



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2023
Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson (by phone), Cynthia van Zelm, Pam McCormick, Judi Manfre, Valerie Amsel, Larrissa Burke, and Donna Allen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deanna Wambolt-Gulick

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Dinnie

I. Call to Order

Ms. van Zelm chaired the meeting as Ms. Anderson could not attend in person. Ms. van Zelm called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

II. New Committee Member

The Committee welcomed new member Donna Allen and those present introduced themselves.

III. Citizens' Forum

There was no members of the public in attendance.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. November 2, 2022

Ms. van Zelm noted two corrections to the minutes – Under Citizens' Forum, the reference in paragraph two needs to be to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and not the Board of Finance; under the Ellington Highlands update, Mr. Radziwon should be recognized as the Ellington Department of Public Works Director.

MOVED (BURKE), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2022 REGULAR MEETING AS AMENDED.

V. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Association Report

Tom Palshaw was not present at the meeting so there was no report given.

B. New Maps Update

Ms. van Zelm said that Ms. Anderson will give the new trails maps to everyone at the next meeting. She said they will be placed in the Library, Senior Center, Parks and Rec Department, and Planning Department, and have already gone in several welcome bags (see below).

Ms. van Zelm noted that the Trails Committee will provide \$725 to the Town's Planning Department to assist with the cost of developing the maps.

Ms. Anderson will also email the maps to the Trails Committee's email distribution list.

Ms. Anderson will also go to Ellington Printery to add QR codes for a link to the map that will be put at the kiosks at trail heads.

C. Crystal Ridge Update

Ms. Anderson, Ms. Amsel, Ms. Amsel's son Jesse, and Mr. Dinnie blazed the Crystal Ridge trail.

D. Metcalf

Ms. Anderson said Public Works will go out to bid in the spring to take down the dead trees at Metcalf. The goal is for the funding to be in place from the State by the spring.

E. Conservation Commission Report

Ms. Amsel said that there were no updates.

F. Ellington Highlands Update

The Committee discussed the best colors to use to blaze the Ellington Highlands Trail. There are four distinct trails within the trail system. The Committee agreed to use at least white and blue, and Mr. Dinnie suggested checking with the palette of colors for trails provided by the CT Forest and Park Association.

G. Dates for 2023 Meetings

The dates for the 2023 Committee meetings were sent out by Julia Connor, but Linda will also provide hard copies at the next meeting.

H. Mini Golf Hole at Hall Memorial Library – February 4, 2023

The Committee discussed the Trails Committee's sponsorship of a mini golf hole at the Library event. Ms. Manfre has taken the lead and said that she has rocks that can be used as barriers on the hole. Ms. Amsel can provide a potted tree.

The event runs from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm on the 4th.

Ms. Allen will assist Ms. Manfre with set up on February 3rd. Ms. van Zelm will assist with clean up on the 4th. Ms. Manfre will look into whether the event needs to be staffed.

Ms. Anderson will get trail maps and leftover lollipops from Trail of Treats as giveaways; there may be others.

I. Welcome Bags

Ms. Anderson said 22 welcome bags for new Ellington residents were stuffed with trail maps.

J. Pruning Fruit Trees at Batz

Johnny Appleseeds will prune the fruit trees at the Batz Property in the spring.

If Public Works can plow the area, Public Works Director Ken Radziwon will let Ms. Anderson know so she can promote that there is access to hiking and other activities at Batz.

VI. New Business

Ms. Anderson mentioned that there is a significant amount of grant money available for trails from CT DEEP. Grants are due March 1. Ms. Anderson spoke to Planning Director Lisa Houlihan about the possibility of a grant for future land purchase for trail development.

Mr. Dinnie said that the funding can be used for clearing trails as well. He recommended that Ms. Anderson reach out to the contact at CT DEEP to ascertain what their priorities are for grants. Ms. Anderson said she will see if Ms. Houlihan can follow-up with CT DEEP.

Ms. Anderson said there has been discussion in the past about a plan to do a suspension bridge off of the West Road trail from Ellington to Vernon over the river. Ms. Anderson will reach out to former Committee member and surveyor Rachel Dearborn as well as Ms. Houlihan about this idea.

VII. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer

Ms. Anderson and Ms. van Zelm will work with the Finance Department on next year's budget once they receive a template from the Finance Dept. There is approximately \$5,100 remaining in the current budget to date.

B. Planning & Development

Ms. Anderson will order ten more mowing signs for Batz. She noted that colleague Jane Seymour has set up a mowing schedule for Batz which Ms. Anderson will give to Mr. Radziwon. Ms. Anderson said that she will also prepare "Beware of Bees" signs to be put on the benches at the amphitheater.

C. Maintenance

Ms. Anderson asked Committee members to walk the trails to check for downed trees. Ms. McCormick walked Batz, and it is okay. Mr. Dinnie said that Ellington Heights should be okay. Ms. Amsel will walk Kimball. Ms. Anderson will walk Crystal Ridge. Ms. Allen will walk Windermere.

D. Community Outreach

1. Post-Thanksgiving Walk

The post-Thanksgiving Walk at Snipsic Lake went well and Ms. Anderson hopes that holding a hike after Thanksgiving will become an annual event.

2. New Year's Walk

There was no New Years Walk held this year.

3. Ginny Apple Talk

Ms. Apple will give the following talks this year at 6:30 pm at the Library – coyotes on January 31, deer on February 28, and moose on March 28.

4. Educational Programs for 2023

On behalf of Ms. Anderson's great work on a program schedule, Ms. van Zelm reviewed the following proposed educational programs:

February 4 – Mini-Golf at Library

April 22 – Town Earth Day event on Town Green (table to be set up)

April 29 – Possible bird walk - Linda will reach out to Denise Anamani who has led the Committee's past bird walks.

May 6 – Possible children's bird walk

June 3 or 4 – CT Trails Day hike - Ms. Anderson and Ms. van Zelm said they would not be able to lead the walk so looking for volunteers. The Ellington Highlands trail might be a good option.

End of June or September 3 – Three-mile hike with the 3 Foragers group. Ms. Anderson will see if the Library would want to co-sponsor this hike.

July – Program with the raptors group at the Batz Amphitheater. Forest Park in East Longmeadow also brings animals on the road, so this is a possibility for a program as well. There is also a porcupine rescue group that does programs. Ms. Anderson will look into these options.

August – Ellington Farmers' Market (table to be set up)

August 12 or 13 – Meteor showers event with Astronomy Society of CT that the Committee has worked with in the past. The best viewing time will be around midnight. Ms. Anderson has reached out to the club for best dates. The Library suggested a spring event but it may be too cold.

October – Ellington Historical Society (table to be set up)

October – Trail of Treats

November – Post Thanksgiving Hike

January – New Year's Hike

Ms. Anderson or Ms. van Zelm will type up the programs for the Committee, which will be iterative as plans coalesce and change.

As an additional New Business item, Ms. Amsel provided a list of locations for various Committee trails' materials. She also suggested that a list of spring trails maintenance jobs be added to the February agenda.

VIII. Adjournment

MOVED (AMSEL), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:38 PM.

Prepared by Cynthia van Zelm, Vice Chair; submitted by Julia Connor

Julia Connor