

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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

CHERI MURPHY
RECORDING SECRETARY

LAUREN DESROCHER
CHAIRMAN

RACHEL DEARBORN
VICE CHAIRMAN

VALERIE AMSEL
PAM MCCORMICK
ERIN STAVENS
LOIS TIMMS-FERRARA
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM
LINDA ANDERSON
JUDI MANFRE

AD HOC ELLINGTON
TRAILS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2019
Town Hall Meeting Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheri Murphy, Lauren Desrocher, Valerie Amsel, Pam McCormick, Cynthia van Zelm, Judi Manfre, Rachel Dearborn, Linda Anderson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Erin Stavens

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Dinnie, Tom Palshaw

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lauren Desrocher called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. CITIZENS FORUM

Tom Palshaw mentioned that there are five large trees blocking the Hockanum River near Lower Butcher Road that will need to be removed in the spring. He also asked the Committee to look into possibly investing in the dead end that leads to the swamp behind the Pinney Athletic Fields; the bridge located there could be higher.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 7, 2018 MEETING MINUTES.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Brookside Park

1. Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Overview

Valerie Amsel attended a Parks and Recreation Commission a couple of months prior and shared some of the discussion that had taken place. One of the topics of the meeting was the proposed Poulin Project. The family was still interested in pursuing a project at the Middle Road location; however, they had received a lot of pushback from the neighbors. There was a map of Brookside Park presented, with an area designated for the possibility of pursuing the project at that location. The Jacob Roger Poulin Foundation Board of Directors will be discussing all options at this point; if the project does move forward at Brookside, it will not impact the Committee's proposed trail there.

2. Brookside Proposal Update

Rachel Dearborn has worked with Tim Webb, Director of Public Works (DPW), and they came up with a Capital Improvements Request, through DPW, of \$35,000 for the development of the trail over the next year; there would also be the possibility of requesting an additional \$20,000 in the future for the addition of exercise equipment along the trail, as well as trail expansion.

B. Trail of Treats

There will be a more in-depth discussion of whether or not to host the event again in 2019. Linda Anderson will reach out to the Economic Development Commission to see if they would like to get involved with the event if the Committee does decide to continue it. Ms. Anderson hopes that if it is continued, the Committee can use Trail of Treats to raise money for future projects and events. A few talking points were brought up. There was an overwhelming turnout by the community, and it was enjoyed by many. The Pinney Street Fields could be a future location, but parking would have to be figured out as it is limited. Pam McCormick was of the opinion that the event isn't well-suited for the Committee; Ms. Amsel didn't agree, as it promoted the Brookside "Trail" even though it was agreed that it's more of a walking path than a true trail. Ms. Dearborn stated that as it became such a huge event even in its first year, it should be more of a Town-sponsored event. Many sponsors were interested in being involved and would be open to assisting the Committee with other things in the future. Lois Timms-Ferrara asked if this event helped the Committee's relationship with the Town.

1. Thank You Notes

Ms. Anderson, along with a few other Committee members, sent out thank-you notes to each of the sponsors and individuals that assisted with the event.

2. Budget Recap

There was no Trail of Treats-specific budget discussion.

3. Idea Sharing

The sharing of ideas as related to Trail of Treats was tabled to a later meeting, as the Committee has not made a formal decision about whether to continue organizing it.

C. Kimball Forest Grand Opening

The Grand Opening of the Kimball Forest Trail, held on December 1, was a huge success. The Committee has received a lot of positive feedback online regarding the event and the trail.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Inventory Keeping

There was no discussion.

B. Website Discussion

This discussion was included under Item D, Discussion of 2019 Goals.

C. Budget Review

Ms. Timms-Ferrara shared a summary document. She has been in contact with both the Finance Department and the First Selectman's Office. The Committee is "in the red" by \$1,254.34; however, the Committee is being given flexibility with the budget as they are a new committee and the appropriate departments are working to figure out an appropriate annual budget. The budget should be discussed during the February meeting as well, and Ms. Timms-Ferrara will need to submit it to the Finance Office in March. The real costs of the Committee over the rest of the fiscal year need to be determined; a realistic budget goal for this period and future years needs to be set, as recommended by Bruce Dinnie. Ms. Anderson stated that Ellington Printery is a specialty company, and should only be used for specialty projects; basic items can be printed elsewhere to save money. She also stated that the Committee should know the Tax ID number in order to make tax-free purchases instead of paying normal retail prices for items. There should be a proposed budget prepared to discuss and possibly vote on for the next meeting.

D. Discussion of 2019 Goals

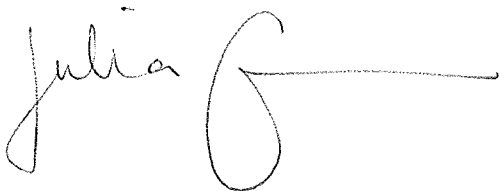
Ms. Anderson went through the minutes of the past year to find items that were shelved and were not accomplished; keeping an updated website was one of these topics. Ms. Dearborn agreed that this should be a point of focus in 2019. Each Committee member agreed to go over equipment or other items that can be used at the trails and share this information in February. A draft list of goals for 2019 was created [ATTACHED]. Ms. Anderson and Cynthia van Zelm will put together a 2019 Events lists for the next meeting.

E. 2019 Trails Day

This event is already in motion and is scheduled nationwide for Saturday, June 1, 2019. The Committee is leaning towards highlighting the Kimball Forest Trail for this event.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:50 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julia", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

2019 Goals – Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

- Get involved with National Trails Day (June 1); the Town's Earth Day Celebration (April); and Community Day at the Farmers Market
- Host events like Trail of Treats (to be decided on at a later date); a Bird Walk (May); a Mushroom Walk (in conjunction with the CT Valley Mycological Society); a Moonlight Hike (January 20 is the last lunar eclipse until 2022, beginning at 11:41pm; Ms. Anderson may reach out to an astrology club that does public events to potentially get a representative to attend, but there may not be enough time to plan this event); a Wildflower Walk (National Wildflower Week is in May, but the Committee may do this in June at the Windermere Trail); and Clean-Up Events (dates and locations will be determined as spring approaches, but Metcalf will need a major leaf clean-up, and perhaps residents or scout groups would be willing to volunteer. More time should also be spent on the Batz property; the Committee will look into having more of a presence there)
- Assign trail managers by the spring – Ms. McCormick stated that they shouldn't have a problem finding individuals who would like to manage a trail; tasks would include walking the trail regularly and posting their contact information in the kiosk in case of complaints and concerns
- Improve kayak accessibility – Ms. Amsel mentioned that the rivers at some of the trails may not be passable by kayak unless tree blockages are removed; she stated that you can get kayaks into the river near the Pinney Fields but isn't sure how far down you can travel. Mr. Dinnie was unsure if you can get past the treatment plant area in Vernon, but shared that kayaks used to be able to travel all the way past Dart Hill
- Improve the Trails portion of the Town website – The maps link is up-to-date on the Trails Committee page; however, trails information is not listed on the Parks and Recreation website. Ms. Anderson would like to see a trails tab added, similar to what Tolland has on their site; she will touch base with the First Selectman's office about getting this done. Erin Stavens will continue updating the Trails Page on Facebook
- Ms. Dearborn can hold a session to train the Committee members on how to use the GPS system
- The Committee needs to determine whether or not they would like to finish/expand the trail at Kimball Forest; if they do, a new bridge will need to be funded and built. Bolles Motors, potentially along with Kelly Fradet, may be willing to assist with this; the bridge would need to be approximately 25 feet and may require a permit from the Town
- Look into installing a memorial bench at Batz Property for Bob Tedford. The Committee will need to propose this plan to Joanne Tedford and be in contact with her for any desired feedback; this will be something the Committee waits a bit to move forward with
- The Land Trusts provided Ms. Amsel with their GPS coordinates; this information should be disseminated to Town emergency service departments
- The conservation easement at the end of Bronisz Drive needs to be mowed so it isn't overtaken by tall grass and roots; it could be a good location for a wildflower or pumpkin field