Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2022
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Ann McLaughlin, Cynthia van Zelm, Valerie Amsel, Judi Manfre, Larrissa Burke, Ken Radziwon, Pam McCormick

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deanna Wambolt-Gulick

I. Call to Order
Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

II. Citizens' Forum: No citizens wished to be heard.

III. Approval of Minutes
   A. February 2, 2022

Ms. Amsel noted that the last sentence under V.B. Stein/Moser should be eliminated – “Ms. Amsel requested that any trail plans be formalized with the Conservation Commission.”

It was also noted under V.A Conservation Commission Report, that the reference to “Wildlife Conservation” should be “Conservation Commission.”

Following the meeting, it was noted that Ms. McCormick was not at the February 2nd meeting.

MOVED (MCCORMICK), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2022 REGULAR MEETING WITH CORRECTIONS.

IV. Old Business
   A. New Maps Update

The Committee reviewed Mr. Radziwon’s first draft of a new map for the Batz Trail which will serve as a template for the other trails. The Committee suggested the following changes: change
the blue background to a more neutral color, add emergency markers and benches that have been mapped by Tom Palshaw, delete Pet Friendly since pets are not allowed on any trails, add No Hunting, and add No Motorized Vehicles.

Ms. Anderson will provide Mr. Radziwon the digital copies of the emergency markers. Ms. McCormick will provide text to describe the emergency markers.

Mr. Radziwon will check with Public Works Director Tim Webb for survey files for the trails.

The Committee agreed on the following steps – finish the maps first and then work on the layout (Ms. van ZeIm, Ms. Anderson, and Ms. Burke will work on the layout), work on a QR code of the maps for the website (Mr. Radziwon), and then finally work on some hard copy brochures.

Ms. Anderson said we should use the old maps for the Earth Day event which the Town is now organizing.

B. Hockanum River Association Report

Mr. Palshaw was not present to share at report at this time.

However, a concerned citizen reported that a bench was torn out of the ground and thrown into the Hockanum River by two individuals at Windermere. The bench has not been recovered but the hope is that it will be trapped downstream. If not found, the bench will be replaced and cemented into the ground.

C. Crosstown Bike Trail Update

Ms. Anderson is looking to schedule a meeting on March 23 with people who have expressed interest in serving on a Crosstown Bike Trail group. Only one person has said they can make the meeting. She believes at least two more people are needed to proceed.

D. Crystal Ridge Update

Ms. Anderson and Ms. Amsel went to the Board of Selectmen to receive permission to work on the Crystal Ridge trail. The Selectmen gave conditional approval pending approval of other committees/commission/Town departments. Ms. Anderson had verbal approval from most of those entities but will follow-up to get written approval.

E. Stein/Moser

Ms. Anderson said work by the Committee on a new Stein/Moser trail will need the same approvals as Crystal Ridge. She will work on these approvals in writing.

F. Subcommittee Assignments

Subcommittee assignments were confirmed as follows:

Treasurer: Ms. McLaughlin
Planning & Development: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Burke
Maintenance: Ms. Amsel, Ms. Manfre, Ms. McCormick, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Burke
Community Outreach: Ms. van ZeIm, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Wambolt-Gulick, Ms. Radziwon, Ms. Burke
G. Wildlife Cams
Ms. Anderson will buy two wildlife cam, one for both Windermere and Kimball, to start.

H. Projects/Goals
Ms. Anderson, Ms. Manfre, and Ms. Amsel walked the Belding trail and decided that a “dog library” which would include sticks for dogs would not work well on Ellington trails since dogs are not allowed off leesh.

I. Conservation Commission Report – Val Amsel
Ms. Amsel said the Commission is working on determining whether property owners would like to sell their property to the Town to be preserved.
She said the Commission also wants to donate $500 to the Trails Committee which it has done in the past.

V. New Business

A. Trees – Metcalf/Tolland
The Town of Tolland has dead/diseased trees on their Town properties. Tolland will be conducting a forest survey and then cutting live and diseased trees. The wood from the live trees, and perhaps some of the dead trees, will be sold to offset the price of cutting them down.
Ms. Anderson reiterated the issue of many diseased trees at Metcalf and the need to take them down.
The course that Tolland is taking is not feasible on Metcalf because a good portion of the trees are dead or diseased, although some may be able to be sold as firewood.
The Committee decided to ask the Town for help at its March 7 Board of Selectmen meeting, with the emphasis on the public safety concern of falling trees and hikers.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer
Ms. McLaughlin said there were no changes to the expense report. Approximately $2,000 has been spent this year.

B. Planning & Development
Items under Planning & Development were covered previously in the meeting.

C. Maintenance
Ms. Amsel reiterated that the Northern Land Trust wants to do a joint hike at Boothroyd.
Ms. Amsel suggested setting a regular schedule for clean up at the trails. The Committee agreed to Thursdays at 10 am from March through early May.
Ms. Anderson will also recruit from the Trails Committee volunteer list.
D. Community Outreach

Ms. Anderson will continue to update the calendar of events.

1. Ginny Apple’s Talks – March/April

Ms. Anderson said Ginny Apple’s talk on “Things That Go Bump in the Night” went very well. The next talk is on beavers on March 28 with an afternoon session at the Senior Center and evening session at the Hall Library.

2. TV Show with Lori

Ms. Anderson will be interviewed for First Selectman Lori Spielman’s television show on April 19.

3. Educational Programs – Co-share with Hall Memorial Library

Ms. Anderson said the Library is putting together kits for youth that focus on some of the events the Trails Committee is holding including bird watching, and astronomy.

4. Drone

Ms. van Zelm will contact the person interested in conducting drone photography of the trails soon before the leaves start coming out.

5. Bird Walk with Denise Anamani

Ms. van Zelm said the bird walk with Denise Anamani is scheduled for 7:30 am at Batz on April 30 with a rain date of May 1.

6. CT Trails Day

Ms. van Zelm said she received the information from the CT Forest and Park Association on CT Trails Day and said the location for the Committee’s walk could be discussed at the next Trails Committee meeting.

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (VAN ZELM), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:18 PM.

Prepared by Cynthia van Zelm, Vice Chairman; submitted by Julia Connor