

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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STUART LANZ
RYAN BIBEAU

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2026
McKnight Room, Hall Memorial Library

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Cynthia van Zelm, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Donna Allen, Tom Palshaw, Robert Barone, Ann Harford, Ryan Bibeau

MEMBERS ABSENT: Valerie Amsel, Bill Schultz, Dan Chamberlin, Steven Austin, Stuart Lanz, Lindsay Neubecker

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

II. Citizens' Forum

Mr. Palshaw spoke as a citizen regarding private property surrounding Town trails. He mentioned that the current expectation is that the Committee does not do any maintenance on private property, which he agrees with. This will shift maintenance responsibility onto the property owners. He believes that subsequently, the Committee needs to abandon maintenance of the West Road Trail and contact Parks and Rec to remove info related to the trail.

He continued to discuss the use of the Vernon-owned areas of the trail, as outlined by the current agreement, which includes the expectation of Ellington paying \$200 an hour for use of the land. From Ms. Anderson's understanding, the agreement was supposed to include the use of the land by Ellington for the opportunity for a trail in the future, but Mr. Palshaw stated that that is not included in the agreement, adding that he finds the deal to be disappointing.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. April 1, 2026

MOVED (ANDERSON), SECONDED (PALSHAW) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2026 MEETING.

B. May 6, 2026

MOVED (ANDERSON), SECONDED (BARONE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 6, 2026 MEETING.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew Report

Mr. Barone shared that maintenance began on the bridge by the culvert. New boards were layered over the old boards, because the old boards were rusted down with old nails. Knotweed has been pulled. Ms. Harford noted that more screws will need to be ordered to continue with planned maintenance of the trail.

Mr. Palshaw noted that the Committee has received excellent support from Public Works.

Mr. Barone noted that no supplies were purchased to build railings. Ms. Harford noted that the bridge isn't far off of the ground, only maybe two feet, so it should not need railings as current guidance is for bridges that are over 3 feet off of the ground.

Ms. Anderson suggested that some of the lumber purchases for planned maintenance may need to be held off for now, pending budget changes for next year. Mr. Palshaw expressed concern over the budget, and Ms. Anderson agreed that the Committee could struggle.

B. Conservation Report

Ms. Harford shared that there is a push to purchase the land with the radio tower. It is 26 acres in Ellington and 26 in Vernon. The Vernon part is dominated by wetlands, really limiting the ability to develop it. One of the challenges is that the easement/entrance is only 16 feet which limits its ability for commercial use. The plan is for the owners to take down the tower before the parcel is sold. With limited competition for the parcel, it is looking good that the Town might be able to purchase the land. The Conservation Commission is looking into the purchase in earnest; it would give the Committee better access to Franklin and the opportunity to develop some trails.

Ms. Anderson expressed that she is hopeful that the towers would be taken down, as that was a sticking point of concern in previous conversations about purchasing the parcel.

C. T-Mobile Hometown Grant Update

Ms. Allen share that unfortunately, the Committee was not selected for the grant, and as this was the final round, there is no further opportunity to pursue this funding. Some other grant opportunities were shared, and Ms. Anderson agreed that the Committee can continue to monitor these opportunities and keep an ear out for future grants that may become available.

D. Eagle Scout – Divija Adhikary – Crystal Ridge Project

Ms. Anderson received an update on the progress of the project. The Scout is planning to make the bench and more on June 14th and then move on-site to continue the work on June 27th, with a possible workday to finish the project on July 17th.

E. CT Trail Finder

Ms. Anderson sent something out to Steve. Mr. Palshaw shared that he used it and it was very handy. Ms. Anderson noted that they put a really nice article out on social media about the emergency signage, which was really appreciated.

The Town holds a quarterly business meeting, and Ms. Anderson is planning to attend to see if more businesses are interested in getting onto CT Trail Finder. There is also a student interning with the Town who could maybe get involved in helping visit Town businesses and getting them on board.

F. Windermere Easement

Ms. Anderson shared that there was nothing new to report at this time. She tried to reach out a couple of times regarding the easement, but she has not heard back. There will be more follow-up to reach out and let the owners know that they would be covered from liability, per previous research, if an easement was granted to the Committee.

V. New Business

There was no new business.

VI. Subcommittee Reports**A. Treasurer**

The budget is currently down to \$2,546.56. Ms. Anderson noted that there are still supplies to purchase, including the aforementioned nails, some blazes, supplies for Trail of Treats, and wood for maintenance projects and two gates at Crystal. With any remaining funds, she plans to stock up on mulch.

B. Maintenance

1. Batz – continued to weed/mulch bee hotel/Linda's Garden-Orchard; planting around sign; signs are in for bluebird houses and pollinator garden

Ms. Anderson shared that Ms. Amsel did weeding at Batz in the sensory garden and other spaces. She also secured the mat in the sensory garden. Ms. Anderson noted that she and Ms. Allen also mulched the bee garden and Ms. Anderson's garden. Ms. Allen bought some rose bushes for the space by the sign and where the lilies used to be. Ms. Anderson noted that these are ones that consistently bloom and should help cut down on weeding and mulching.

Ms. Harford offered some perennials that she has been thinning out from her garden. Ms. Anderson appreciated the offer and mentioned that she was planning to purchase some more plants for the sensory garden but could potentially use the ones from Ms. Harford instead.

Signs came in for the bluebird houses and the pollinator garden, so those should be installed soon. The gates have not yet been purchased, which will likely be roughly \$300. Maintenance will continue.

2. Metcalf Cleanup

Ms. Allen and Ms. Anderson did some cleanup of the path going into Metcalf. They did some looking in on the actual trail and noted that it does look like it's getting used. Maintenance will continue.

C. Community Outreach

1. Bird Walk rescheduled date was cancelled due to rain
2. CT Trails Day, June 6th at 9am, Pinney Field to Dart Hill with Vernon Greenways

Ms. van Zelm shared that the signup is full, meaning 30 people have signed up; she noted that it has been a great partnership with Vernon. She is looking forward to it, describing the multi-tiered hike options and how it should be a great opportunity for many to enjoy the trail. Ms. Anderson expressed her excitement for this opportunity, suggesting that it can potentially become an annual hike if it goes well and is enjoyed. She echoed appreciation for the partnership with Vernon Greenways.

3. Forest Walk, July 21st, 9am at Highland Trail with Julia Sonen (DEEP) with Hall Memorial Library – registration required, 15 attendee limit

Ms. Anderson emphasized the 15 attendee limit.

4. Astronomy Event at Pinney Field, August 12th, 9pm-midnight

Ms. Anderson noted that she will check with Public Works to confirm that the sprinklers will be off. Ms. Palshaw suggested that they check on the parking lot lights as well, which he sees are on late into the evening. Ms. Anderson is also planning to reach out to the Resident Troopers to let them know the event is going on and to expect cars in the parking lot after typical hours.

5. Farmers Market – August 29, 2026 – need volunteers to set up/work event

Multiple members have volunteered to help. The Committee can be there to begin setting up at 8:00 am, and the market runs from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

- 6. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – September 6th at Bald Mountain Preserve in Somers, 10am; 2.5 miles, meet at rear of Somers Town Hall, 600 Main Street, Route 190
- 7. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – October 18th at 1pm with Friends of Valley Falls; hike through Andrew Webster Knapp Property to Rails to Trails, then up ridge overlooking Valley Falls Park; walk can be steep, 1-1.5 hours, then 2:30 pm tour at farm museum; meet at Valley Falls parking lot at 1pm

Ms. Anderson noted that this is a good partnership, and she is hoping to include more updates about their work to help strengthen involvement.

Ms. Allen inquired about how steep the hike is. Ms. Anderson read a description that noted that it was steep, but not too difficult with good shoes.


- 8. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – Skyline Scenic Area at 10am, 2.5 miles, up and downhill; meet at rear of Somers Town Hall, 600 Main Street, Route 190
- 9. Trail of Treats, October – date not announced yet

The Committee is used to the date being announced by now, but Ms. Anderson believes the event is still in planning.

- 10. Annual After-Thanksgiving Walk, Saturday, November 28, Snipsic Lake Road, 10am

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (PALSHAW), SECONDED (ALLEN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:23 PM.

Submitted by 
Julia Merriam