

**Bike & Trails Committee Meeting
February 20, 2019
Town Hall South, 3 Main Street, Newtown, CT
MINUTES**

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

Present: Brid Craddock, Geordie Elkins, Charles Foster, Dave Siroky, and Brad Accettella

Also Present: Linda Hess (P&R), Mark Lurie (Conservation), two members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER – 7:05

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept the minutes of the 1/16/2019 as submitted was made by Brad Accettella and seconded by Dave Siroky. **Motion passes unanimously.**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Brid contacted Newtown Bridle Lands Association (NBLA), Newtown Hikers, Dan Cragin (volunteer to the committee), and DEEP Trials Coordinator. They had much more to say, beyond our survey questions. Dan Cragin is willing to work on grants, ArcGIS and trail signs. Dee Davis of NBLA would like to see old trails opened up, her priority for our first project is the Pole Bridge Preserve. Work to be done on that trails is to mark and clean it up. NBLA may be willing to volunteer with the cleanup. There was a general desire to see more trail markers and signs, and a standardized marking system within the town. Sally Cox of Newtown Hikers would also like to have better trail markers and is happy to participate in trail marking. Both Sally and Dee are would like the committee to organize a trails class to be offered to the public, with the help of WestCOG and Paula Burton. They would like to see a 'Beginners Guide to Trail Maintenance and Building'. Call with Laurie Gianotti, DEEP trials coordinator, she is happy to help guide us in preparing state grants.

PUBLIC COMMENT-

Paula Burton, 31 Longview Terrace, Sandy Hook- WestCOG employee:

As part of the committee's effort to identify and select a trail(s) to focus our efforts on, Paula prepared and shared a report (See attached documents) that she produced that summarizes the various sections of Al's trail and who the current owners and managers are. Some parts are in need of restoration. Rob Sibley, (Town of Newtown Land Use Office) is aware of public interest in Al's Trail and he has available landscaping tools that could be used for public workdays, should the committee decide to organize a workday. He also has more of the yellow signs that mark the trail.

The town, DEEP, State Park (which is different from State Forest) and DOT sections are the easiest to work on because ownership is clear. Some sections of the trail are on private property where it can be harder to obtain permission to do the work. Also, it is not clear to what degree landowner permission is documented for sections crossing private property. Documenting permission from legal owners or managers, and ideally securing easements where needed, is a goal for the committee. She brought to the committee's attention a "rogue" website about Al's trail, it is not authorized by the Town as a reliable resource for information regarding the portion of Al's trail which is located on Town land.

Peter Cloudas, 15 Housatonic Drive, Sandy Hook-

In reference to the aforementioned website, Mr. Cloudas commented; There may be problems with the parking information listed on some maps for Al's Trail that are posted on the Al's Trail website, but they are generally a good resource. Mr. Cloudas leads a Friends of Al's Trail, it is a very small group dedicated to maintaining the trail. He would like to grow the organization to help fix up the trail. There is a possibility that we could develop this into a trail maintenance sub-committee. A trails crew could register through Park and Recreation as part of a trail building training program and this would also cover liability issues.

We should look to connect the schools and town to Sandy Hook.

Peter asked if a Rail with Trail could be a possibility on the Housatonic RR? Brewster was successful with a similar type of project.

The Chair requested his top priorities for this committee's work, his reply was:
Trail on Town land through Town dog park, Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary, State of Connecticut Correctional facility. To build a 4' wide gravel/cinder style trail here. To include a bike Pump Track.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE (David Siroky)

David Siroky presented a framework to help organize the committees work into working groups (Grants, Volunteer Engagement, Mapping-Marking-Approvals, Communications) that specialize in aspects of the total work of the committee. Projects that we take on would then be divided among the appropriate committees to move the work forward. (See attached documents)

Each working group will organize with leaders and members. We will flesh out the work of each WG at a future meeting.

Chaz is willing to help on MMA, Brad is willing to help with grants, Peter is willing to be involved with Volunteer Engagement, Dave will help with grants, Gavin will lead MMA, Ali and Jim will work on Communications. The Chairperson, Brid Craddock added to New Business for our next agenda discussion and motions to appoint and vote on sub-committee chair assignments as discussed above.

We can look at survey results and decide what is low hanging fruit and what are longer term projects. We need to pick a project sooner or later.

TOPICS FOR OUR MARCH MEETING AGENDA

Due to inclement weather several members were absent,

OLD BUSINESS

We will continue to decide what projects are "low hanging fruit. By our April meeting we will pick a project, and a trail area, to focus the work of this committee on.

Mark Lurie will make a presentation to the committee on Pole Bridge trail.

Chaz will talk to Rob Sibley to see if he can talk to the committee about what extending the rail trail involves.

Geordie will meet with Dave and Brad to start a list of potential grants. He can call on Dan Cragin as a volunteer to the Grant sub-committee.

Geordie will contact The Nature Conservancy to find out who manages their land in Newtown that Al's Trail crosses.

Prior to our next meeting, a request will be made to Ali to create folders within Google Documents to allow sub-committee members to share and edit documents online.

NEW BUSINESS for our March meeting.

Discussion and motions to appoint and vote on sub-committee chairperson assignments. Sub-committee chairperson(s) and sub-committee member(s). (Full Committee)

Discussion of *DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE TO SOLICIT BIKE AND TRAIL COMMITTEE IDEAS (Ali)*

GOAL SETTING (Ali)

REFINE MISSION OR FORM SUB-COMMITTEE TO WORK ON IT (Chaz)

ADJOURNMENT-

Motion to adjourn was made by Charles Foster and seconded by Dave Siroky. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Adjourned at 9:18

Respectfully submitted, Geordie Elkins, Secretary

Next meeting - March 20, 7 p.m.

Attachments: 2, see below.

Newtown CT Trail Planning

Submitted by Paula Burton, Planner, WestCOG

Al's Trail

Overview and issues: Al's Trail has had a long history, but it is a well loved and used trail. The trail traverses many areas of scenic interest and is open to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The trail provides connections from the center of town to various neighborhoods, open spaces, and town facilities. Future extension of the Al's Trail could connect to Newtown Middle School and Reed Middle School as well as Fairfield Hills. Presently the Newtown Land Use office under the direction of Rob Sibley is responsible for the maintenance and land use of the trail. The Land Use Office also has trail tools for approved trail users to access. There are many land owners along the trail and agreements with those land owners need to be updated or pursued. My suggestion is to choose a section with easy and secure access to work on. I spoke to Connecticut Forests and Parks and they cannot take on managing a trail without the access issues being addressed. Any group or individual doing maintenance on the trail must inform the Land Use Office, Rob Sibley.

I recommend starting with town owned, DEEP owned, and DOT sections of trail for assessment and maintenance. Permission and access will be easy to obtain.

I recommend seeking written from Newtown Forest Association, Newtown Methodist Church, and Catherine Hubbard Foundation.

*** means that you will need to contact Rob Sibley, and that there are issues surrounding the property and trail access

Land managers	Contact info	Status	Other issues
Town of Newton	Rob Sibley Rob.sibley@newtown-ct.gov 203-270-4276	Good	Website is not approved by town
DOT (Department of Transportation)	?	Good, Rob Sibley has obtained written permission	Section needs much work and redesign to be bike friendly and walk friendly
Catherine Hubbard Foundation	info@cvhfoundation.org 866-620-8640 Jenny Hubbard 716-807-5201 Jhubbard@cvhfoundation.org	Good but needs investigating – may need letter	Hikers, horses and mountain bikes allowed.
DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection)	Upper Paugussett State Forest & Rocky Glen State Forest Nate Hale DEEP Land manager 203-938-2551, Nathan.hale@ct.gov , Also, Gerry Milne, State Forester, Gerard.milne@ct.gov	Good, please contact Nate for Rocky Glen and Gerry and Nate for Upper Paugussett	Rocky Glen section below the cliff needs to be assessed and possibly redesigned. Also, there are number of blow

			downs which have caused social trails and confusing. Signage needs updating also. Bike friendly go around needs to be built. This may require a section on the road, and redecking a bridge.
Newtown Forest Association	admin@newtownforestassociation.org 203-270-3650 Aaron Coopersmith is the contact. Aaron Coopersmith	Verbal permission only, needs written permission	
Nature Conservancy of Connecticut	No contact info talk to Rob Sibley	Not certain	***
Mclaughlin Winery	No contact, property has changed hands	Not certain	***
Newtown United Methodist Church	?	Verbal permission only	Talk to Rob Sibley
First Light	Brian Woods brian.woods@firstlightpower.com	?	*** (ask Paula or Rob about this one)
Eversource	?	?	Fences have been erected, contact Rob ***
Town Water Treatment Facility	Rob Sibley	Good	Trail must stay a certain distance from facility for security reasons.
CFPA (Connecticut Forest and Parks Association). Responsible for the Lillinonah Trail	Claire Cain (Please contact Claire if doing any maintenance on the section of Al's Trail that overlaps with Lillinonah Trail ccain@ctwoodlands.org	Good	Part of Upper Paugussett State Forest is closed due to logging efforts and tornado damage.

Website is not up to date and is rouge (not approved by Land Use Office)

Other issues

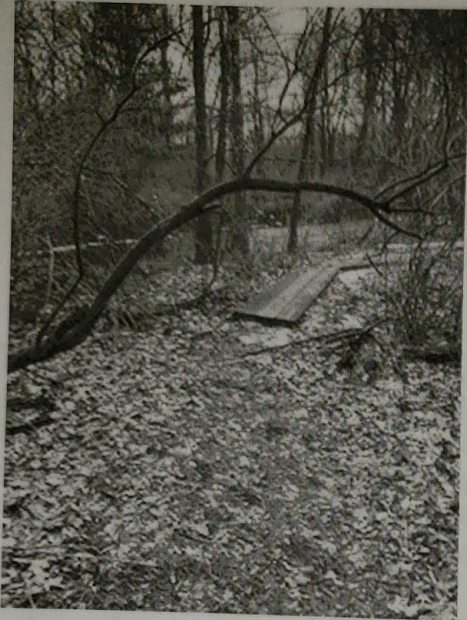
Bridges

Signage

Complaints from neighbors – Dayton Street, and Fox Hollow development

Unauthorized trail maintenance

Tornado damage from May 15, 2018



Behind the Methodist Church



Blue – existing Al's Trail

Red- proposed Al's Trail extension (permission will be needed to go through Newtown Veterinary Specialists)

Bike & Trail Committee
February 20, 2019

Working Groups

Grants	Volunteer Engagement	Mapping Marking Approvals	Communication
Leader:	Leader:	Leader:	Leader:
Member: - -	Member: - -	Member: - -	Member: - -
Federal	Trail crew	Town	Facebook
State - DEEP	Boy/Girl Scouts	State	Newtown Bee
Private	Equestrian	Private	Town Website
		Others	Parks & Rec
			Outreach to interested people
			Outreach to other organizations

Projects:

- Rail trail continuation
- Mapping & marking existing trails
- Finishing FFH (ADA) compliance
- Bike routes & safety in town
- Al's trails (connect from FFH)
- Improving existing trails - Paula Burton
- Skill park, pump track
- Bicycle playground
- Quick wins