Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2022
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Ann McLaughlin, Valerie Amsel, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Jude Manfre, Ken Radziwon, Pam McCormick

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cynthia van Zelm, Larrissa Burke

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Dinnie, Tom Palshaw

I. Call to Order: Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

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

III. Approval of Minutes
   A. May 4, 2022

Ms. McLaughlin noted the following correction needing to be made: the Committee has received a donation of $500 from the Conservation Commission. This will go towards money the Committee hoped to raise for the Town.

MOVED (MCLAUGHLIN), SECONDED (WAMBOLT-GULICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 4, 2022 REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED.

IV. Old Business
   A. Hockanum River Association Report

Mr. Palshaw shared an update. They are currently working on Windermere Trail, doing upkeep such as mowing and tackling knotweed specifically. The signpost behind The Gold & Diamond Exchange has been damaged. There are blockages in the river and trash to be picked up, but mowing is the priority.

There is a ship delivery expected for Friday; two loads of chips were asked for to use on the June 7th Trail Clean Up Day. The Association will bring three wheelbarrows to help.

Ms. Anderson said that the Committee is hoping to have volunteers help with the mulching, and another crew of volunteers to help with basic clean up tasks.

Mr. Palshaw said that members of the Association will be there doing mowing and cutting. They will also be available to help direct the mulching. He added that there is bridge work to be done as well, and suggested that, if possible, they can have volunteers help with the spur bridge on the 7th. Ms. McCormick noted that the YMCA has shut down the bridge on their property by the trail. Ms. Amsel clarified the scope of the work to be done, suggesting that they focus on creating a bridge extension and work on
Swamp Bridge at Windermere. Mr. Palshaw agreed that it will depend on volunteers available. The primary focus is the chips, and whatever is left undone, they will help with later.

The Committee and Mr. Palshaw clarified the organization of equipment required for the planned work.

B. New Maps Update

Ms. Anderson took the Committee through changes as follows:

On Batz, Ms. McCormick said to add the parking symbol.

At Kimball, add a bridge by K7, twin bridges, or clarify that there are two bridges. Move the parking closer to the kiosk. A bridge is on the wrong side. At K5 move the bench symbol closer to the actual location. Include an updated trail description which includes the extensions.

At Metcalf, no bridges or anything, just a stone foundation. Adjust peach trail and other colors on the trail (the green section should be blue, small section is red). Mr. Radziwon added that there are no emergency markers yet, because the trail is currently closed.

At Windermere, the suspension bridge should have its own symbol.

At West Road & Balanced Boulder Trail, create these maps as they currently are. Mr. Radziwon clarified the color of the trails, which are blue and orange.

At Franklin Street Trail, this hasn’t been included as it is not Town property, all private property.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will help with the maps.

C. Crystal Ridge Update

Eagle Scout McTighe’s is currently working on the paperwork required for the project and he will be funding the project. He hopes to complete the project prior to graduating.

D. Stein Update

The Committee is officially good to go on this property. The parking area will need guardrails, which are on back-order. The Town Engineer is looking into expanding the parking area to accommodate disc golf.

Mr. Dinnie asked for clarification on the official name of the trail; Ms. Amsel answered that it is technically the Ellington Highlands Trail, which is what it will be known as moving forward.

E. Conservation Commission Report – Val Amsel: There was nothing to report.

F. Trail of Treats Update: There was nothing to report.

G. Ellington Beekeeper Update

Ms. Anderson relayed that they are concerned about the invasive species and the danger they post to native bees.

H. June 7th Cleanup Event

This event will be focused on cleaning up the Windermere/Hockanum River Trail.

V. New Business

A. Disc Golf

This still needs to go through a hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission. This may be planned for the Ellington Highlands property, but other properties may be pursued for purchase if that isn’t a good fit.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer

Ms. McLaughlin shared that there is about $2,200 left in the budget. Ms. Anderson stated that there will be more bills for mulch purposes and the remaining funding is likely closer to $1,800. The Committee is still looking into trail cameras, emergency signs, and purchasing more wood for upcoming projects.
Ms. Amsel added that there are other possible bridge and kiosk projects coming up, as well as the possible opportunity to purchase Trex from Kelly Fradet at a reduced price. Ms. Anderson suggested that the Committee budget for at least $1,000 in building supplies for upcoming projects.

B. Planning & Development

Ms. Anderson shared that trail development will continue as discussed, and the Committee will be looking to begin the blazing of the Crystal Ridge Trail.

C. Maintenance

1. Stein

Ms. Amsel shared that a bridge at Ellington Highlands has been replaced using supplies that had been previously purchased and stored at Public Works. Another bridge repair is planned for the near future. A small neighborhood bridge was repaired. A 16-foot boardwalk bridge still needs to be done, and will require more community help.

Ms. Amsel has a backpack blower and a trimmer that she is happy to use for maintenance of the trails.

2. Windmere

Nothing has been done yet; the Committee will build on what is accomplished at the June 7th event with the support of volunteers.

3. Batz – Mulch

Ms. Anderson shared that she and others did some maintenance at Batz, which included spreading 50 bags of mulch, and trimming. More mulch, likely 30 bags, will also be added in the future. Ms. Amsel mentioned the benefit of having signs on both sides of the trail.

D. Community Outreach

1. Trails Day

Ms. Anderson shared that engagement so far is small, but expects more with increased advertisement.

2. Printing

Ms. Anderson shared that the Committee needs weather-resistant tree signs, as well as a “no-mowing” sign for the front field at Batz.

3. Bird Watching

Ms. Anderson shared that there will be a list of birds in the newsletter.

4. Drone Update – There was no update.

5. T-Shirts

Sizes for the new members are needed by the next meeting.

6. Calendar of Events

Ms. Anderson shared an update on upcoming events, including a flyer for Jane Seymour. Volunteers are needed for the Farmers’ Market. There is a new addition of a fungi-foraging event, and hopefully Ms. Anamani can do another bird walk in September.

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (MCCORMICK), SECONDED (MCLOUGHLIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:28 PM.

Prepared by Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Secretary; submitted by Julia Connor