



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

LAUREN DESROCHER
CHAIRMAN

VALERIE AMSEL
PAM MCCORMICK
ERIN STAVENS
LOIS TIMMS-FERRARA
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM
LINDA ANDERSON
JUDI MANFRE
ANN MCLAUGHLIN

AD HOC ELLINGTON TRAILS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2020

Via Zoom Teleconferencing

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lauren Desrocher, Linda Anderson, Judi Manfre, Lois Timms-Ferrara, Valerie Amsel, Ann McLaughlin, Pam McCormick

MEMBERS ABSENT: Erin Stavens, Cynthia van Zelm

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Desrocher called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. CITIZENS FORUM: None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 4, 2020

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (MANFRE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MARCH 4, 2020 MEETING MINUTES.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of Batz Property Projects

Linda Anderson described the progress that's been made on the Batz Property Sensory Garden project; mulching is complete, and a "living tunnel" will be constructed using a cow fencing panel. Eagle Scout Ben Lipman will meet with Ms. Anderson soon to discuss placement of the educational composting system he has designed. Rachel Dearborn will schedule testing of the well with Public Works to see if the original well on the property can be modified using a hand pump. This would assist the community gardeners greatly, as the rainwater collection units are both completely dry due to drought and currently water needs to be hauled in from the gardeners' homes.

Judi Manfre will update trail signs to better direct foot traffic on the property. Valerie Amsel suggesting posting signs for tick warning at all properties. There are suggested postings available from the state; the Town doesn't have their own design, so the Committee will create one.

Ms. Amsel shared progress on the Sensory Path at the Batz Property. Six of ten sensory "blocks" on the path have been completed, and this should be finished before July's Raptor presentation.

Ms. Anderson discussed the tree-stump Tic Tac Toe stations, which will be placed near the Little Free Library and Reading Nook in the Children's Garden area.

Ms. Anderson, Ms. Desrocher and Ms. Dearborn will meet with Public Works to schedule appropriate mowing days for the property in order to suit public programs, trail access and to preserve native plants during particular times of the season.

Ms. Amsel and Ms. Manfre will briefly reroute the forest trail around a muddy area near the Decide to Be Kind tree. They, along with Ms. Dearborn, will arrange to swap the two boardwalk bridges around the Frog Pond to improve traffic flow, preserve wetland plants and improve accessibility. Ultimately, a boardwalk will provide wheelchair access to this area.

Ms. Timms-Ferrara inquired about the possible installation of bees in one of the wildflower fields on the property. The Committee will refer to the property deed to see if this would fit within the zoning requirements of the property and if the Town has any concerns about liability, even if the trails don't provide access to that area.

B. Metcalf Property Update

Progress has stalled on the Metcalf rerouting project due to illness. Work will resume on clearing and blazing a new, safe trail in the areas impacted by storm damage once the weather begins to change in August or September.

C. Raptor Event

Ms. Anderson reviewed the July 8 Raptor presentation, which will be a collaboration with Horizon Wings and Hall Memorial Library (HML). The library will handle registration for the event, which will be limited to 30 spots to conform to physical distancing requirements. Three members of the Committee will be present to assist the library. The Committee and HML will split the cost of the event, leaving each party responsible for approximately \$180. If the program goes smoothly and as pandemic conditions allow, HML wishes to collaborate on the Committee's proposed Bats at Batz presentation in August or September.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acknowledgement of Resignation – Rachel Dearborn, Vice Chairman

Ms. Dearborn's resignation has been acknowledged, and her seat will be publicized by the Town. Voting to assign a new Vice Chairman has been tabled until the next meeting.

B. Invasive Species Webinar

Ms. Manfre will attend a webinar on the control and causes of invasive species on cleared trails on June 25 at 7:00 pm. Committee members were encouraged to attend, but space is extremely limited.

C. Trails Blog

Ms. Desrocher has created a free website for the Committee in order to support field notes being shared by Ms. Carrie Crompton, who led a wildflower walk and tree identification walk last year. The Blog website will also feature the work being done at the Batz Property and potentially house Trail Camera footage from some of the existing trails, if cameras can be purchased at a reasonable expense.

On another note, Ms. Timms-Ferrara updated the Committee about her formal request to the Finance Department; she asked that the Trails Committee be entitled to reserve the existing \$1,400 of raised funds outside of the budget for future projects, bearing in mind the potential of Town Budgets being reduced due to community needs during COVID-19. Ms. Timms-Ferrara has also request a current list of expenditures to be sure that records match, but has not yet received this.

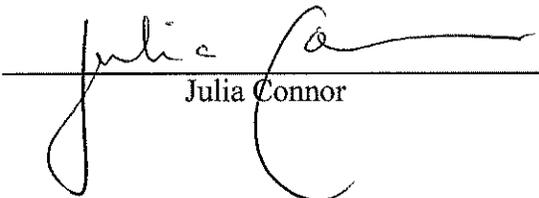
Final expenses for 2019/20 include lumber purchases for various projects and maintenance, cattle fencing and posts for the tunnel at Batz, signage for all trails, and additional printing costs for updated maps, though the maps may stretch into the 2020/21 budget, as the GPS needs updating in some locations.

Ms. McCormick stated that the new bench that Ms. Manfre constructed at Kimball Forest is receiving positive reviews from the community and that she has been asked to request a building schematic which could be shared with the public. Ms. Manfre plans to construct a second bench further along the trail on higher ground with a view of the waterfalls.

Ms. Amsel requested that Ms. Desrocher contact Joanne Tedford to see if she is in possession of the original wooden sign that had been removed several years ago and given to Bob Tedford. She would like to reinstall the sign on the property, as the Committee has striven to follow Mr. Tedford's vision of creating an outdoor education center in that location.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:24 PM.

Submitted by 
Julia Connor