



TOWN OF VERNON

Hockanum River Linear Park Committee
c/o Parks & Recreation Dept.
120 South Street
Vernon, CT 06066

Approved
Town of Vernon
Hockanum River Linear Park Committee

Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2021

Present: Members: George Arthur, Don Bellingham, Ann Letendre;
Staff advisor: Marty Sitler, Director, Parks & Rec;
Amy Watts, Assistant Director, Parks & Rec

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am by Ann Letendre, Chairman

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting of September 24, 2021 were approved; motion by George, second by Don.

2. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Trail Reports

Refer to the Vernon Greenway Volunteers report (attached) for details.
Don noted that the major item involves future leadership of the VGV and possibility of merging with the non-profit Friends of the HRLP, Inc.

B. Review of trail needs at HRLP sites

Sites noting actions:

- Saxony Mill Park: Ann reported that Dave Turkington had done a great job of clearing the riverside trail that had gotten overgrown and creating a small walking trail loop, approximately 1000 feet. He also opened a viewing area of the large sycamore tree, which is the 4th largest in the state and is on the list of CT "Notable Trees" by CT Botanical Society. Ann suggested some enhancements to the area, such as an interpretive sign about the tree, and a trail sign. Marty proposed that we take a comprehensive look at improvements to Saxony in the spring.
- Dart Hill South Park and Trail: Costs for replacement of the washed out sections of the trail with asphalt was included in the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant submittal, discussed in item D below.
- Dart Hill North Trail: WPCF Parking Area and Dave Smith Bridge site: Ann noted that the four interpretive signs need cleaning; Don and VGV will take care of it.
- Pleasantview Marsh Boardwalk Trail: Marty reported that the boardwalk damage was repaired by ORC, LLC (Phil Oswald). Ann noted that the access path from Trail Run is still eroded; she will plan to meet with property manager to discuss. She also noted that the stipulations required for the development

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have been met, including 9 parking areas set aside for HRLP access there. The areas should be marked with a sign, Ann will discuss also with property manager.

- Other parking areas:

- Don noted that there's a significant hole in the parking area behind Paul's Pizza; VGV will repair, P&R will drop off a load of dirt to fill it. Don noted that HRLP parking sign should be installed there.
- Walgreen sitting corner conservation easement area – Ann will talk to manager about caring for the area; it has become overgrown, blocking view of the river.

C. Current Grant Projects – Status

- SustainableCT grant: Rail on berm to D. Smith Bridge – Ann reported that the four stone posts are in place, but she is still looking for a welder to install the connecting rail; she met with one last week, and is awaiting the quote.
- Trail Census – Don reported that latest census numbers are confusing. To be conservative, we can say we're one of the top 5 most-used trails of the 21 program participating trails.

D. New HRLP Trail Development / New Grant Applications

- a. Dart Hill Loop Trail – No further action.
- b. Pleasantview to Manchester Line Trail Section – Regarding obtaining permission for trail parking at the French Social Circle on Kelly Road, Ann reported she was able to get a contact name from Shaun Gately and will contact the person.
- c. Papermill Pond to Snipsic Lake – No new activity
- d. Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Application: Marty and Amy provided a summary of the application that was submitted to DEEP early November; the total value of the submittal was \$202,000, including the 20% match requirement. It included both Rail Trail improvements and HRLP trail improvements. Award notice is expected late December or early January.

E. River Protection: Action, Public Education - No Action

F. Other HRLP items: none

3. New Business

A. Future of VGV and Friends HRLP, Inc: Don and Ann discussed the possibility of merging the two organizations, with the VGV becomes a 501c3 IRS organization, and taking on the leadership structure of a regular non-profit with a Board of Directors, etc. Both organizations face serious problems with future leadership.

B. Meeting Dates for 2022 – The Committee agreed to the same schedule, the 4th Friday for the months of January, March, May, July, September and November.

4. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 10:35 am, motion by George, second by Don, approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Letendre, Chairman



Vernon Greenways Volunteers Report September 24, 2021 to November 19, 2021

Sustainable Ct Grant

All funds from Sustainable Ct have been received. The only remaining piece is providing a railing on the steep incline from ground level to the bridge at the Dave Smith Suspended Bridge.

Work Parties in 2021

We had four work parties for 54 volunteer hours since our last meeting on September 24th until our season ending October 21 End of Year Outing at Camp Newhoca. Trail Maintenance Team 2 sessions and 2 sessions to repair the immediate area around the memorial bench at the suspended bridge.

Season Ending Outing at Camp Newhoca

We were able to have our season ending outing at Camp Newhoca for the first time in a couple of years because of covid. It was attended by 27 and short speeches were given by the mayor, Parks and Rec Director and me. Parks and Rec provided a Italian catered meal as a thank you to us for all the volunteer work we do.

Memorial Bench at the Dave Smith Suspended Bridge

The original immediate area around the memorial bench at the suspended bridge was redone. The immediate outline structure was removed and the large stones within that structure were removed. A new immediate area was constructed and anchored and small chips replaced the large stones.

Multiuse Trail Damage

Parks and Rec has put in for a grant to do a number of repairs within their area of responsibility including paving sections of the trail. This is a big need as the weather this year has done a job on the quality of our multi-use trail system. We should know soon if they get it or not.

Future of VGV and Friends of HRLP Committee

Ann and I are looking into moving the 501(c) 3 and reporting responsibilities from the Friends of the HRLP, Inc to the Vernon Greenways Volunteers since the current leadership of the Friends has dwindled. The Friends organization would be discontinued. I am currently putting together a list of my duties and identifying members that might be appropriate for a leadership team or board of directors. It, also, would guarantee the ongoing continuation of the VGVs should I not be available in the future.