



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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STEVEN AUSTIN
STUART LANZ
RYAN BIBEAU

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2026
McKnight Room, Hall Memorial Library

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Cynthia van Zelm, Donna Allen, Tom Palshaw, Robert Barone, Ann Harford, Stuart Lanz, Ryan Bibeau

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Valerie Amsel, Bill Schultz, Dan Chamberlin, Steve Austin, Lindsay Neubecker

I. Call to Order

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

II. Citizens' Forum

Ms. Anderson introduced Divija Adhikary who developed and implemented her Crystal Ridge Trail project to build a bench and create a new trail. Ms. Adhikary was joined at the meeting by her father Divyendu Adhikary. Ms. Adhikary raised \$1,100.01 for the project and wanted to donate \$293.06, which she did not end up needing for completion of the project. Ms. Anderson thanked Ms. Adhikary and said that Hall Memorial Library will use the funds to pay for a wildlife talk in the near future. Ms. Anderson also noted that the new trail will be named for Ms. Adhikary. The map for Crystal Ridge will be updated with the new trail and Mr. Palshaw will have emergency signs put on the new trail.

Ms. Adhikary said she put in 211 hours of work and her designation as an Eagle Scout is awaiting approval. Ms. Adhikary and Mr. Adhikary left the meeting.

Ted Conklin introduced himself and said he has been working with the Windermere Trail maintenance group (Mr. Palshaw, Ms. Harford, Mr. Barone, and Mr. Chamberlin) and is interested in joining the Committee.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. June 3, 2026

MOVED (PALSHAW), SECONDED (ALLEN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2026 MEETING.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew Report

Mr. Barone said the team had removed knotweed, grape vines, and rose bushes from the Windermere Trail. Poison ivy was sprayed and will be sprayed again in the fall. He said they put a new bench top on the trail

spur with two more to be done. A new top was put on the walkway which will be temporary until a more permanent walkway can be built.

B. Conservation Report

Ms. Harford said there was no update on related Conservation Commission activities.

C. Eagle Scout – Divija Adhikary – Crystal Ridge Project

See above.

D. CT Trail Finder

Ms. Anderson said she attended the Town of Ellington's Economic Development Commission's monthly meeting with Town businesses and handed out information on how they can be listed on CT Trail Finder. She will go back to the CT Trail Finder team to add the new Crystal Ridge Trail once the map is complete.

E. Windermere Easement

Ms. Anderson spoke to the Burns family who owns property on the Windermere Trail about the state statute that would cover liability on their property if something happened on the Trail. The Burns family was amenable to opening/allowing an easement on the portion of the trail on their property.

Ms. Anderson said there was nothing new on the selling of the radio station adjacent to the Windermere Trail.

F. West Road Easement

Ms. Anderson said a letter went to all three property owners whose land is on the West Road Trail regarding the above-mentioned statute provisions on liability. Sullivan Tire responded and seemed amenable to allowing use of the Trail that crosses their property. Ms. Anderson will follow up with the two other property owners. Mr. Palshaw will talk to his contact with the condo association that also owns property along the Trail.

V. New Business

A. Highland Trail – David Bidwell-Coyotes; Moving the Bridge

Ms. Anderson said she does not think the coyotes are still on the Highland Trail. She does need a crew to move the bridge on the Highland Trail approximately three to four feet to leave room for emergency vehicles to navigate the gully. Mr. Bibeau said he and some friends can help do this on Friday.

B. Crystal Ridge Trail – Concerned Citizen/Boundary Signs/Update Map/Emergency Sign

Ms. Anderson will update the Crystal Ridge Trail map and let Mr. Palshaw know so he can put up the emergency signs.

Ms. Anderson mentioned that a neighbor had expressed concerns about people hiking near his property. The trail was not made by the Trails Committee but by the neighbors. Boundary signs will be installed and a gate has been installed by Public Works leading to the retention pond and the neighborhood.

C. Batz - Concerned Citizen/Boundary Signs

Ms. Anderson said a resident had called the Town about putting up no trespassing signs near his property as hikers think it is part of the Batz trail. Ms. Anderson will work with the resident to get some boundary signs placed adjacent to the resident's property. Mr. Bibeau will assist her.

D. Public Works – Battery Cabinet

Ms. Anderson said there is now a cabinet in the basement of the Town's Public Works Department which is storing all the Committee's batteries. She has a key to the cabinet. Ms. Anderson will check with Public Works on whether the batteries can be charged on a timer so not over charging per a comment from Mr. Palshaw.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer – Trail of Treats/New Leaf Blower/Battery Cabinet/Four Gates (3 Crystal, 1 Highland)/Metal Blazes

Ms. Anderson said the Committee did not use approximately \$900 of its budget this year. The recently approved budget included the same amount as last year's budget for the Trails Committee.

Ms. Anderson bought glow rings for Trail of Treats, another leaf blower, and the battery cabinet (this item is out of the FY26-27 budget). Three gates at Crystal Ridge and one gate at Highland were purchased. Orange metal blazes were purchased for Highland. More blazes will be purchased.

B. Metal Cabinet

See above.

C. Maintenance

Batz – Weeding done; pollinator pathway and bluebird signs installed; poison ivy control done on pollinator pathway; Ms. Allen and Ms. Anderson cut/raked blue trail

Highland Trail – Ms. Allen put up new markers on orange trail; Ms. Anderson did poison ivy control

D. Community Outreach

1. CT Trails Day, June 6th at 9am, Pinney Field to Dart Hill with Vernon Greenways

Ms. van Zelm said the CT Trails Day hike went very well. The turnout was close to 30 people. She commended the team with Vernon Greenways Volunteers for their initiative and doing much of the organizing of the hike. Ms. van Zelm noted that the longer hike may have been a bit too long, especially given the heat and the time it took to do the entire hike.

2. Forest Walk – “Appreciating the Little Things,” July 21st, 9am at Highland Trail with Julia Sonen (DEEP)

Ms. Anderson said this walk led by Ms. Sonen was great and she hopes to do the forest walk again in spring 2027.

3. Astronomy Event at Pinney Field, August 12th, 9pm-midnight – Town Depts notified

Ms. Anderson said Public Works will turn off the lights at 9 pm. The meteor showers should be impressive if the weather holds.

4. Farmers Market – August 29th, 9a-noon, set up 8:15a; working Ms. Anderson, Ms. Allen, Ms. van Zelm, Mr. Bibeau

Mr. Lanz said he can help with transporting the canopy.

5. Possible Bike Ride with Vernon Greenways – Late September/Early October

Ms. Anderson said she spoke to Mark Leighton with the Vernon Greenways Volunteers about a bike ride on the rail trail and is waiting to hear back from one of the group's other volunteers.

6. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – October 17th at 1 pm 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

7. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – Skyline Scenic Area at 10 am on October 25, 2.5 miles, up and downhill; meet at rear of Somers Town Hall, 600 Main Street, Route 190

8. Trail of Treats, October 26th at Tedford Park; help setting up, working, breakdown

Mr. Lanz will help with the transport of the canopy. Ms. Anderson will also need someone to break down the canopy as it will not fit in her car.

Ms. Anderson said the route for the Trail of Treats will go both ways to help alleviate foot traffic and move the event along. Ms. Anderson will check to see if there is a rain date.

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

Ms. Anderson said there may be a talk in October. She also said the Library may bring back Ginny Apple (January to March timeframe) to do some of her talks on wildlife again.

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (ALLEN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:45 PM.

Submitted by


Julia Merriam