



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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ANN HARFORD
STEVEN AUSTIN
STUART LANZ
RYAN BIBEAU

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2026
Ellington Town Hall

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Valerie Amsel, Bill Schultz, Dan Chamberlin, Steven Austin, Ryan Bibeau, Lindsay Neubecker

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm.

II. Citizens' Forum: No citizens came forward.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. August 5, 2026

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (BARONE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 5, 2026 MEETING.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew Report – Signage

Mr. Barone shared that they have been busy cutting down weeds and maintaining the trails. There was a metal conduit on the trail that was exposed, posing a tripping hazard. The Committee would like to thank Public Works for doing a beautiful job covering up the culvert and restoring safety to the trail. Cleaning was done behind Sullivan Tire. A very resilient hornet's nest was removed along the trail, requiring consistent attempts, but was ultimately successful. The bridge that is nearby Sullivan Tire has been slippery, so it was washed today to remove some of the slipperiness. Mr. Barone looked into anti-slip solutions, such as adding some strips to improve grip walking across it. Ms. Anderson stated that all improvements to that section of the trail should be paused, pending easements from abutting businesses.

Ms. Anderson shared that during CT Trails Day, a concern was brought to her attention by a hiker that had left early; they had ended up lost while participating in the hike. Ms. Anderson explained that numerous people have mentioned that the Windermere Trail can be confusing. Ms. Anderson suggested making a few changes to support safety on the trail. First, she suggested that any time people are joining a hike on the trail, if leaving early, there needs to be a verification that they know how to get back. Maps should also be handed

out to people joining hikes, and a tutorial on blazes should be done before embarking on the hike. She also suggested that permanent signage be put up with arrows indicating the direction of Pinney Street Parking. Mr. Barone inquired about the possibility of sending an instructional video on blazes to individuals that sign up for trail hikes. Ms. Anderson thought that was a good idea.

B. Conservation Report

Ms. Harford shared that the Conservation Committee met last night, but that there has not been an update on the parcel with the radio tower.

Another upcoming concern is solar projects; there are several upcoming proposed solar projects in the works. One of the projects includes putting solar fields on Frog Hollow Road by the stop sign at all four corners of the stop sign. Another potential site is up on Johnny Appleseed land on School House Road. DEEP is currently accepting input on the projects at DEEP.steps@ct.gov, at which point the Siting Council will make decisions.

Ms. Anderson asked about what the input can lead to, and Ms. Harford explained that the State is currently looking into establishing guidelines around where to put solar fields, whether farmland can be used, and more. She noted that the project on School House Road had the land mislabeled, as it was not listed as farmland. This was corrected with the State, but the project is still moving along. Mr. Palshaw noted that the solar fields are ultimately temporary, and that the stipulations on the usage states that there is testing to be done prior to the establishment of the solar fields and that the land must be returned/restored to initial testing conditions at the end of the solar fields' lifespan.

Ms. Harford also reminded the Committee that the power generated from solar fields is not going directly back into local communities.

C. CT Trail Finder – Info Handed Out

There was a lot of information handed out on CT Trail Finder at the Farmers Market Booth on Community Organizations Day.

D. West Road Easement

Mr. Palshaw shared that there was no response to his letter, which Ms. Anderson noted was a wonderfully-written letter that he sent to the owners/management of the condos near the West Road Trail.

Ms. Anderson said that without an agreement or an easement, the trail will need to be closed. Mr. Palshaw suggested that trail signage, including emergency signage, be removed along any private property portions of the trail, and signs indicating private property be put up instead, but potentially leaving signage that has already been established, including emergency signage, up at and past Sullivan Tire. The map has been removed from the town Parks and Rec website and is no longer publicly published.

E. Highland Trail – Bridge Moved

Ms. Anderson thanked Mr. Lanz, Mr. Barone, Mr. Bibeau, and herself for moving the bridge; now, emergency services can get their ATV across the gully without any issues.

F. Crystal Ridge Trail – Boundary Signs/New Blazes/Emergency Signs/Gates Installed with Locks

Ms. Anderson noted that Mr. Lanz and Ms. Anderson went to put out boundary signs due to a neighbor's concern. They also put up many of the metal orange blazes. There is still a little more blazing left to do to reach the road. Public Works has gotten locks for all of the gates. Emergency signs have not yet been added to the new map, but Ms. Anderson will continue to work on it.

G. Batz – Concerned Citizen/Boundary Signs

Ms. Anderson has not met with him yet but is hoping to walk the area with him in the coming months and put up boundary signs as needed to address his concerns. Public Works is also okay with potentially putting in a gate if needed.

H. Public Works – cabinet all set, batteries can be charged in cabinet with no issues

Ms. Anderson shared that the cabinet in Public Works is all set, the Committee just needs to get the key for it. She also noted that there should not be any issue with the batteries, as they shut off once fully charged.

V. New Business

A. New Members

Ms. Anderson met a potential new member who used to do trail work in Shelton; he expressed interest in joining, so the Committee will see if contacts the First Selectman's Office.

B. New Structures on Town Land

One of the Little Libraries on Batz had a hornet's nest problem, and when Ms. Anderson reached out to Public Works, they explained that they are not responsible for structures that have been put up on town land without going through the proper processes. Mr. Lanz took care of the hornets instead, but this emphasizes that any and all structures need to follow the proper processes when being established to ensure ongoing maintenance from Public Works. Any existing structures that were put in via donation, such as Eagle Scout projects, do not include ongoing maintenance, which Ms. Anderson noted is completely understandable considering labor constraints on Public Works.

Mr. Palshaw asked if the Troops could potentially take on labor tasks, especially on projects that have been done by Eagle Scouts. The Committee stated that this could be a great idea, and Ms. Anderson suggested that the Committee talk to Scout leaders to see if this is something the Scouts have interest in for their volunteer hours or ongoing badge projects.

Ultimately, Ms. Anderson noted that there should be no more structures added, unless it goes through all proper channels.

C. Comments on CT Trails Day: See notes above regarding changing procedures.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer – \$4,593.75

Not much has been spent at this point, which is typical for this point in the year. Ms. Anderson noted that some money can be spent on the signage identifying the Pinney Street parking as discussed above.

B. Maintenance

1. Batz – Blue Trail behind amphitheater cut back brush by Donna Allen and Linda Anderson; Public Works took down diseased tree and put up Nesting Bird signs, and removed downed tree on path behind frog platform; Stu Lanz removed bees from Little Library
2. Crystal Ridge - boundary signs put in near new trail, new metal blazes put up on Orange Trail by Stu Lanz and Linda Anderson

C. Community Outreach

1. Farmers Market, August 29th – handed out 40 maps, info on CT Trail Finder, and possibly met new member; thanks to Stu Lanz, Donna Allen, Ryan Bibeau, Cynthia van Zelm and Linda Anderson for setting up and working the booth
2. Bike Ride with Vernon Greenways

Ms. van Zelm discussed a potential bike ride from Rockville Spur by the bike shop heading to the Rails to Trails in Vernon, up to Bolton Notch. It is a five mile bike ride, or a one mile walk. The potential date would

be October 10. The Committee expressed its support, noting that it is a great opportunity to partner with a group to offer some biking opportunities.

Ms. van Zelm will work with him on logistics and is hoping to share details at the October meeting.

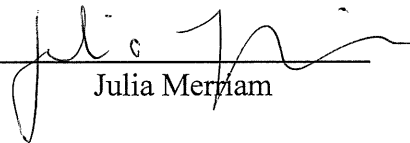
3. Northern CT Land Trust Walk – October 17th at 1 pm with Friends of Valley Falls; hike through Andrew Webster Knapp Property to Rails to Trails, then up ridge overlooking Valley Falls Park; walk can be steep, 1-1.5 hours, then 2:30 pm tour at farm museum; meet at Valley Falls parking lot at 1pm
4. 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
5. Trail of Treats, October 26th at Tedford Park; help setting up, working, breakdown

The Committee discussed some changes that are planned to the flow of pedestrian traffic for the event this year, which should hopefully reduce wait times in line. More details about who from the Committee can help will be discussed at the next meeting.

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

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (PALSHAW) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:41 PM.

Submitted by 
Julia Merriam