

Bike & Trails Committee Meeting
December 18, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
Community Center Meeting Room
8 Simpson Street, Newtown, CT

Minutes

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

ATTENDEES

Brid Craddock
David Siroky
Ken Kerin
Gavin Arneth

Brad Accettella
Geordie Elkins
Chaz Foster

Mark Lurie- Conservation
Peter Cloudas

Paula Burton- WestCOG
Maureen Crick Owen- Board of Selectmen

CALL TO ORDER- 7:05

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- **Motion** to approve the minutes of the 11/20 meeting made by Gavin Arneth and seconded by Ken Kerin. **Passed**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT- Brid learned more about infrared trail counters. We will use them at FFH and then share the information with CT Trail Census. Paula, Brid, Amy Mangold, and Rob Sibley met with CT Trail group. Rob said that town can buy the sensors. WestCOG has expertise and software to analyze the data. Data can be used to support grant applications. Each counter needs 10 hours of calibration. Volunteers are needed to do this work.

Maureen Crick Owen provided more information to the committee about what is required to move from a committee to commission. Need a go-a-head from the Legislative Council and then get letters of support from other town commissions. The application process can be lengthy.

Brid and Paula met to plan trail regulations and standards- land use, conservation, parks and rec. all have some jurisdiction over trails. The committee would work to consolidate and centralize authority over trails. Approvals, regulations, and standards for building new trails and maintenance of existing trails would be overseen by the committee. They are looking to other states for existing regulations that we could model. Creating a commission with regulations and standards that is focused on trials will make them a priority rather than an afterthought.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Winter Seminar – March 8, at 11 a.m. is the proposed date. Invite all groups with an interest in the trails as a way to meet groups and build relationships to help build consensus for future trail projects. Build town-wide awareness about trails. Walk FFH Trail afterwards. Topics to talk about may include Al's trail, CT trail census, mapping, trail ambassador, FFH trail walk, Spring clean-up sign up sheet.
- Trails at Fairfield hills – We are on the agenda of the Fairfield Hills Authority meeting on Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. We will present ideas for FFH trails including counters, bike park playground, and road changes at Keating Farms. Brid has talked to some in town about the closure idea and people are generally in favor as the plan will get rid of old sidewalk, save sycamore trees currently slated for removal, and will allow access when needed by installing a functioning gate.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ken Kerin is going to study existing research and prepare a presentation on the monetary value of trails to share with various municipal boards and the Board of Selectmen. The idea is to educate people in town on the value of trails, recreation, and open space and how it can increase property values and support local business.
- Formation of a Bike Friendly Community Subcommittee- Gavin is starting a sub-committee to work towards obtaining a Bike Friendly Community designation. Recently a biker was almost hit in town, reminding us of the need for such a program. Gavin will coordinate programming with Susan at Bike Walk CT. and start the application. He is working with public works to get more signs up in town. Clinics and signs are important components of getting the award. Gavin and Brad will meet with Carl Samuelson at Park and Rec. to see if we can work with them.
- 2020 Committee meeting calendar- Brad motioned and Chaz seconded that we approve the 2020 meeting calendar. **Passed**

REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES:

- Communications
- Grants

Sustainable CT Grant- Ken Kerin & Greg Ritzinger sent a proposal to Sustainable CT. They are not being able to support funding a bike park idea as it does not have a real transportation and education component. They will look out for other grants. The library has a grant database and others have found Google helpful in searching for open grants.

NPS Grant- Geordie had the first conference call with NPS representatives. Calls are scheduled for every other Monday at 2 p.m. anyone is welcome to participate. The next call is on Dec. 30. Each call has notes that are available to any committee member that wants to read them. The representatives are coming to the Jan. 15th meeting of the committee to do a grant kickoff meeting and site visit starting at 2 p.m. We need to invite interested parties to the Jan 15th meeting so that we can present the project idea to the wider community.

- Mapping, Marking & Approvals-

Geordie met with Christina Worle with town GIS to develop a mapping app. Ideally we would like to have the app allow volunteers to record trails to add to the database. We could host a training for trail data collection. Geordie will talk to Christina about an adding collect data feature.

Mark is looking at how to reroute Al's Trail through Rocky Glen SP.

Do we want to consider adding "blue routes" to our trail maps? These would be canoe and kayak put-ins etc. that allow for water recreation in addition to hiking and biking.

- Volunteers (events)- Brad did a trail ambassador program in LI that works to get people out on the trail and recording their volunteer time and notes on the trails. The program gave participants ID signs for the ambassadors. He will draft a summary and how we might do something similar here. Maybe it could be ready for March to do a training.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT 8:40

Geordie Elkins, Secretary