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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Cynthia van Zelm, Valerie Amsel, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Pam McCormick

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann McLaughlin, Ken Radziwon, Judi Manfre, Larrissa Burke

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Palshaw

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. June 1, 2022

There was one correction of the spelling of a Committee member’s name.
MOVED (VAN ZELM), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 1, 2022 REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Association Report

Mr. Palshaw shared an update. They are heavily into mowing season and are doing well but things are moving fast. DEEP recommends that trees be left in the river to help with fish and other life in the river. A sign has been righted by The Gold & Diamond Exchange. Another sign by the cornfields needs to be fixed. Officials in Vernon/Bolton want to add emergency signs to their portion of the trails.

Ms. Anderson suggested that the Committee do a story about it in a local paper to highlight the system. Mr. Palshaw added that Emergency Services also likes the new maps.

B. New Maps Update

Ms. Anderson shared that the new maps are projected to be ready by September or October, which will not be in time for inclusion in this year’s Annual Report.

C. Crystal Ridge Update

There has been no new update from the Eagle Scout interested in helping with the project; this will be revisited in the fall.
D. Ellington Highlands Update
Ms. Anderson shared an update. Disc golf is going forward through the normal approval channels. Ms. Anderson shared that she will walk the trail with Dustin and Ken to see what their plan is.

Ms. Amsel shared that she doesn’t expect there will be a lot of support from the community for adding this feature.

Ms. Anderson stated that they are planning for 9 disc golf holes. Mr. Palshaw clarified about a possible emergency service entrance that appears to be private property. Ms. Anderson clarified that there is a strip of Town property that is in between the two private properties.

This trail will not be ready to open until at least the fall, as parking needs to be addressed. Parking plans include diagonal parking for more space, a guard rail, and some cement bumpers.

E. Conservation Commission Report – Val Amsel
Ms. Amsel shared that letters have been sent out to the Green Road properties; this land qualifies as open space.

Ms. Anderson celebrated Ms. Amsel, Ms. van Zelm, and Ms. McCormick for their five years of service as members of the Ellington Trails Committee.

F. Trail of Treats Update
Ms. Anderson shared that the event will be on October 24th, with the 25th as a rain date. The Lions Club will be organizing it through Dianne Bouchard. The field is open and the lights will be set; Dustin will help for the event and will check with Ken about adding additional lights, or Erin if needed. Extra lighting will not be needed in the future.

Parking is limited, due to space, and fencing may need to be opened up to create better flow. No banner will be put out, so as to protect the flow of traffic.

Ms. Amsel asked how it will be advertised. Ms. Anderson clarified that it will be on the Committee’s Facebook page, and advertised through The Lions Club. The Committee agreed that advertising on Facebook is beneficial.

The Resident State Troopers Office would like to send five officers and a supervisor. The cost is $35 per hour per officer, and the time is slotted from 5 pm until 7:30 pm. Officers will be on duty from 4 pm until 8:40 pm. The Committee will be splitting the cost with the Lions. Officers will be billed through the Committee, decor will be handled by the Lions Club. Ms. Van Zelm clarified that the Lions Club recognizes that there will be a rate difference for police officers, for this event, going forward, as they will be billed at a higher rate than the Trails Committee. Ms. Anderson said that they are aware of this.

The donation for vendors will be raised from $25 to $30; the Committee will need help setting up for vendors. Ms. Van Zelm suggested checking with new businesses and political candidates to see if they are interested in sponsoring, though the Committee clarified that this is not a political event.

Set-up is planned for the Sunday prior, and Ms. Anderson is planning to reach out to Troop 96 to see if they are interested in helping with the operation of the event.

V. New Business
A. Mowing at Batz
A large strip was mowed by the flora. Bruce was there and was able to stop it. The Committee is planning to sit down with Ken and establish a schedule to mow ½ of the fields, on a rotating basis. This will help protect wildlife. The Committee will be asking for later mowing, in the fall/winter.
TruGreen has been putting down an herbicide that kills mugwort, as mugwort has been an issue. It is not harmful to wildlife and is recommended by DEEP.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer

Ms. Anderson shared that the Committee came in under budget by about $150, and bought discounted boards from Kelly-Frasket. $8,000 has been allocated for Trails Committee funding for this upcoming year. There was conversation about a past donation that needs to be removed from the Committee’s budget lines, but it should not impact any funding received this year. A form must be filled out in January to remove it from the budget lines.

Ms. McLaughlin is likely leaving the Committee in August, so the Committee will be in search of a new treasurer, if any member is interested in taking over the role.

B. Planning & Development

There were no further updates.

C. Maintenance

1. Kimball
   Steps will need to be added and stabilized, likely in the fall. Brush cutting will be needed soon.

2. Batz
   The pond needs some work; a turtle was spotted recently!

3. Ellington Highlands
   Three bridges have been dealt with; two were fixed, one is new.

D. Community Outreach

1. Trails Day
   There was good engagement, and seven people attended.

2. Key Bank/Jaime Foster
   Over 30 people were in attendance, including folks from Key Bank, the Committee, and Representative Foster. Mulch was put down, a rotted area on a bridge was replaced, and litter was picked up. This was an enjoyable event and hopefully it can happen again next year.

3. Balanced Boulder Walk
   This was a beautiful morning for a walk and took place on Father’s Day; there were seven attendees.

4. Bird Watching – Jane Seymour
   11 people were in attendance for the bird walking with Jane. Very passionate bird watchers participated. Jane will do more general walks in the future. Denise will be doing the more focused ones. There was also a very passionate young boy in attendance who is hopeful to help out in future, kid-centered events.

5. Hall Memorial Library Kit Day
   Kit day was very popular; many people were there to explore and check out the available kits.

6. Farmers’ Market – July 9th
   Ms. Anderson clarified the coverage for the Farmers’ Market table.

7. Drone Update
   There was no update at this time.
8. Astronomy Event
The event will be at the Pinney Street fields from 7:30 until 10:00 pm on August 2\textsuperscript{nd}, with the 3\textsuperscript{rd} as a rain date. Ms. Anderson is hoping that members of the Committee can be in attendance.

VII. Adjournment
MOVED (MCCORMICK), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:43 PM.

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