

Approved

**Town of Vernon
Hockanum River Linear Park Committee**

Special Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2021

Present via Zoom: Members: George Arthur, Joe King, Ann Letendre
Guest: Don Bellingham, Vernon Greenway Volunteers;
Staff Advisor: P&R Director, Marty Sitrler

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
21 MAR 29 AM 10:13

HRLP Committee meeting called to order at 9:38 am by Chairman Ann Letendre.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting of January 24, 2020 were approved, motion by George, second by Joe. Trail reports from G. Arthur and Vernon Greenway Volunteers are attached to minutes.

2. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Trail Reports

Refer to Arthur report and Vernon Greenway Volunteers report (attached) for details.

Highlights:

- Don discussed the new project regarding repair and replacement of boards on the Rail Trail bridge over the Tankerhoosen River and to put a rail on the berm access to the Dave Smith Suspended Bridge. He has received a CT Sustainability grant to fund the project. \$3,000 has been raised as matching funding. The work is expected to be done late spring.

-Don also reported he had been contacted by Hockanum Mansions property manager regarding possible construction of exercise stations on the stonedust trail along the river. Ann and George noted that the stone dust trail is on the Town property parcel along the river, and is therefore accessible by the public. The stations would belong to the Town if constructed and would require approvals. Don will relay this information to the property manager, since it isn't clear if the property manager understands these points, and it may affect their decision to go forward with the project.

B. Review of trail needs

- Gene Pitney Memorial Park – new site, Don will see if anyone wants to be a Trail Manager for the site
- Paul's Pizza parking area – Still need to install a "Do not block entrance" sign at trail access so that trail walkers as well as vehicles can enter if needed.
- Pleasantview Boardwalk - needs to be checked for icy conditions after snowstorms

C. Current Projects – Status, Update

1. Friends HRLP Recreational Trails Grant – Suspended Bridge & Pleasantview Marsh Boardwalk:

Final Report - Ann reported that the grant has been completed and the final report was submitted to DEEP in July, 2020. She commended the Vernon Greenways Volunteers, the Town of Vernon, and George Arthur for providing the matching labor and materials. Final costs were:

Reimbursable from DEEP	\$189,000.39
Matching materials & labor	<u>47,249.98</u>
Total Project	\$236,250.37

Pleasantview Ribbon Cutting – Delayed by Covid, it was decided not to hold a ribbon cutting, since we had already held one for the suspended bridge, and the boardwalk trail use has been well underway since 2018.

Pleasantview to Manchester Line Trail Section: Easements still need to be obtained from Subway (use of bridge to get across the Tank river at Golfland); Tri-City owners and Circle Associates; use of parking lot at the former Free Spirit; possibly parking space at Starbucks. George noted that we will need 3 or 4 boll devices to get through the DOT chain link fence near the highway. Ann said we'll need to find grant support to complete this section of trail. Don said he has a trail manager who will take over the section from Pleasantview Dr to Kelly Road. Don will see if he's interested in doing the section under the bridge to Golfland. This trail section will connect the Vernon HRLP trail to Manchester HRLP trail and is important to the overall trail connectivity between towns.

2. *Trail Run Development Approval Stipulations*

Ann reiterated that the P&Z Commission had stipulated requirements for amenities to the Hockanum River Linear Park in their March 2016 approval of the Trail Run Development, as reported in the January, 2020 minutes. The stipulated amenities are:

- (1) An approximately 8 to 9-acre conservation easement along the eastern side of the Hockanum River (easement description subject to approval of the HRLP Committee);
- (2) Pedestrian/vehicular access easements to the HRLP trail along the river;
- (3) Nine parking spaces to be reserved for HRLP trail users;
- (4) Construction of an 8-ft wide stonedust and gravel path along the river.

Ann and Marty will follow up with the Planning Department or Building Department regarding construction status of these stipulations.

3. *Railing on D. Smith Bridge access berm*

Will be included in the Sustainable grant (see item 2 A above)

4. *Trail Census Project*

Don reported that there are now 25 statewide multiuse trails included in the census project. Latest census data shows that Vernon's Rail Trail is the 4th most-used trail out of the 25 trails.

D. Potential Future HRLP Trail Development / Projects and New Grant Applications

1. Hockanum River Loop Trail at Trail Run: East side of river, extend trail north to Hockanum Blvd bridge (no further action)
2. Pleasantview to Manchester Trail Connection at Golfland (see item 2.A above)

E. River Protection & Resource Accessibility: Action, Public Education

"Bike-Walk Bolton" Trail Organization – Invited Panel Meeting:

Ann reported that Don, Marty and Ann were invited to a panel discussion by Bolton Bike-Walk organization to share information about maintenance and management of our trails. This regional organization is involved in the Hop River Trail, and the East Coast Greenway development and maintenance. They have been very impressed with the Vernon Trail system, noting that they are well-maintained trails, and that the trail amenities provide interest to users, making for enjoyable experiences for riders and walkers. They wanted our input and recommendations. Don gave an excellent presentation on the organization of the Vernon Greenway Volunteers and how they interface with Marty and the Parks & Recreation Department. Marty discussed the P&R trail maintenance procedures and protocols and available trail maintenance equipment. Bike-Walk Bolton was very pleased with the meeting and encouraged future co-operation and discussion.

F. Other Hockanum River Projects:

Former Marianist Fathers Property – R. Hamid (part of extension of loop trail, D.1 above) – no new discussions

3. New Business –

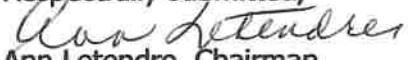
A. Dog Park at Saxony Mill Park – Sitting Area Improvements

At Marty's suggestion and pending Covid protocols, the HRLP Committee agreed to hold the March meeting at the Saxony site to discuss improvements, and what might be accommodated in his budget.

4. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:27 am, motion by Joe, second by George, motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,


Ann Letendre, Chairman

Vernon Greenways Volunteers Report

January 24, 2020 to January 22, 2021 (Overview)

Annual Trail and Project Sponsor Renewal Letters

Sent our 16 Trail and Project Sponsor Renewal letters on January 3. Four returned so far. One discontinued participation due to Covid-19.

Submitted VGV Web Page Updates

Submitted VGV Web Page (<https://vernongreenways.org>) updates to Jon Roe in late December. He will update in January. Included was the update of the mural which will now be redone annually, the leveling of the Multi-use trail from Phoenix St to the 1 mile marker toward Bolton and my 2020 Recreation and Parks Volunteer of the Year Award.

Email to VGV members asking for Donation for Tankerhoosen Bridge Repair

In December sent an email to 90 of the 110 members to request donations thru the Institute for Sustainable Energy for the repair of the Tankerhoosen Bridge. I focused on those who have not participated financially or as part of management. Copy attached. So far \$565 of the \$1,300 needed received. Copy of email enclosed.

2020 Overview

Had 29 formal work parties in 2020 including: Trail Maintenance Team, Weed Whacking Team, prep of formal gardens, Trail Leveling, Memorial Bench Update at Suspended Bridge. In addition Planting Adopters and Trail Managers continued their duties.

**Parks and Recreation Volunteer Report – George Arthur
January 24, 2020 to January 22, 2021**

The leaves were raked off of the 18 fairways on the disc golf course.
The new green growths were then clipped. Total was 20 man-hours. Further work was stopped on May 21, 2020 because of family illness.