

Connecticut Greenways Council January 9, 2017 Record of Minutes



CGC Members present:

Bruce Donald - Greenways Council Chair, East Coast Greenway Alliance, Regional Coordinator
Lois Bruinooge - Greenway Council Member Last Green Valley, Executive Director
Anna Bergeron - CT Department of Transportation, Multi-Modal Planning
Bob Dickenson - Greenway Council Member, South Windsor advocate
Rista Malanca - Greenway Council Member, City of Torrington, Naugatuck Valley Greenway
Joe Hickey - Greenway Council Member
Jamie Littner – Greenway Council Member, Eversource Energy
Bill O’Neill – Greenway Council Member
Andrea Drabicki - Greenways Council, Acting Secretary
Laurie Giannotti - Greenways Council Co-Chair, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection,

On the Phone:

Michelle Eckman - Greenways Council Member, Audubon Society, Director of Education

Absent:

Stacey Sterns – Greenway Council Member, CT Horse Council

Members of the Public present:

Steve Mitchell - Greenway Council Member, East Coast Greenway CT Chapter, Co-Chair
James Kulpa - VHB, DOT Liaison Local Roads Unit
Tim Malone - Capitol Region Council of Governments, Principal Planner, Bike/Ped Planning
Aaron Budris - Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, Director
Eric Sanderson - Northeastern Council of Governments, Planner
Ken Shooshan-Stoller – FHWA Division Office
Judy Miller - Shoreline Greenway Trail
Kevin Tedesco – Bike/Ped Advocate
Kevin Sullivan - Wethersfield Advocate Bike/Walk

Members of the Public on the phone:

Laura Brown - UConn Extension Community Economic Development, CT Census Project
Eric Hammerling - CT Forest Park Association, Director
Gene Nichols - Department of Public Health

Call to Order 9:34am

Acceptance of Revisions to Agenda

Bruce Donald addressed the Council and members of the public if there is anyone who would like to speak that isn't on the agenda. No one chose to speak.

Adoption of Minutes

Bruce Donald asks for an adoption of the minutes from November 14, 2016.

Joe Hickey motions. Rista Malanca seconds the motion. Unanimous approval of adoption with no abstentions.

Chairman's Report

- Bruce Donald proceeds to give an update regarding the Recreational Trails Grant applications:
- Just under \$10 million was requested by communities and interested parties across the state for the Recreational Trails Grant
- 50 project applications were submitted
- There is an obvious need for Recreational Trails Grant Program
- For the FY 2017 only \$400 is available from the State turning back funds
- Bruce encourages the Greenways Council Board to write letters to encourage Legislators and the Governor to get the Recreational Trails Funding (\$5 million) fully reinstated as well to get funding back on the bonding commission.
- Bonding commission is on a calendar year / not a fiscal year
- \$5 million a year in lieu of Federal Funds (Federal is for construction small percentage can use small amount for planning/design)

Eric Hammerling:

- Add element of timeliness - narrow window where Governor can consider Bonding - Bond Funds get tighter
- Requests need to go in within the next month to Governor's office
- Confusion at Governor's office regarding funding mechanisms apply for funding Trails
- w/o the \$5 million Recreational Trails Grant reinstated there will be gaps in lieu of federal money

Bruce Donald:

- None of the applicants submitted can be covered by the DOT Transportation Alternatives program

Steve Mitchell:

- Asks the Council if they are aware of where the money from Volkswagen Settlement is going?
- How is the money getting routed back to CT?
- Laurie Giannotti responds that she believes that the money is routed back to each relevant environment agency
- Subaru is donating a lot of money to trails - explore this piece of information.

HB 5403 (Public Act 15-64)

- Where is, the money going?
- How much money is being routed to the municipalities?
- Is it worth the GC to support the cause to investigate this?

Public/Private Partnerships

Bruce shares with the Council that the William Penn Foundation in New Jersey building bike trails working with the Regional Economic Development Coordinators

Laurie Giannotti:

- The CT Recreational Trails Program was unfunded when budget got cut meaning in essence that there is NO more RT Program.
- The Governor would need to have the CT Recreational Trails Program in the budget by February 8th and the Legislature needs to approve the vote.
- Laurie asks if there is roll for the COGs/RPOs to play here perhaps they can encourage municipalities to Federal dollars or to reach out to the General Assembly

Bruce Donald states:

- What they [CGC] can prove is demand for need
- CT DOT handles larger capital improvement projects well
- CT DEEP handles smaller capital improvement projects well

Anna Burgerion - CT DOT

- Community Connectivity Program - got approved (waiting to hear if Phase 2 will remain funded)
- \$400K max project amount / towns will have to kick in an unknown amount

Correspondence

Laurie - Grants are submitted and will be under review January 17, 2017

Anna Burgerion - CTDOT & Bike/Ped Advisory Comm.

- No State-Wide Bike/Ped Plan yet - still being finalized by FHI
- There is a need for more money - negotiations on going with FHI for an interactive/digital map With a request for something like the RI DOT bike/ped map
- Working on Community Connectivity Grant process - worked on - two months there should be additional
 - Money not just for "shovel ready projects" but also applies for design and planning projects
- Community Connectivity Program - Road Safety Audits
 - 70 RSA's were done in 2016 and the remaining 10 will be getting done this spring, for a total of 80
 - Currently the state of Connecticut is without a Bike/Ped Coordinator and is the only state in the Nation without one

Kevin Tedesco asks:

- Who is doing map for League of American Cyclists?
- And has the map has been released yet.
- It is understood that a January release date is planned
- **Steve Mitchell to follow up**

Old Business**Aaron Budris & Laura Brown - NVCOG/Uconn Trail User Survey Update**

- Rec Trails funded program
- 13 Infrared cameras
- CLEAR set up a website
- Urban/stone dust/ rural trails
- Working with trail monitors
- Trainings with volunteers in spring to conduct intercept survey
- 4 additional counters are purchased

- Lacking in the urban trails counting
- One on CTfastrak/Farmington Canal - south
- Welcome webinar for volunteers
- There will be a training for data collection volunteers
- Looking for ideas for other urban trail locations

Q: Bruce asks - will the counters be calibrated? Based on observational site counts.

Aaron says yes in April/May

Q: Bruce - how much do you want to publicize raw data - perhaps clean it before promoting.

Aaron B. - Don't have much money for analysis

Laura Brown - Don't have a lot in the budget for education of data use but will have some education on the website on how to use the data for a municipality.

January 2017 release date of the DRAFT Naugatuck River Greenway Pathway to Revitalization - CERC did the analysis.

Bruce: CT historically has had no trail usage numbers

New Business

- Source for trail project funding limited
- Demand is high from municipalities

ACTION ITEMS

Andrea Drabicki

- To develop and email blast and general letter template for muni's/ advocate groups to send letter to Governor's office
- Bruce will send out

Jamie - Eversource Energy

- Inquire about Carbon credit funding - how does that work.

Legislative Breakfast

- Bruce wants to work with new Bike/Ped CT Director (Adina) to co - host
- Working on pulling together legislator names

Steve Mitchell

- Bike Friendly Conference
- Designated Bike Friendly Communities:
- League of American Bicyclists - will come and speak on how to become a bike friendly community
- The process and getting to the designation is the motivator
- March/April timeline

Greenway/Blueways Designations

- New round opens in February with April deadline
- Protection blue blaze hiking trails

Last Green Valley

\$6.1 million grant awarded to Last Green Valley for open space preservations - tri-state RI/eastern CT/eastern MA

- NRCS - under the farm bill - landowners with forest and bird habitat for conservations easement
- Needs based/first come
- Working forest land - no preclusion for trails
- Federal agency will own the easement - transaction fee covered
- Designation and awards day around Trails Day in June.

CT Greenways Day - June 2

Bruce to consider the venue location

ECG Ride the State

- June 24, 2017
- Should the GC co-sponsor the event?
- Farmington Valley Trails Council meeting is tonight 1/9/2017 -
- **Bruce** will inquire with the FVTC if they are interested

Additional Comments:

Bill O'Neill - to approach on Wednesday night a group legislators to revive the license plate bill.

Special Meeting January 17, 2017 9am next Tuesday

- Currently Appointed Council Members

Next Meeting March 13, 2017

- Bruce thanks VHB for sponsoring the Greenway Council

Adjourns - 11:26 am