



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

## Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187  
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

**CHAIRMAN**  
LINDA ANDERSON

**VICE CHAIRMAN**  
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM

**SECRETARY**  
DEANNA WAMBOLT-GULICK

VALERIE AMSEL  
PAM MCCORMICK  
JUDI MANFRE  
ANN MCLAUGHLIN  
KEN RADZIWON  
LARRISSA BURKE

Ad Hoc Ellington  
Trails Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 6, 2022  
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Ann McLaughlin, Cynthia van Zelm, Valerie Amsel, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Ken Radziwon

MEMBERS ABSENT: Judi Manfre, Larrissa Burke

OTHERS PRESENT: Lori Spielman, First Selectman; Tom Palshaw, Bruce Dinnie

**I. Call to Order:** Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

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

**III. Approval of Minutes**

A. March 2, 2022

MOVED (VAN ZELM), SECONDED (MCLAUGHLIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2, 2022 REGULAR MEETING.

**IV. Old Business**

A. New Maps Update

Mr. Radziwon shared an updated map of Batz Trail. It included the bench added to the map, trail markers, and contours. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Amsel asked if other details are to be added, such as the pond, community garden, amphitheater, etc. Mr. Radziwon confirmed his intention to add them with images or letters to denote them. Ms. Anderson added that the Committee will need to determine other information to include, such as trail colors or an Emergency Information Explanation.

B. Hockanum River Association Report

Mr. Palshaw shared an update, stating that all emergency signs recently added are doing well. He noted hanging tree limbs are present on Batz, and that the land boundary markers are doing well. He also noted that plastic water tanks such as those currently in use are often not recommended due to erosion from UV.

Mr. Palshaw continued that at the Hockanum River Trail, trees were in the water and have been removed with ropes. There is a piece of rebar in the trail behind Nutmeg, as a boundary marker. Hanging trees are present. He shared that he, Ms. Amsel and Ms. McCormick inspected the bridges. The bridge behind the pond has tipped; he discussed a plan to lift it and secure it. The previously vandalized bench (W4) was recovered, and there is a plan to re-secure it using cement to better anchor the bench.

#### C. Crosstown Bike Trail Update

There was an interested person at the meeting to discuss the Crosstown Bike Trail; this individual is planning to hand out flyers, as the Committee will continue to do. Ms. Anderson shared that this initiative will be featured on Ms. Spielman's TV program.

#### D. Crystal Ridge Update

Ms. Anderson shared an update on Crystal Ridge. Everything is set to work with the Recreation Department. Written approval for the trail is all set from applicable commissions, including Wetlands, Planning and Zoning, and Conservation.

Mr. McTighe is an Eagle Scout interested in helping develop the trail. Members of the Committee clarified the scope of his project. Ms. Anderson confirmed the scope to include a bridge, trailblazing, and fundraising. She predicts that the project should start moving quickly.

#### E. Stein/Moser

Ms. Amsel shared that this project is in the beginning stages of the approval process. The Conservation Commission has already shared its support.

#### F. Wildlife Cams

The Committee is interested in adding wildlife cams to different trails. Ms. Amsel suggested adding one at Kimball Trail, one at Batz, and one at Windermere. The Committee will continue to look at options and prices.

Ms. Anderson shared that Girl Scout Troops have had good success with wildlife traffic on their cam.

#### G. Conservation Commission Report – Val Amsel

Ms. Amsel shared that notices are going out to property owners along Green Road.

#### H. Metcalf Tree Issue

Ms. van Zelm shared an update. She spoke to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) about the trees on Metcalf. Ms. Anderson read Ms. van Zelm's statement to the BOS and noted that the BOS acknowledged the concern. Ms. Anderson shared a sign that she encountered when hiking in Enfield, notifying hikers of tree danger and liabilities. The Committee suggested putting in similar signs.

Ms. Spielman spoke on this issue. She shared the urgency with which she sought a quote, which came to around \$50,000 to address the dangerous trees. She shared that she is looking into a grant to deal with the Metcalf tree issue, hoping to secure bonding to address the situation.

### V. New Business

#### A. Pam's Emergency Sign

Ms. McCormick shared an update about emergency signage on trails. She stated that the signs will each have individual markers. Mr. Dinnie clarified that they would be trail-specific. Ms. McCormick confirmed this.

Ms. Anderson noted that the Committee will need to put signage on maps to explain what the emergency markers are.

#### **B. Move August Meeting Date**

Ms. Anderson shared a concern about the August meeting date conflicting with a planned Astronomy event of interest to members of the Committee. The Committee agreed to move the August meeting to August 10th.

#### **C. Handicap Ramp**

The Committee is redoing town usage forms, as they pertain to trails, specifically amenities available at Batz. Ms. Anderson and Ms. van Zelm expressed concern over how to address lending out the handicap ramp at Batz. Ms. Wambolt-Gulick shared the importance that it be available to any group that needs it, to promote accessibility and equity. The Committee agreed, and will plan to lend out the ramp on an as-needed, case-by-case basis.

### **VI. Subcommittee Reports**

#### **A. Treasurer**

Ms. McLaughlin shared that there is currently \$6,337.40 left in the Trails account; these funds are available for continued signage, trail development and trail maintenance.

Ms. Anderson reminded the Committee of a public hearing on next year's budget on April 12<sup>th</sup>, as well as the Town Meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### **B. Planning & Development**

Ms. Anderson stated that the current focus is working on Stein/Moser and Crystal Ridge trails. The Committee would also like to put in a fence at Kimball Trail, by Route 140, to prevent trash from reaching the trail. Members expressed a concern to make sure the fence is easily visible to lessen its impact on wildlife.

#### **C. Maintenance**

Ms. Amsel suggest purchasing a handheld leaf blower for maintenance of the trails. The Committee discussed different available options. Ms. Anderson encouraged Ms. Amsel to work with Ms. McLaughlin and Public Works to purchase this item.

Further updates included that maintenance on the Batz trails was set. Kimball Trail maintenance is in progress. Metcalf has gravel cleared. Preen has been added to prevent weeds. The stairs at Key Bridge have been retrieved and cabled into place.

#### **D. Community Outreach**

##### **1. Educational Programs – Co-share with Hall Memorial Library**

The talk on beavers talk went well, with over 20 people in attendance.

Upcoming events include *Things That Go Bump in the Night* on April 12th at 1:00 pm, as well as a talk on bears on April 25th at 4:00 pm. The Committee hopes to do a talk on coyotes in May or June.

## 2. Staffing for Earth Day Table

Ellington's Earth Day celebration will be held on April 23rd, from 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Ms. Anderson confirmed she will be there for the duration of the event. Ms. Amsel and McLaughlin stated they were available to help.

The Committee plans to hand out trail maps for Batz, Windermere, and Kimball, as well as handing out a flyer for the upcoming Bird Walk, mentioned below.

## 3. Bird Walk with Denise Anamani - Staffing

This event is set for April 30th at 7:30 am. Ms. Anderson, Ms. McLaughlin, and Ms. Wambolt-Gulick are available to attend and help.

## 4. Drone

Ms. van Zelm shared that she met with a local member of the community to provide drone filming/mapping for trails, free of charge. Ms. van Zelm plans to follow up with him.

Ms. Anderson suggested directing him to Mr. Radziwon for help. She confirmed that it will be good to use this footage for advertising.

## 5. Trails Day – Date and Time

Ms. Anderson asked the Committee to start thinking of a date and time that would work, possibly June 4th or 5<sup>th</sup>, perhaps at Crystal Ridge, if available, or Batz.

## 6. Printing

Ms. Anderson shared changes to printing through the Town. She confirmed that the Committee can still get basic printing done at Town Hall, as done historically.

## 7. Crystal Lake PTO

Mr. Radziwon shared that the Crystal Lake School PTO is interested in putting a trail in behind/around the fields at Crystal Lake School. They have funds to utilize. They are at the beginning of the process, but wanted to let the Committee know of their interest.

## 8. Trail of Treats

Ms. Anderson and Ms. van Zelm expressed concern over continuing The Trail of Treats event. Ms. van Zelm feels that it was moving away from the Committee's mission. Ms. Anderson shared concern over the manageability of the size of the event. Ms. Anderson suggested passing the event off to a local charity, as a fundraising event. Ms. Wambolt-Gulick expressed her gratitude for the event, and her hopes that it would continue, because it was so successful and well-received.

## VII. Adjournment

MOVED (MCLAUGHLIN), SECONDED (AMSEL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:32 PM.

Prepared by Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Secretary; submitted by

  
Julia Connor