



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

Minutes, Special Meeting – January 7, 2022

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

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Acting Chairman Letendre

**1. Discussion – HRLP Master Plan, Trail Section One, Dart Hill Trail Loop –
and Site Plan for the Village at Naek Rd, PZ-2021-19**

The Committee reviewed the site plan to ensure that the planned continuous trail and linear park along the Hockanum River is incorporated into the plan, and that the plan meets the broader goals of river park planning: (1) preservation/conservation of riparian areas, (2) protection of river water quality, (3) public accessibility.

The Committee found that these features on the site plan met the above goals:

- A trail/conservation easement approximately 100 feet in width from the edge of the river, extending approximately 1700 feet along the length of the river, about 4 acres. (*Preservation of riparian area*)
- A stonedust walking trail approximately 1700 feet long along the entire section of the river on the site, including two boardwalk spans (approx 50 ft each) across wet meadow areas; a parking area for 8 vehicles at the end of Naek Road, and a short connector trail to the river trail. (*Public accessibility*)
- Water quality protections, including (1) no activity in wetlands, and (2) on-site treatment of stormwater runoff from new construction only, through use of rain gardens, ground infiltration and constructed drainage basins. (*Water quality*)

The Committee had two concerns with the application:

1. Stonedust trail surface: The Committee discussed the stonedust surface, noting that best practices for trail construction in river wetlands/riparian/floodplain areas discourage use of loose material. Don and Marty cited the extensive stonedust trail washouts during recent major storms. Ann noted that best practices for high use trails in riparian areas is to construct a surface raised off the ground (puncheon), or at-grade boardwalk; Marty cited the exposed root problems on the nearby bare-ground Pleasantview trail areas that

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have become eroded. Committee concurred that an at-grade type boardwalk would be the best trail surface for the riparian area trail here.

2. Determination of responsibility for trail amenities: Ann noted that trail amenities "viewing areas and benches" are cited in the permit application, but they are not shown on the site plans. There was no comment on which party would provide the amenities, only that it should be negotiated prior to any permit approvals so that HRLPC/Town can plan future trail budget needs.

Ann offered to summarize above HRLPC input to PZC, and send to Committee for approval; Committee agreed; Ann also noted that three documents/reports are not yet available (Terms & conditions of the conservation easement, Town Engineer's Report, and North Central Conservation District Report), and that the Committee may have additional comment after reviewing the three documents, as well as on the recommended stipulations by Town Planner.

2. Other Related HRLP business

Marty reported that the P&R crew had use of the multi-town excavator for 3 weeks and was able to clear the drainage ditches along the Rail Trail from Bolton line to Church St, and from West St to RHS. He noted he received a lot of positive feedback that the trails are now much drier and safer with better drainage.

Motion to adjourn was made at 10:20 am by George, second by Don, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Letendre, Acting Chairman

