

(TBA)

**TOWN OF PUTNAM
Trails Committee
Minutes of a Regularly Scheduled Meeting**

Date: Tuesday January 26, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m.

The Putnam Trails Committee met for a Regularly Scheduled meeting via Zoom # 959 8041 5212 on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

Chairman Moorehead opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

1.Attendance: Chairman Scott Moorehead, Delpha Very, Economic & Community Development Director, Committee Members: Susan Phaneuf and Michael Rocchetti. Volunteer Lyann Graff with The Last Green Valley, and Jackie Lefevre, Administrative Assistant Putnam Economic & Community Development. Absent: Committee Members Angela Kneeland and Timothy Oles

Chairman Moorehead brought forth the addition of an agenda item, under New Business **3 c) Rails with Trails**. This item is in support of information and pictures emailed from Member Rochetti. Chairman Moorehead motioned to add agenda item 3 C) Rails with Trails, seconded by Member Phaneuf, motion passed.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes- August 25, 2020* Sept/Oct./Nov./Dec. 2020 meetings were cancelled: Chairman Moorehead motioned to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2020 meeting, seconded by Member Phaneuf, motion passed.

3. New Business:

- a) **2021 Trail Committee Schedule of Meetings*:** A copy of the Trails Committee Schedule of 2021 meetings was reviewed. The Chairman explained meetings will be held every other odd month. The option is always open to hold a Special Meeting as needed. Chairman made a motion to accept the 2021 Trail Committee Schedule of Meetings as presented, seconded by Member Rochetti, motion passed.
- b) **Putnam Nature Trail History & Directional Markers:** The Director expressed apologies for recently, during the Economic & Community Development Office move, a historic file was found on the Putnam Nature Trail and then was misplaced. Once found information will be provided at a future meeting. The Director shared Lyn, a Trails Committee Volunteer, is generously offering to donate directional markers.
- c) **Rails with Trails:** A big "Thank you" to Member Rochetti for his recent research and pictures. He emailed pics of certain sections of the connections on the Airline Trail. He provided a link to a report titled "Rails with Trails - A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocates on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors" The former Providence & Worcester (CSX) rail line through Putnam seems to coincide with the old Airline, and appears wide enough to accommodate a walking path. This would potentially provide a way to connect the Pomfret-Putnam section with the Mechanicsville- East Thompson section of the Airline Trail. The Airline Trail is a

state park which may be worth reaching out to both the State of CT and CSX to ask a few questions.

He mentioned an example, on a Massachusetts trail, where rail lines, both live and not, run parallel with sections of trail/s. Consensus agreed the best approach would be to contact State of CT D.E.E.P for guidance prior to contacting the railroad.

Member Rochetti spoke of the flooded areas where it appears culverts cross the railroad bed, (refer to emailed pics), located in mostly Putnam section of the Pomfret to Putnam connection have a massive drainage issues caused by years of overgrowth. Chairman Moorehead shared he and Putnam Town Administrator Sistare have spoken about these drainage issues. She and First Selectmen of Pomfret are aware of them.

4. Old Business:

a) Airline Trial Update: The Director read aloud an email received from Town Administrator Sistare:

Pomfret to Putnam Airline Trail: Ongoing construction. Still on target for Spring completion. State of CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (D.E.E.P) is concerned if the bridge planking for pedestrians located over Rte 44 use will continue to increase and the trail surface is not ready to accommodate full use.

Final Phase Pomfret to Putnam Airline Trail: project is being managed by Pomfret, it includes 100% Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and State Greenway funding for design through construction. Advertisement for engineering consultant firms is next step. Anticipate a Spring 2021 consultant selection, followed by 2021 design efforts. Estimated late 2021 to early 2022 construction season. This process would include complete resurfacing between Pomfret and Putnam and construction of ADA accessible connection between the Airline Trail and Putnam River Trail. Multiple connection locations will be considered, with front runner still including the existing steep slope west of Putnam pedestrian's bridge which recently was re-planked.

Putnam to Thompson Airline Trial Gap analysis: D.E.E.P has allowed us to modify the gap location from the area of the Putnam Pedestrian bridge (now fully funded for above) to instead plan for Putnam to Thompson gap. Not much progress has been made, plans are the first quarter of 2021 will allot for further progress to include a selection of a consultant firm. A copy of the Town Administrator's email will be emailed to Committee Members for their reference.

Director Very reiterated a quick update on the Airline Trail Master Plan discussed at a past meeting. The Economic & Community Development Commission approved the expenditure of Putnam's share to participate in the Eastern CT Tourism District Grant with the towns of Pomfret and Thompson. The grant will provide for a pocket size foldable map/mapping/a QR code to assist in promoting the Airline Trail. Next step is a Design Consultant request for proposal process to choose a consultant to perform the design of mapping etc.

Director Very mentioned there maybe a need for a review of Trails Committee Resolution. Apparently, some discrepancies were found with respect to the number of members and representation of members. Upon review, this will be brought to a future meeting.

- b) Kennedy Drive Footbridge:** The footbridge re-planking has been completed. Chairman Moorehead inquired about the placement of the Airline Trail "Coming Soon" sign. A recent conversation, between Director Very and Town Administrator Sistare, produced a concern whereby advertising too soon may cause frustration among trail users. Director Very suggested holding off on the erection of sign until the Pomfret Putnam connection is closer to completion.

5. Public Participation: Chairman Moorehead asked if there were any questions/concerns from Public. There were none.

Adjournment: There being no further items to come before such meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by Jacqueline A. Lefevre, Recording Secretary

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S. A. Lefevre
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