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STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

## Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187  
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

VALERIE AMSEL  
JUDI MANFRE  
DONNA ALLEN  
LINDSAY NEUBECKER  
BILL SCHULTZ  
TOM PALSHAW  
DAN CHAMBERLIN  
ROBERT BARONE  
ANN HARFORD  
MICHAEL EMONS  
STEVEN AUSTIN  
STUART LANZ

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2025  
Town Hall Annex

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Linda Anderson, Tom Palshaw, Cynthia van Zelm, Donna Allen, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Steve Austin, Michael Emons, Valerie Amsel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Judi Manfre, Dan Chamberlin, Lindsay Neubecker, Stuart Lanz, Robert Barone, Bill Schultz, Ann Harford

### I. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

### II. Citizens' Forum

No citizens wished to speak at this time.

### III. Approval of Minutes

#### A. December 4, 2024

MOVED (ALLEN), SECONDED (EMONS) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2024 MEETING.

### IV. Old Business

#### A. Hockanum River Crew

Mr. Palshaw shared that not much recent work has been done; they are waiting for spring.

##### 1. Sidewalk

Mr. Palshaw shared an update concerning a sidewalk project being put in along Pinney Street; Ms. Anderson added that there will not be a crosswalk installed.

##### 2. Development on Parking Lot Expansion near Hockanum River

There is potential to expand parking for this trail. However, it is a lengthy process, as Ms. Anderson is concerned that it might interfere with wetlands that exist around the trail.

Ms. Amsel stated that it might be better to just utilize the parking that already exists at the Pinney Street Fields. Ms. Wambolt-Gulick asked if that was a viable option, and Mr. Palshaw explained that the parking area there is quite far from the entrance to the trail.

#### B. Conservation Commission Report

Ms. Amsel shared that nothing of particular significance to the Committee was discussed.

##### 1. State Blue Trail near Kimball (See Handout)

Ms. Anderson shared an update on the Blue Trail, as it is impacted by changes to the intersection of Hopkins Road and Route 140. The State does not believe that a crosswalk is warranted where initially proposed, due to potential dangers being located along a curve and low usage activity of the trail. Instead, the proposal

includes moving the exit of the State Blue Trail onto Route 140 closer to the intersection of Hopkins Road with a crosswalk which will alleviate some concerns.

**C. Kiosks – Maps/Still need to add *No Motorized Vehicles* and *No Hunting* Signs to Crystal Ridge and Ellington Highlands; Updated Maps Printed/Laminated, need to be added to kiosks**

Ms. Anderson showed the new, laminated trail maps for Crystal Ridge, Windermere, Kimball and Batz. She also showed laminated blaze guides to put in all the kiosks as soon as the weather permits.

**D. Emergency Signs**

Mr. Palshaw introduced Selectman Turner to discuss emergency signage. He reviewed the necessity for having these maps and markers, including the process by which emergency services may need to access this information. He gave an overview of how emergency calls are directed and dispatched to help the Committee better understand how emergency services may utilize the emergency signage information.

He explained that emergency dispatch has the capability to approximate locations of callers, based on the caller's cell phone. As Ms. Anderson explains, however, it is not consistently dependable. Selectman Turner acknowledged this and shared that the emergency signage information can be shared with Troop C to aid in helping during emergencies. They are planning to share this information with Sgt. Santa. However, he emphasized that from there, it is up to emergency services to determine how to incorporate the information to aid in their procedures. He recommended that this information be sent to TN to help with dispatch work.

Ms. Anderson inquired if other towns are working on similar projects. Selectman Turner shared that different neighboring towns are working on similar projects. Mr. Palshaw also shared that he has given this emergency signage information to the State, at their request. Selectman Turner recognized the work that the Committee has done with this project and discussed the work to be done with future trail emergency signage. This is a project that is ongoing, and he reiterated his support of this work to help individuals who might experience an emergency on a trail.

Mr. Palshaw added that there is a distribution list being kept so that the Committee can know who has been given access to this information. Mr. Palshaw discussed that a potential future goal for this project might include collaborating with neighboring towns, especially those that have trails that interface with our trails.

Ms. van Zelm and the Committee expressed their thanks to Selectman Turner for helping advance and advocate for the Committee's work with emergency signage. Selectmen Turner reiterated the benefits of the emergency signage system that is being created and implemented.

**E. Maps – Ellington Highlands not until spring**

There was no discussion at this time.

**F. Easements for West Road/Franklin**

Mr. Palshaw shared that he and Ms. Anderson met with John concerning the easement. They are hoping to have "no hunting" added into the easement. Ms. Anderson is also hoping that if the Islamic Center agrees to the easement that it will include use of their parking lot. Mr. Palshaw emphasized that if the easement isn't agreed to by the Islamic Center, it will end plans for the trail.

Mr. Palshaw explained the benefit of the easement is that it limits the liability of the property owners, because if the easement is signed it transfers the responsibility of trail maintenance, and therefore the liability of the trails, away from the property owner.

Ms. Anderson is now waiting on updates from the Town Administrator and Town Attorney on this project.

**G. Eagle Scout Projects – No New Projects; Batz Bee Hotel in the spring**

There was nothing new to share at this time, as the project is on hold until spring.

**H. Gates – Update**

Ms. Anderson shared that the first gate was put in at Ellington Highlands. Another gate was put in at Crystal Ridge, where the initial trailhead was proposed. There are plans to put in an additional gate and plans to grade Forest Road to help facilitate it's installation.

**I. Community Service Hours for High School Students – No Update**

There was nothing new to report at this time.

**J. Facebook**

Ms. Anderson shared that Mr. Austin will be taking over the Committee's Facebook page. Ms. Anderson will assist in helping him gain access to the information so that he can help promote the Committee's events and share any news. Mr. Austin emphasized that engagement and content is key to a successful social media presence. Ms. Anderson agreed and discussed different things that she would like to see posted.

**V. New Business****A. Boy Scout Cleanup Day at Crystal Ridge – April 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am**

This date will not work for this event. Ms. Anderson has suggested May 17<sup>th</sup> as an alternative date and will hear back once the Boy Scouts have had a discussion.

- **With Green Earth Club?**

She will then ask the Green Earth Club for their involvement as well.

- **Handrails/Blowing Leaves/Cutting Back Shrubs/More Drainage Stones and Pavers at Quartz Bridge/Small Trail Off Forest Road**

Improvements for this day include work on handrails, blowing leaves, cutting back shrubs, adding more drainage stones and pavers at Quartz Bridge, and a small trail off Forest Road.

**B. Cub Scout Cleanup at Batz – April 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am**

Ms. Anderson expects the scope of the project to include some work with raking leaves and similar tasks.

**C. T-Mobile Hometown Grant**

Ms. Anderson shared that the Committee was sent information concerning this grant which is meant to help fund community-centered projects up to \$50,000. She is not sure that there are any specific projects that the Committee is looking into at this time. She mentioned dining spaces at Batz which had been previously considered, but the Committee agreed that it isn't something desired at this time.

Ms. Allen suggested improvements to the amphitheater at Batz to create better accessibility and potentially encourage more use, as well as the possible addition of solar or electricity options at the site, though it would be important to limit noise so as to not impact neighbors.

Ms. Anderson encouraged the Committee to let her know of any ideas for this grant.

**VI. Subcommittee Reports****A. Treasurer****1. Budget Submission for FY 2025-2026**

The printing budget was cut from \$600 to \$500. Ms. Allen asked for clarification on if this includes the map printing costs; Ms. Anderson said that it does, but that the map printing only costs \$54. She shared that there is still \$490 left in the budget, adding that there are still printing projects left to complete this year. While the printing budget will be used this year, dropping the budget for next year should not be an issue.

Education has dropped from \$700 to \$500. Ms. Anderson reviewed the educational programs that the Committee runs and many are free, many others are shared with Hall Memorial Library, and all are affordable within the decreased budget.

Contracted Services has been reduced from \$900 to \$700. This item is largely used for the MapGeo app for mapping trails. Ms. Anderson does not anticipate that the entire budget will be needed, as the Committee only has one more map to go.

Technical Equipment has been maintained at 3,000, given the upcoming projects planned for trails.

Food has been increased to \$200 to allow for more options during Trail of Treats.

Overall, the budget has decreased from \$5,350 to \$,900. \$2,933.18 remains in the budget for this fiscal year.

### **B. Maintenance**

Ms. Amsel shared a railing plan for the Committee's consideration. The cost of the project depends on the height of the bridge. Ms. Amsel has the information for the bridges at Kimball, noting that both bridges should be low enough to only require one railing and one curb.

### **C. Community Outreach**

#### **1. Mini Golf at Hall Memorial Library – February 8, 2025, 10 am-5 pm; Set-up February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2-5pm**

Ms. Anderson reviewed the needs for set-up and staffing the event. Ms. Amsel will be there from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Ms. Anderson will be there starting around 12:30 pm; Ms. Allen will be there around 1:00 pm. Ms. Anderson will have 100 maps with information about blazing to hand out.

#### **2. Earth Day – April 26, 2025, Town Green**

There was no update.

#### **3. 3 Foragers, Spring 2025 with Hall Memorial Library**

Ms. Anderson anticipates working on this after the Mini Golf event is concluded.

#### **4. Bird Walk at Batz – May 3, 2025, 7:30 am (rain date May 4<sup>th</sup>)**

There was no update.

#### **5. Geologist – Ray Schaeffer**

There was no update.

#### **6. Chess Tournament for Fall 2025**

There was no update.

#### **7. CT Trails Day – Ellington Highlands, June 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>**

There was no update.

#### **8. CT Astronomy Night – July/August**

There was no update.

#### **9. Ideas on Using Amphitheater at Batz**

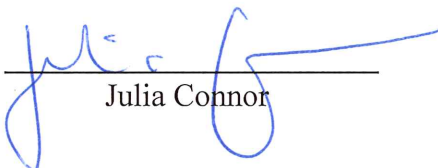
- Ellington Public Schools
- Halloween

Ms. Anderson discussed a potential idea for putting on a Halloween-centered program, potentially with acting and readings.

### **VII. Adjournment**

MOVED (VAN ZELM), SECONDED (AUSTIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:55 PM.

Submitted by

  
Julia Connor