



AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

February 12, 2014

Meeting Notes

Upcoming Events

- **Paddle and Bike Day is under consideration in Waterbury.**
 - Will probably be a shorter course than last year, beginning at Riders Café.
- **April 16, 2014 –Waterbury Bus Facility Information Session W/DOT at Watertown High School.**
 - The new CTTransit Waterbury bus facility will be located at the site of the old Watertown Drive-In along the future route of the Greenway. DOT has agreed to include a parking area and trailhead for use by greenway visitors.
- **June 7, 2014 - National Trails Day:**
 - **Harwinton:** Joan Kirchner is organizing a 5K Walk, Wheelchair & Run event. For more info, see web site: <http://tinyurl.com/k8rgfex>.
 - **Watertown:** Steele Brook Greenway event along the Phase II route.
 - **Waterbury:** Fulton Park guided and self-guided walking tours and canoe/kayak in the ponds.

News

- **Derby:** Jack Walsh briefly discussed recent events concerning O'Sullivan's Island at the confluence of the Naugatuck and Housatonic Rivers (*details filled in from NH Register article 1/15/14*).
 - O'Sullivan's Island was the site of a major EPA toxic contamination remediation for PCBs and other toxic chemicals prior to 2009. Following the EPA cleanup, the island (actually a peninsula) was opened as a city park.
 - \$365,000 for improvements to the park from the Housatonic River Restoration Fund has been held up because the CT DEEP has not certified the site for public use.
 - Derby's Board of Aldermen voted to close O'Sullivan Island (and the recently opened greenway phase III) out of fear for public health until the site can be certified for public use.
 - The main walkway of the Naugatuck River Greenway, adjacent to the closed area, remains open to the public.
- **Beacon Falls:** Rich Minnick talked about the pressing need for signage on the Beacon Falls section of greenway and in town parks, but he wants to make sure that they comply with the future greenway signage plans. John Monroe said that he already has a plan ready to implement, and he will consult to assure uniformity.

Proposal for Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee Organization

- The Steering Committee **Mission/ Vision Statement** was read aloud and accepted as official:
"The Naugatuck River from Torrington to Derby is rich with history, stunning scenery and wildlife. Just as the river built and shaped our towns and cities, the Naugatuck River Greenway will be a driving force for the next century and beyond. Our mission is to harness the vitality and protect the health of the river for economic development and quality of life for all."

- Steering Committee **Composition and Member Responsibilities** were discussed:
 - Committee membership will include all current members who wish to continue to serve and agree to meet Committee responsibilities.
 - Membership will continue to be on a volunteer basis (not by appointment) with the goal to have those best able to help the committee available to serve.
 - Recruit membership from unrepresented towns:
 - Torrington – Sam Gold
 - Thomaston – Will Cummings
 - Seymour-
 - Naugatuck- Jim Stewart
 - Litchfield- Ingrid Manning
 - Companies with a potential interest will be contacted for possible inclusion:
 - Princeton Engineering (Laura Wildman), Milone&MacBroom, Fuss&O’Neill.
 - A broader distribution list will be compiled to include those who are not on the Committee but should be kept informed on committee business
 - This should include all river town CEOs
 - The establishment of the following Task Forces was discussed:
 - Local Relationships (Jack Walsh, Chuck Berger, Sam Gold)
 - State Relationships (Susan Peterson, Laurie Giannotti)
 - Economic Development/ Grants (Kathy McNamara, Sheila O’Malley, Sam Gold, Jack Walsh)
 - Advocacy/ Lobbying (Ingrid Manning)
 - Communications/ Website (Ingrid Manning, Kevin Zak, Vicki Barnes, Jack Walsh)
 - Signage (John Monroe, Rich Minnick)
 - Engineering/ Design/ Construction (Chuck Berger, John Monroe)
 - Events Coordination (Joan Kirchner, Jim O’Rourke, Dave Faber, Chuck Berger)
 - Environment (Bob Gregorski, Kevin Zak, Vickie Barnes)
 - Art - Kathy McNamara suggested that an additional task force be added to include Art. Construction of the greenway is an excellent opportunity for the introduction of public art which can be included in many grant requests.
 - Chris Way said that murals on Corps of Engineers walls might be permitted, and followed up with an e-mail stating that it has been allowed in the past, but requires permissions and coordination in advance.
- **3 Co-Chairs** will serve on a revolving basis:
 - **Ingrid Manning** –Communications and Website Priority.
 - **Chuck Berger** –Design/ Construction and Event coordination Priority.
 - **Jack Walsh** -Economic Development, Data Gathering and Presentation Priority.
- Sam Gold offered **COGCNV staff to provide administrative and clerical assistance.**
 - Rich Minnick explained that the role COG has played in the greenway committee is often overlooked at COG meetings. A letter of appreciation to COG Chairman Ed Edelson was suggested.
- **2014 Meeting Schedule:** March 12, May 14, July 9, September 10, November 12.
 - The COG conference room is available as a central meeting point, but a variety of locations should be considered.
 - Outdoor summer meetings should be planned to visit and highlight recent progress.

Greenway Role in Economic Development and Community Revitalization

- Sam Gold and Kathy McNamara discussed **Waterbury's TIGER Grant Application**.
 - The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program is a federal grant administered by the US Department of Transportation aimed at incentivizing transportation projects which generate economic growth, reduce energy use, and transform environmentally degraded areas in economically depressed areas.
 - The program is tailored to large grant requests which are typically awarded to larger cities. Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport have all successfully applied for TIGER funds.
 - Waterbury will apply for a TIGER grant this spring to fund Phase II of the Waterbury section of Greenway. The approximately \$33 million project, currently in design by The RBA Group, will consist of a bike/pedestrian trail from Eagle Street along the Naugatuck River to West Main St, pedestrian friendly connections to the train station and downtown (via Freight Street), and a riverside park adjacent to downtown along Jackson Street.
 - TIGER grants require at least 20% funding match (but to be more competitive, a higher match helps).
 - If successful in securing the grant, a very aggressive 2 year construction time frame could quickly and drastically change the look and feel of downtown Waterbury, attract businesses, visitors and residents, and jump-start the completion of the central section of the Greenway.
 - Letters of support will be requested from the NRG Steering Committee as well as area towns, focusing on the regional benefits this project will provide.
- There is a **need for data about economic benefits of completed greenway sections**.
 - Kathy McNamara explained that the research for the TIGER grant has revealed a need for data on economic impacts that towns and businesses have experienced after greenway sections have been completed.
 - Compiling this data regionally could help in future grant writing, and may be the basis for a publication.
- All present agreed that compiling information about all aspects of the greenway (history, progress, economic impacts, etc.) into a presentation, pamphlet, or other media should be a priority of the Steering Committee.
 - Would allow accurate and consistent information to be disseminated to the public more easily.
 - Focus on economic development and presentation to CEDS.
- Steering committee should interface with manufacturing initiatives throughout the valley.
 - Possible letter of support from NPS.

NaugatuckRiver.net Update

- Kevin Zak explained that he has been regularly updating the website with information, but coordinating calendars and getting people to the site continues to be a problem.
- Several ideas were discussed to increase web traffic:
 - A Billboard –Free billboard time may be available to non-profits if donated by a sign media company (tax write-off).

- Business cards with the web address distributed where fishing licenses are issued, at bike or kayak shops, and anywhere else that recreational information is posted.
 - COG is designing cards and will have them printed.
 - Web-mailings
 - Photo Contest
 - Kevin asked for volunteers to get the word out about the website, and for ideas of where business cards can be left: naugatuckwebsite@hvatoday.org
- A complete overhaul of the website is planned using a CT Community Foundation grant.
 - Focus will be on getting information to those looking to get out on the river.

2014 Priorities/ Next Steps

- Contact potential new members
 - From towns without current representatives.
 - From companies and other potential interested parties.
- Organizing a community forum was discussed, but it was decided to focus on supporting outside **events** for this year, while putting a forum off until the future.
- Develop **presentations**, pamphlets, brochures, and other media which will allow committee members to present the Greenway to outside organizations, CEDS, COGs, Municipalities, etc.
 - Should focus especially on economic development.
- Update the **website** with access information and ease of use as priorities.
- We are still waiting on the **signage** grant, but John Monroe has an implementation plan and is just waiting for the green light to put it into action.
- Be involved in **design and construction** (Watertown/Thomaston, Waterbury, Derby Phase IV).
- Kathy McNamara will give a presentation on Economic Development/ Grants at the next meeting.

Next Meeting – March 12 at COGCV, 49 Leavenworth St, Waterbury

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

(Present in **Bold**)

Aaron Budris- Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

Bill Purcell - Valley Chamber of Commerce

Bob Gregorski - Naugatuck River Watershed Association & Trout Unlimited

Christopher Way - US Army Corps of Engineers

Chuck Berger - Watertown Town Engineer

Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway

Dave Faber - CT Outdoors (outfitter in Watertown)

Elaine LaBella - Housatonic Valley Association Land Protection Director

Fred Messore - Town of Seymour

***Chair*Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation**

Jack Walsh - Valley United Way

Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jim Whitney - Western CT Convention & Visitors Bureau

Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission

Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW

John Monroe – National Park Service: Rivers & Trails Program

Kate Rattan - CT DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator (On maternity leave. David Head is filling in for her.)

Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury

Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group & Housatonic Valley Association

Kim Barbieri - City of Torrington

Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways

Liz Falzone - Beacon Falls – Citizens for Tomorrow's Downtown

Mark Jewell – VHB, Inc (CT DOT)

Maura Martin - Thomaston Trails Committee Mike Jastremski – Housatonic Valley Association

Peter Kisselburgh – Thomaston Trails Committee

Ray Leite - Digital Arts Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College

Rich Minnick – Beacon Falls

Richard Knoll – TEAM Inc. (Community Action agency in Ansonia)

Sam Gold - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

Sheila O'Malley – City of Ansonia

Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Management Program

Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

Vincent Gualtieri - US Army Corps of Engineers

Vinnie Scarlata – Ansonia Economic Development Commission

Will Cummings – Thomaston Trail Committee

Yi Ding - Valley COG