

**Bike & Trails Committee Special Meeting  
March 20, 2019  
Town Hall South, 3 Main Street, Newtown**

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

Present: Brad Accettella, Gavin Arneth, Brid Craddock, Dan Cragin, Geordie Elkins, Charles Foster, Ken Kerin, and Dave Siroky.

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

**CALL TO ORDER – 7:00**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to accept the minutes of the 2/20/2019 as submitted was made by Charles Foster and seconded by Ken Kerin. **Motion passes unanimously.**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

**Committee and Sub-Committee assignments (revised)**

Board Assignments

Chairman - Brid Craddock

Vice Chairman - Dave Siroky

Secretary - Geordie Elkins

Parliamentarian - Chaz Foster

Sub-Committees

Communications – Dan Cragin

Grants - Geordie Elkins & Brad Accettella

Mapping, Marking & Approvals -

Gavin Arneth & advisor to the board Mark Laurie  
(Conservation Commission)

Volunteers – Brad Accettella, Dan Cragin, Ken  
Kerin

Ali De La Rosa and Jim Zarifis have stepped down from the board. Greg Rintzinger (yet to be sworn in) and Dan Cragin have been appointed to the board.

Maureen Will and Bill Halstead will draft a letter to DEEP making the case for improved signage in the state parks due to the large numbers of lost hikers. This board will draft a letter to accompany these letters expressing our support for this recommendation.

June 1 is National Trail Day. We need to consider a training or volunteer work day to mark the day. Brid and Paula will talk over possible ideas for a training workshop.

There is the possibility that a trail could be constructed that would go from Cherry Grove Farm to Ferris Acres. Brid will contact NFA about the proposal and the committee will plan on having a special meeting for a site visit.

Dan Cragin will develop for the committee electronic communication tools and standards. He will secure a website address for the committee on the town website. He plans to advise the committee on social media use.

## OLD BUSINESS

We had 38 responses to the survey and may try to solicit more. We will consider polling people at Fairfield Hill, the Conservation Commission's Earth Day booth, or setting up a QR code along trails that people could respond to.

Response to question one (What is a first project the committee should consider?) were handed out. Answers clustered around Al's Trail, connecting/expanding Fairfield Hills trails, and rail trail completion.

There are some questions about what authority the committee has, or restrictions that are on us regarding contacting the press, speaking on behalf of the town, and fiscal authorization for grants. Brid has contacted Dan Rosenthal for clarification on fiscal questions. He replied *"If the applying for the grant compels the Town to accept it then approval is required before the application. In this case [AARP], my understanding is that we are not required to accept a grant award so upon reward an impact statement would need to be prepared and the grant would need to be approved by the Board of Finance and Legislative Council prior to acceptance (I bring to the Board of Selectman though not required by Charter)."*

## NEW BUSINESS

**AARP Grant-** Geordie presented a recommendation from the grant sub-committee to move forward on pursuing an AARP Community Challenge Grant to build a connecting trail from Nunnawauk Meadows to the new community center at Fairfield Hills. Paula Burton has been in touch with some board members from Nunnawauk Meadows Apartments and they are potentially supportive if concerns about trespassing on their property by general public can be addressed. Perhaps including a gate or fence in the plan. There is also consideration about including a second project that would connect a retirement community on Oak View to a trail network.

Motion to approve applying for an AARP Community Challenge grant to fund projects that connect senior living communities to existing trail networks was made by Charles Foster and seconded by Dan Cragin. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Pole Bridge Site Visit-** A few members of the committee, and our Conservation Commission advisor Mark Lurie walked Pole Bridge Preserve on 3/16/2019. Construction of a multi-use trail was started there. The committee looked at the possibility of completing it. The site has limited parking and some water drainage issues along an existing fire road. There is some tree damage from the spring microburst. Is it possible that the town (Parks and Rec or Public Works) could aid in some of the tree and drainage repairs? It is our understanding that Park and Rec helps with maintenance of the site but that the Conservation Commission has ultimate control of the site. Mark Lurie will discuss our findings at and upcoming meeting of the Conservation Commission.

**Future Project Evaluation and Volunteers-** After reviewing the survey and talking about Pole Bridge, we concluded it would be best to start with a project that focuses on maintaining/improving an existing trail before we start building new trails. Al's Trail was prominent in the survey and is really the marque trail in town, but it is in poor condition. Why don't we have a "Save Al's Trail" campaign? The section near the Violet Hubbard Sanctuary is not in too bad shape and could easily be cleaned up and improved by volunteers. We could use this for the June 1 event and possibly link it to a trail maintenance training. Brid, Brad, and Dan will work on the June 1 event. Committee members with links to volunteer groups should start contacting them to help with June 1. Trail Maintenance/Building class will be offered to volunteers prior to our June 1 work date. The commission will discourage unauthorized trail work of any kind. Discussed developing network of trail stewards or adopt a trail program. Businesses, or other groups like Trout Unlimited that use the trails may be willing to sign on to such a program.

**Mapping, Marking, and Trail Planning-** There are deficiencies in current trail markings and people are getting lost on trails. The committee should develop or adopt a marking standard to use on town trails. Discussed requesting compliance with these standards with other trail managers such as Newtown Forest Association and Newtown Bridle Associations. Committee expressed preference for painted trail blazing over signs nailed to trees or posts. Discussed standardizing trailhead kiosks to display maps. Discussed developing maps with a grid or mile

marking system as ways of helping to find lost hikers. Discussed working on a comprehensive trail management and development plan, to set guidelines for the committee in constructing new trails and managing existing trails. Brid Craddock offered to solicit trail design and management guidelines from our neighboring towns.

**ADJOURNMENT-**

Motion to adjourn was made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Dan Cragin. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Adjourned at 8:30

The next meeting is on 4/17.

Respectfully submitted, Geordie Elkins, Secretary

