



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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ANN HARFORD
MICHAEL EMONS
STEVEN AUSTIN
STUART LANZ

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2025
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Tom Palshaw, Cynthia van Zelm, Donna Allen, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Valerie Amsel, Bill Schultz, Robert Barone, Lindsay Neubecker, Stuart Lanz, Ann Harford

MEMBERS ABSENT: Judi Manfre, Michael Emons, Steven Austin, Dan Chamberlin

I. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

II. Citizens' Forum

Timothy Kennedy was present at the meeting to hear what the Committee is working on.

Mr. Palshaw passed out information on a recreational trails grant from CT DEEP. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Amsel have attended meetings previously and will look into the grant.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. March 5, 2025

MOVED (ALLEN), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2025 MEETING.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew

Mr. Barone shared that sagging boards have been addressed. Pavers had been moved, and they have been reset. Some decking and walkways have rot that is approaching levels of concern. Ms. Anderson shared a reminder that two major projects are on the Committee's radar for the upcoming year.

Ms. Anderson stated that Windermere Trail will be the priority moving forward, especially replacing the rotting wood with Trex. Ms. Harford stated that they would prefer to replace the rotting wood with more wood, citing concerns with how it would be able to be replaced on top of the existing structure. Ms. Amsel clarified that if it was replaced with Trex, the whole structure would likely need to be replaced so that the joist spacing is consistent and strong.

Ms. Anderson asked if the bridge that was made last year is holding up. Ms. Harford said that it is, but there are a couple more, smaller walkways that will need to be built.

1. Gate at Parking Lot

Ms. Anderson spoke with Taylor at Public Works, and they want to put a gate where there are currently some cement blocks and a chain. Since there is money in the budget, Ms. Anderson agreed. Ms. Harford asked why they want to make this change; Ms. Anderson thinks it is due to ease of access and to improve the look of the space.

B. Conservation Commission Report

Ms. Amsel shared that they are working on historic preservation plans, asking if farm spaces want to donate land to continue working on creating open space.

Ms. Anderson shared that they are looking into using funding for open space to help secure the easements that are necessary for the development of trails along West Road. Ms. Amsel predicts that it would be \$1,200-\$1,300 per easement, for a total of close to \$4,000, which would be a one-time payment. Ms. Harford asked the reasoning behind the money, and Ms. Anderson clarified that businesses have been paid for easement land use in the past.

C. Kiosks – Maps, *No Hunting, No Motorized Vehicles*

Ms. Anderson shared that she and Ms. Amsel went and updated the maps and added this signage. Mr. Palshaw asked if Windermere was updated; Ms. Anderson clarified that she hoped that Mr. Palshaw could update them, which will be done shortly.

D. Emergency Signs

Mr. Palshaw shared that he is in the process of updating emergency sign maps. He emphasized that these maps have different information compared to the rest of the Committee's trail maps. He clarified that the emergency access off of Stein Road to Highland Trail is steep and only accessible by quad. This is also a concern with the width of the bridge at N1, which is only three feet wide. Mr. Palshaw recommended that this bridge be made larger, up to six feet, by adding on and strengthening it to ensure an emergency quad vehicle can pass across to access the rest of the trail.

Mr. Palshaw shared that this draft is a go; signs need to be purchased and put up, and then Mr. Turner will share the map with T1. It was confirmed that funds are available for this purchase.

E. Map – Ellington Highlands

Ms. Anderson requested that the Committee review the map and let her know if there are any issues with it. She needs to get back to Rebecca at MapGeo to make any updates. Once it has been confirmed, the QR code will be made and the maps can be put into the kiosk. Ms. Amsel was concerned that the Orange Trail didn't look very orange on the map; Ms. Anderson will see if the color on the map can be adjusted.

F. Easements for West Road

This was discussed under the Conservation Commission report.

G. Eagle Scout Projects – Bee Hotel

Ms. Anderson shared that this project at Batz has already begun and showed the Committee a copy of the sign, which is very informative. Ms. van Zelm had some editing concerns that she will share with Ms. Anderson after the meeting.

H. Gates Update

Ms. Anderson shared that both gates at the Crystal Ridge Trail have been put in. Ms. Amsel and Ms. Anderson went to look at the lower gate; bikes are still getting through there, so Public Works will go and put some large rocks in to deter bike entry. Ms. Harford asked if that can be a solution at Windermere Trail, but Ms. Anderson explained that the gate at Windermere should help address the issue.

I. Community Service Hours for High School Students Committee

There was nothing new to report at this time.

J. Facebook

Ms. Anderson will check in to confirm that all the information for the Committee's Facebook account has been transferred over.

K. Cleanup Day at Kimball – April 5th, 9am, No Rain Date

Ms. Anderson shared that there is predicted rain all day and therefore, this event has been cancelled.

At Ellington Highlands, all picnic tables have been stacked on top of each other. Public Works will put them back, and Mr. Barone suggested the tables be chained down to prevent further movement of them.

All the trails have been cleaned by neighbor David Bidwell; a big thank you for all of his hard work!

L. T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program

Ms. Amsel and Ms. Allen went to Barnyard and got an estimate for putting a shelter over the Batz Amphitheater. They also went to an electrician to get an estimate for portable batteries that can be charged and hooked up to add lighting and power to the shelter. The complete estimate came to \$35,000. The grant, if awarded, would be able to cover the cost as it is up to \$50,000. There is not a lot of power, just enough for some lights and some microphones. The power would not be enough to create significant noise pollution. The plan will be presented at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Ms. Allen shared that she reached out to the Ellington Community Theater and they would be very interested in using the space, provided that it has power. Hall Memorial Library would be interested as well, and the Boy and Girl Scouts would benefit from the space being updated.

Ms. Anderson shared that because it would be a town grant, other town groups that might need to use the power stations/batteries would be able to.

M. Painting of Storage Bin

Mr. Schultz shared that the Monday after Earth Day, at 2:30 pm, they will begin to power wash the storage bin. Opportunities to design the paintings have been given to students in the art club at the high school. There are specific design criteria that have been communicated. Ms. Anderson added that the building will also need to be bleached. She will check with Public Works to see if there are any oil-based paints that can be used; spray paint can also be an option, if necessary. The four sides of the bin will be painted, not the roof.

V. New Business**A. List of Projects for This Year and Future**

Ms. Anderson shared the project list with the Committee. She anticipates that more projects will be added at Windermere and Ms. Amsel confirmed that adding a railing to the bridge at Highland should be added. Ms. Anderson verified that the railing is already on the planned list of projects.

B. Thank You from Hall Memorial Library

Ms. Anderson read a thank you note from the Friends of Hall Memorial Library, thanking the Committee for their involvement in the Mini Golf event.

VI. Subcommittee Reports**A. Treasurer**

\$2,933.18 is currently remaining in the budget for this fiscal year.

B. Maintenance

Ms. Amsel shared that she has applied Preen at Metcalf and has ordered wood that would cover at least two of the planned bridge projects. She added latches for the bluebird houses and put in a new map box at Batz. There is a new fabric mat for the sensory pathway at Batz. Ms. Amsel asked if more foam is needed for the project; Ms. Anderson shared that the foam has deteriorated, but Ms. Amsel confirmed that there is some foam still in the bin that might work for the project.

Ms. Anderson is planning to begin working on cleaning up the trails, and urged the Committee to reach out if interested in helping.

C. Community Outreach

1. **Cleanup Day on April 5th at Kimball with Green Earth Club and any volunteers – Committee members attending?**

This event was cancelled due to the forecasted rain.

2. **Cub Scout Batz Cleanup – April 12th, 9am**

There was no discussion.

3. **Earth Day – April 26, 2025, Town Green, 10am – 2pm**

- **Setup: 8-9am – Ms. Anderson/Ms. van Zelm**
- **Help at Table: 10am-Noon – Ms. Anderson/Ms. van Zelm**
- **Noon-2pm/Breakdown – Ms. Anderson/Ms. Allen**

There was no discussion.

4. **Bird Walk at Batz – May 3rd, 2025, 7:30am**

Ms. van Zelm confirmed the details of the event, specifically that there is no rain date. Mr. Schultz asked if this was open to students, which was confirmed.

5. **Cleanup Day at Crystal Ridge – May 10th, 9am start with Boy Scouts, Green Earth Club and any other volunteers**

Ms. Anderson is hoping that the railing for the bridge that goes over the brook can be installed on this day.

6. **CT Trails Day – Ellington Highlands, June 7th, 2025 at 10am with Ms. van Zelm and Steve Austin**

Ms. van Zelm confirmed the details for the event, reminding members that they do need to sign up if interested in attending. She will make sure the details are communicated to all.

7. **3 Foragers sometime in July**

There was no discussion.

8. **CT Astronomy Night – August 12, 2025 at Pinney Field, 9pm – midnight**

There was no discussion.

9. **Geologist – Ray Schaeffer**

There was no discussion.

10. **Color My World Theme for Hall Memorial Library Summer Reading Program – maybe talk with Jane Seymour if Pollinator Garden looks good**

There was no discussion.

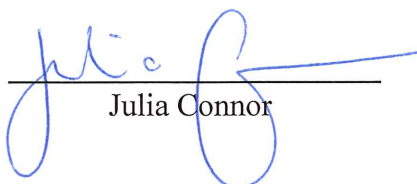
11. **Trail of Treats – End of October, no date yet**

There was no discussion.

VII. Adjournment

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

Submitted by


Julia Connor