event. Sue Marcinek (Dan Rosenthal's Executive Assistant) needs some pictures to help publicize the event. Mark will see if he can get a picture of Al's trail.

- **Grants**

National Park Service Grant is a service grant, we can get collaboration, community engagement, planning and other service to support the work of the committee. The committee will apply and WestCOG will give technical assistance. They will help to review the grant. Let First Selectman Dan Rosenthal know that we are considering the grant so that he is kept in the loop. The grant will likely be used to consider future possibilities for Al's Trail and evaluate if it could serve as a greenway from Sandy Hook to Fairfield Hill or be extended south to connect to the rail trail in Monroe.

- **Mapping, Marking & Approvals**

The committee is creating a spreadsheet to make a list of bike routes and will create a list of bike routes including a road bike route, family bike routes, destinations, mixed surface routes, and mixed-use trails.

How do we get bike route signs? And then how do we designate a road as a bike route? We have permission from the town to put up "share the road" sign where on local roads where they are missing and on roads that need them. We need permission from DOT on state roads. Gavin is going to investigate the process of getting permission on state roads.

We should agree on a format for recording trails so that we can start building a comprehensive trail map. Garmin GPX may be the most common format. There are websites that have tools that can convert them.

- **Volunteers**

The committee is considering hosting an event to build trail partnerships in town. We want to invite landowners that have trails on them and organizations that have some interest in local trails. (WestCOG, CFPA, TNC, NFA, Eversource, NBLA?, Housatonic RR? Etc.) Additionally, we want to make sure that we invite all the people that came to the trails meeting. All B&TC members should come back to the next meeting with a list of groups that we would like to invite. We should do personal invites to increase the response rate. We want to set a fall (or winter) date for all trail partner meeting. We want to coordinate efforts, build partnerships and start sharing trail ideas. We could have speakers, workshops or display tables. We need to make an agenda in advance of inviting people. We need to run the idea past the town. Come to the next meeting with a list of objectives for the event to help in planning the event. (New Milford has been working with Housatonic RR to talk about using the bridge to get over the Housatonic so reaching out to them is not out of the question.)

Events- The Earth Day event had very cold, windy weather which kept people away. Ken reported that the volunteer fair was a great success. We were one of 22 exhibitors. Many attendees were aware of the B&TC. We had about 24 people show interest in the Al's Trail workday or other future volunteer opportunities. We signed up 24 of 90 attendees.

Plans for the Save Al's Trail Workday: Arrive at 8:30. All attendees will sign in, get a sticker so we know who is a worker. Work areas: Dave oversees cutting back trail on Tom's Brook and will work with the Trout Unlimited people, so we do not accidentally undo their work. Peter Cloudas will oversee moving the bridge. Mark will lead the effort to move the trail near the Highway. Moving the trail requires workers who participated in the trail building class and have skills. Chas will work south of Tom's brook which is mostly cutting back vegetation. The last area is cutting away vegetation between two overpasses. We will leave the debris. Let people know about Poison Ivy and ticks. Foreman need day glow vests. We need someone to take pictures of the event. Brad will bring tent and sign in. Paula will bring Pizza from Big Y, Amy will get jugs of water.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Cloudas took out timber traffic bridge that could be reused for building trail bridges
If we want the salvage materials, we need to send a letter of interest to Dayton Construction that we would be interested in the bridge.
Brid will write a letter and Mark will see if Fred Hurley can help with moving the wood. Peter will help with the engineering.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to close the meeting was made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Dave Siroky. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:27

Respectfully submitted. Geordie Elkins, Secretary

Next meeting June 19th