Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2022
Town Hall Annex

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pam McCormick, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Palshaw, Bruce Dinnie

I. Call to Order: Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

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

III. Approval of Minutes
   A. April 6, 2022

   There were a number of corrections made.

   Pam McCormick was not listed as an attending member.

   Under Hockanum River Report, the plastic water tanks can be used as long as they are covered.

   Under Wildlife Cams, the name should be changed to Ms. Anderson.

   Under Maintenance, the stairs at Kimball are not cabled and they need to be put back into place. The bridge is cabled.

   Under Trails Day, the location of the hike was switched to Kimball and the date is June 4th at 10:00 am.

   MOVED (MANFRE), SECONDED (BURKE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 6, 2022 REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED.

IV. Old Business
   A. Hockanum River Association Report

   Mr. Palshaw reported that the West Road trail has been cleaned and wood chips have been put down.

   The original trail on Franklin Street has been restored.

   Mr. Palshaw moved the emergency marker at the end of the trail at Kimball to the new exit to match the map. He suggested to have two parking spaces made at the exit of Kimball Trail in the future; there is room for these spaces. Also, the cable at the exit needs to be pulled out or cut (not active). Mr. Palshaw has updated the emergency maps and sheets for Kimball and Boulder.
Mr. Palshaw informed the Committee of a fire that was started on the Franklin Trail and reported by a neighbor. Emergency Services were able to use the Mr. Palshaw's emergency signs to find the exact location of the fire, showing that the signs are working.

Ms. Anderson informed Mr. Palshaw and the Committee that there will be a cleanup on the Windermere Trail on June 7th from 9:00-5:00 pm for “Neighbors Make the Difference Day.” This is being sponsored by Key Bank and local State Leaders; invitees include Representative Jaime Foster, Tom Arnone, Carol Hall, the Committee, Lori Spielman, and residents. Parking will be at the Pinney Street Fields with access to the trail. Dustin Huguenin, Recreation Director, was contacted about this parking situation and said that as long as the group is gone by 5:00 pm, there won’t be a problem using the parking area. The group will also complete a Town Property Use Form.

Since there will be little litter to pick up, Ann Harford was spoken with about putting down mulch. This will need to be coordinated with Public Works, the Hockanum River Association, Gerber, and Rachel Dearborn in order to get the mulch pile close to the area of the trail where it is needed. Wheelbarrows and tools will also need to be provided. Another possible job for the day would be fixing one of the bridges.

B. New Maps Update

Mr. Radziwon presented the newest update on the Batz Map, which will be used as a template for all future map updates. It was well received by all Committee members; the colors, legend, trail description and size is perfect. Ms. Anderson suggested adding the community garden, sensory garden, pavilion and picnic tables. Mr. Radziwon added these changes and presented a new map the next day to be reviewed at the June meeting.

Ms. Anderson mentioned that First Selectman Spielman suggested including all maps with next year’s Annual Report that can be torn out and used.

C. Crosstown Bike Trail Update

There was nothing new to report; information was passed out during the Earth Day event.

D. Crystal Ridge Update

Final approval was granted at the April Board of Selectmen meeting, with Eagle Scout Zachary McTighe present, to start improving existing trails (cleaning, blazing, new bridge and a bench) and to create a new trail.

E. Stein/Moser Update

On May 9, Ms. Amsel will be attending the Board of Selectmen meeting to get approval to develop the Stein/Moser Town Parcel. This development will be done in two phases. The first phase will include blazing and cleaning the Main Loop Trail along with installing three bridges (one needs shoring up.) The second phase will be cleaning and blazing the lollipop (side) trails, along with fixing an existing bridge. Rachel Dearborn will be attending the May 9 Inland Wetlands Agency meeting to get final approval for the bridges. Planning and Zoning have given written approval for work on this Town Parcel.

F. Conservation Commission Report – Val Amsel

The Commission is still pursuing the purchase of property on Green Road.

G. Metcalf Update

The property is closed. The Committee and the Town have place closed signs on the property, and it has been shared via the Town’s Facebook page and the Town Newsletter.

V. New Business

A. Trail of Treats

Ms. Anderson met with the Ellington Lions Club to discuss their group taking over Trail of Treats; they were receptive of the idea.
The Committee would co-sponsor this year, and the Lions Club would take over full control in 2023. All funds collected by the vendors would go to the Lions Club; they are meeting on May 9th to discuss this with the members, and they will let the Committee know of the decision that is made.

B. Cow Chip Bingo
The Committee was asked to participate in Cow Chip Bingo at the end of July; this invitation will be declined due to the lack of help available.

C. Other
Ms. Anderson received an email from an Ellington beekeeper who expressed interest in placing three beehives on the Batz Property. Unfortunately, after discussing the pros and cons of this, the Committee agreed to decline the offer. Ms. Anderson will let the beekeeper know of some possible alternatives.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer
Ms. McLaughlin reported that there is $5,552.42 left in the budget; the Committee has not received the bill for the blower yet.

1. Conservation Donation
The Committee will not be receiving a donation from the Conservation Commission since, as mentioned in previous minutes, the support is no longer needed since the Committee is funded by the Town. The Trails Committee appreciates the previous donations that were received.

B. Planning & Development
Related discussion was held under Old Business.

C. Maintenance
Ms. Amsel reported that all trails have been cleaned of leaves and debris at Kimball, Batz and Windermere. At the Earth Day event, a concerned citizen asked about a bridge at the YMCA that needs work. That bridge is on the YMCA property and is not a concern of the Committee.
Ms. Amsel will be buying an extra battery for the blower and gave the Committee an estimate of $2,400 for wood needed for Stein and Moser. The Committee asked Ms. Amsel to buy the wood.

D. Community Outreach

1. Earth Day
Ms. Anderson reported that Earth Day was a successful event. The Committee handed out 80 maps of the trails, me: new residents in Town and answered many questions. Discussion was held on doing a Trail Cleanup event with Key Bank and Representative Jaime Foster’s team. Discussion has been held with Big Y about possibly helping build bridges at Stein. Erin Stavens has asked if the Committee would like her to make a cow cutout of the Trails mascot for future events, and the Committee said yes.

2. TV Show with Lori
Ms. Anderson taped a 30-minute video with First Selectman Spielman, discussing the work of the Committee. The video can be watched on the Town’s Facebook page.

3. Drone
Overall, everyone was very happy and appreciative of the drone footage. There are no changes needed to the Kimball video. The bridge segment in the Batz video will have to be removed.
since it’s on private property. The Committee would like the Batz video to focus on the trails for 30 seconds, keep the amphitheater footage, and reduce the fire pit footage, as it takes too long to focus in on the pit. The Committee would like Hunter to take drone footage in July or August of the Sensory Garden and the Community Garden, and if he can add in captions for features that would be great. Mr. Radziwon suggested a standard template for captions, such as: Ellington Trails, Name of Trails, and start by showing the location of the kiosk and parking of the trail, and then show highlights as described above; perhaps music could be added. Ms. van Zelm will follow up with Hunter with the suggested changes and ask him to attend the July or August meeting with the adjusted footage. Hunter will also film Windermere once his drone is repaired.

4. Bird Watching/Walk
The Bird Walk at Batz on April 30 with Denise Anamani was very successful. There were nine participants, and 25 bird species were seen or heard.

5. Printing
Signs for the Sensory Garden, “No Mowing” signs for the Batz Wildflower Field, maps for each kiosk, and “Tree Damage” signs are all on order.

6. Ellington Farmers’ Market - Date
The date for the Committee to set up at the Farmers’ Market is July 9th, the Bugs and Bees day.

7. Trails Day
Trails Day is June 4; a walk will be hosted at 10:00 am at Kimball. Ms. Anderson, Ms. van Zelm, Ms. McLaughlin and Ms. Amsel will be in attendance.

8. T-Shirts
The Committee asked for t-shirt sizes for the next meeting for Mr. Radziwon and children, Ms. Burke and children, and Ms. Wambolt-Gulick and children.

9. Battery-Operated Photo Display
Ms. McCormick suggested that, if there is money left over at the end of the fiscal year, the Committee should look into purchasing a battery-operated photo display for table set-ups at future events. The cost would be around $150.

VII. Adjournment
MOVED (BURKE), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:15 PM.

Prepared by Linda Anderson, Chairman; submitted by Julia Connor