



## Meeting Notes

Wednesday, July 9, 2014 - 9 to 10:30

Naugatuck Town Hall

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Commissioners Corner

229 Church St, Naugatuck

See last page for attendance and a roster of steering committee members.

The intent of this meeting was to explore plans in each municipality, and find out what this committee can do to help keep plans progressing. A questionnaire was distributed to all members and Municipal representatives prior to the meeting with the following questions:

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up- to- date map in 2014.)
2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?
3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?
4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for cleanup etc., other?
5. How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.

Municipal representatives were asked to share their answers with the group (Questionnaires that were completed and submitted can be found in the appendix to these notes):

**Thomaston:** Will Cummings, Thomaston Trail Committee, reported:

- Thomaston is currently working with Watertown to plan the section of trail that will connect the two towns, and will be funded by the DEEP Grant. They are pretty confident with the route in the southernmost part of town. The remaining 4 miles will be studied and hiked this fall in consultation with the 2010 routing study conducted by ALTA design. The Alta study route ends at the southern end of Thomaston Dam US Army Corps of Engineers property. Extending it through or around Corps property will need to be discussed eventually.
- The primary obstacle in Thomaston to the trail being built is funding. The DEEP grant (being held up due to environmental/ archaeological review...might hear by August?) will cover the first 2000 ft., but there is no funding beyond that. Will mentioned that Thomaston is looking into fundraising (duck races/ NRG branded merchandise/ adopt a trail, etc.). There is also a very outspoken equestrian community, and it may help to bring them on board.
- The NRGSC would be of most assistance by researching funding opportunities and advocating for projects at the state and federal level. Defining the potential economic benefit of the greenway would be very useful, as would defining the number of people who use biking/ hiking trails.
- There are very few places to access the river in town. It was suggested that the CT DOT District IV office on South Main St be designated as an access point. The office is on the western bank of the river, has a large parking lot, and has been used as a kayak put-in area for past events. Allowing people to park in the DOT parking lot off hours and on weekends could greatly increase recreational access to the river. Kate Rattan (CT DOT) explained that if this is possible, an encroachment permit would have to be obtained. She also commented on the section of trail that may pass under the state owned Reynolds Bridge. She will work with Will to put him in touch with the proper people at DOT to discuss this with.

**Watertown:** Jolene Podgorski reported in place of Chuck Berger who was on vacation:

- Watertown is also waiting on the DEEP trails grant which will fund the design of a large section of trail in town. The route is fairly well established, but may be moved slightly away from Route 8 and closer to the river.
- Inclusion of a larger paved parking lot, trail section, and water line for a future comfort station in the plan of the DOT Waterbury Bus Maintenance Facility (which is to be built on the site of the old Watertown Drive-In) has been requested by the Town and this committee. The bus facility construction is being paid for through a Federal Transit Administration program, and CT DOT has repeatedly stated that these improvements were not possible with federal funds. On June 26, the NRGSC Co-chairs sent letters to Senators Blumenthal and Murphy and Congresswoman Esty requesting assistance in this matter. The letters explained that these improvements are within the FTA's funding guidelines and are exactly the type of features that the FTA is supposed to be encouraging under the Federal DOT's "Livability Initiative".
  - It was reported that new drafts of plans may include some of the requested improvements.

**Torrington:** Rista Malanca, Torrington ZEO/WEO, and Erin Wilson, Torrington Director of Economic Development reported:

- As of now, there is no official greenway trail built, although there have been trails built that will be part of an overall trails network in the City. Much of the river in Torrington has been channelized and is bound by USACE built/ City owned levees and floodwalls. Much of the greenway will follow these levees, similar to the Derby Trail. There are many bridges crossing the river, allowing for either side of the river to be developed for trail as necessary.
- The city has recently fast-tracked a remediation project on a 2 acre parcel at 100 Franklin St. on the east bank of the river. The property is a former industrial site, and a parking lot will be built to help alleviate parking issues for businesses in the neighborhood. The current plan is to use a portion of the site for parking, leaving the remainder for a park/ trail connection.
- The city is applying for a brownfields remediation grant from DECD to fund a study to look at the adjacent Nidek industrial property at 100 Franklin Avenue. The city is looking into acquiring the property which would open up nine acres of riverfront property to mixed use development including a riverwalk/ greenway that will connect to downtown, and would be part of the Riverfront Recapture project. Grant funds would be used to conduct Phase 1, 2, and 3 assessments, a remedial action plan and conduct a "Riverfront Recapture Study".
- The DOT is currently at 10% design for a maintenance garage on the West side of the river, and provisions for the greenway will be requested. Bridges will allow for both sides of the river to be used.
- The NRGSC would be most helpful making the argument for the greenway and trails by explaining successes along the river, and by putting groups together with one another.
- Main Street Market Place, a street fair held every Thursday evening on Main Street was also mentioned. For more info: <http://www.mainstreetmarketplace.org/>.
- Susan Peterson mentioned a low impact (LID) parking lot that was recently completed on the corner of Main St and Rte. 4. The project was funded by DEEP through the NW Conservation District.

**Waterbury:** Kathy McNamara, Waterbury Grants Administrator, and Sal Porzio, Waterbury Greenway Project Manager, reported.

- Construction on Phase I of the Waterbury Greenway (from the Naugatuck line to Eagle Street) is currently in final design and was slated to begin construction in 2015, but there has been a setback. A retaining wall along South main, owned by CT DOT, was found to be in poor condition. The City has requested that DOT replace the wall before construction of the greenway begins. Construction is now expected to begin in 2016.
  - Bob Gregorsky asked if construction of the park to be built on donated land at the intersection of S. Main and Platts Mill Rd. could proceed sooner, with the trail construction following once

the wall is fixed. He explained that the park will be a much needed river access point in the city, and should not be held back as well.

- Sal Porzio explained that all of the construction will be conducted under one contract, taking advantage of economies of scale, and it would not be possible to split up the project.
- Phase II of the Waterbury Greenway from Eagle Street to West Main Street is in preliminary design and immediate progress will depend on whether the City's TIGER grant application is successful. Notifications regarding TIGER should be made in September, and if received, construction would have to be completed in 2021.
- The City is working to purchase and rehabilitate the 17 acre Anamet site on the east bank of the river in the South End. The Anamet property figures prominently as a promenade along the greenway in the preliminary Phase II plans drawn up for the TIGER grant.
- Waterbury has created web pages for the TIGER grant with all supporting documentation at <http://www.waterburyct.org/content/25076/default.aspx>.
- A webpage about the greenway in general will eventually have articles about safety and economic impacts of greenways that other municipalities will find useful: <http://www.waterburyct.org/greenway>.

**Naugatuck:** Jim Stewart, Naugatuck Director of Public Works reported:

- Naugatuck Greenway Phase I (from Bridge Street to Maple Street, including walkway along Rte. 8) is largely complete (and was toured after the meeting).
  - The deteriorating hand rail along the Rte. 8 adjacent section which may pose a safety risk was discussed. If there is imminent safety risk, DOT would likely replace it.
  - The "White Building" on the corner of South Main and Maple streets (on the East bank across from the current end of Phase I) is slated to be demolished, and a pocket park is planned for the site.
- Grant funding is being actively sought for Phase II (Bridge St to the Waterbury Phase I section on Platts Mill Rd), and will be the next section completed. A bridge to connect back to the east side of the river where the recreational access is on Platts Mill Rd. will be required, driving up the potential cost.
- The route south from Maple St. past Breen field, the Chemtura brownfield site and the sewage treatment facility toward Beacon Falls would follow. Tight geographies between the river, Rte. 8 and the rail line might make routing difficult.
- The greatest obstacle to progress is finding, and the NRGSC can be most helpful by assisting with grants and coordinating plans.

**Seymour & Ansonia:** Mark Nielson, Valley COG Senior Regional Planner reported:

- Seymour is currently looking for Federal funding to help complete the downtown trail loop which will eventually connect to the larger greenway.
- There may be state funds left over from a previous study for a planning study of the route North from Seymour to Beacon Falls.
- The Seymour to Ansonia connection could be difficult due to the rail line on the east bank and Rte.8 on the West.
- The NRGSC can be of most help by helping coordinate connections.

**Derby :** Jack Walsh, Valley United Way reported:

- The Derby Greenway was constructed in 4 phases:
  - Phase 1 – 1.7 miles along the USACE levee
  - Phase 2 – Signage/ Enhancements
  - Phase 3 - Loop and footbridge (O'Sullivan Island)
  - Phase 4 – Connection to Osbornedale State Park (this has not been, and probably will not be realized.)

- There have been exciting developments Across the Housatonic in Shelton
  - The city has redeveloped a former industrial site into Veteran's Park, and has recently extended their greenway.
  - Shelton is looking to attract young professionals to town, and a major aspect of that is access to transit- mainly the train station in Derby. Bike and Pedestrian improvements are being planned for the Bridge St. Bridge across the Housatonic connecting Derby and Shelton, which would also serve to connect the two greenways.
  - Jack suggested that Shelton be included in the NRGSC in the future.

**Preliminary Survey Results:** Requested areas of assistance from NRGSC in order of perceived importance:

1. Information and data on economic benefit of greenways to be used by municipalities and businesses for grant applications. Kathy McNamara indicated she has almost completed a paper with updated data on the economic impact of greenways. Marketing the economic benefit to towns, businesses and residents.
2. Support and assistance in finding and applying for possible funding opportunities for the greenway.
3. Assistance with coordinating Greenway routing especially the Naugatuck to Seymour portion through Beacon Falls and the Torrington to Thomaston portion through Harwinton. Creation of modified Greenway map with access points.
4. Reestablishment of access points for fishing with help from Tim Barry at CT Fisheries.
5. Encouragement of greenway use through events, better access, marketing.
6. Continued relationship building with CTDOT
7. Strengthening local greenway committees.

**NaugatuckRiver.net Updates:** Sam Dzieken reported on progress:

- The website is being entirely redesigned. The new main page will be de-cluttered, with links to pages about getting out on the river to do specific things (fishing/ hiking/ biking/ boating, etc.)
- A blog page will contain much of the type of information that is currently on the main page. The blog will allow multiple authors to post content, will be in a format that will be familiar to most users, and will allow archiving of content.
- A facebook page has been set up, and social media will be a part of the new site.

**Other Business:**

- Erin Wilson requested support of the Committee for **Torrington's DECD brownfields grant request** to study the Nidek property (see description above).
  - A **motion** was made, and it was **unanimously voted to:** Write a letter of support for Torrington's grant request to the DECD.
  - A letter was drafted and sent on 7/14.
- Will Cummings reported that the town of Thomaston had received an application for an **outdoor gun range** on rte. 222 just across the road from the ALTA routing study proposed route of the greenway. A gun range at that location would cause noise pollution not only for future greenway users, but for town residents as well.
  - The Republican-American reported on 7/15 that the **application has been withdrawn.**
- Will Cummings also reported on the 14 acre parcel of land in Thomaston across the river from the proposed Bus Maintenance Facility in Watertown. The parcel is being auctioned off on July 25<sup>th</sup> for back taxes. Will has been unable to find a buyer for the property which has portions of CT Forest and Parks Blue Blazed Trail on it, and he may bid himself. More information at: <http://www.cttaxsales.com/>
  - Will later reported that he put in a successful bid at the auction.

- Susan Peterson reported on a low impact (LID) parking lot that was recently completed on the corner of Main St and Rte. 4 in Torrington. The project was funded by DEEP through the NW Conservation District, and was designed to minimize the amount of stormwater entering the river.
- John Monroe has been in discussions with Torrington about the possibility of holding a workshop in November (Date TBA). The event would be a great way to support the City's recent efforts and help them make the case for future greenway progress to town officials. The November NRGSC meeting might be held in conjunction. More details to follow.

### Next Meeting: September 10, Location TBD.

- Any suggestions or to volunteer a location, please contact Aaron Budris at [abudris@cogcnv.org](mailto:abudris@cogcnv.org)

## **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 MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

**Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer**

Jim Whitney - Western CT Convention & Visitors Bureau

Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission

**Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW**

**John Monroe – National Park Service: Rivers & Trails Program**

**Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation**

**Kate Rattan - CT DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator**

**Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury**

**Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group & Housatonic Valley Association**

Laura Wildman – Princeton Hydro

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

**Mark Nielsen – Valley COG**

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)

**Rista Malanca - Torrington**

**Sam Dzieken - Housatonic Valley Association**

**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**

Also Present:

**Sal Porzio – City of Waterbury**

**Erin Wilson – City of Torrington**

**Joanna Rogalski - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley**

## Appendix A – Waterbury Questionnaire Answers:

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up- to- date map in 2014.)

*The greenway is likely due to start construction in 2016, rather than 2015, given the need for reconstruction of a wall along S. Main Street. The overall route is indicated in the Routing Study. Route adjustments do not affect the start or end point of Waterbury's greenway segment.*

2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?

*The first 2.2 mile segment from the border of Naugatuck to Eagle Street is moving forward towards final design. The next 2.3-mile segment from Eagle Street to West Main Street is in preliminary design.*

3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?

*The primary barrier to completion of the entire 7.4-mile Waterbury greenway is funding. Waterbury's greenway is a phased project dependent on funding. Much of the route is developed and space is often constricted, thus making the project challenging.*

4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for clean up etc., Other?

*A project that is important for the greenway would be the development of a greenway public art plan. Public art would heighten the experience of the greenway and create opportunities for involvement in the project by the many diverse neighborhoods through which the greenway travels. The City has a new Public Art Committee that may be helpful in this regard.*

*Other projects that might be helpful would relate to river/greenway awareness, fund-raising, planning and implementation of river-based or bicycle-related events.*

5. How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.
  1. Coordinate plans among the towns.
  2. Develop economic benefit statistics
  3. Research funding opportunities and assist with applications.
  4. Advocate for projects at state and federal level.
  5. Assist with marketing and/or events for the river and greenway. #2
  6. Encourage participation and use of greenway/river - better access, other. #1
  7. Strengthen local greenway committees/organizations. #3
  8. Other

## Appendix B – Derby Questionnaire Answers:

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up-to-date map in 2014.)

*Derby has completed Phases 1-3 of its project which includes the 1.7 mile path from the Derby/Shelton bridge on Main Street to Division Street in Ansonia. Phase 1 was the original construction. Phase 2 added benches and signage and Phase 3 included a new loop and bridge on O'Sullivan's Island.*

2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?

*Right now there is nothing formally in development. However, there are two ancillary projects that could affect the Greenway. One is an enhancement to the Derby/Shelton bridge that would not only improve the appearance of the bridge, but would also include expanded pedestrian access that would improve foot and bike traffic and make a more attractive connection with the Shelton Riverwalk.*

*The other project is the reconfiguration of Main Street in Derby. That opens the possibility of enhancing the Main Street entrance to the Greenway and combining with the bridge project to enhance connections with the existing train station in Derby.*

3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?

*Much of this will be at the direction of D.O.T. working with the Council of Governments. There is great cooperation among the towns.*

4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for clean up etc., Other?

5. How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.

1. Coordinate plans among the towns.
2. Develop economic benefit statistics
3. Research funding opportunities and assist with applications.
4. Advocate for projects at state and federal level.
5. Assist with marketing and/or events for the river and greenway.
6. Encourage participation and use of greenway/river - better access, other.
7. Strengthen local greenway committees/organizations.
8. Other

*I think for Derby, the long term benefits of connecting all the segments along the Naugatuck coupled with the possibilities for enhancing the ties with Shelton offers the greatest opportunity. Plans to enhance our greenway further to Orange and up the Housatonic River do not seem viable at this point in time. By working together on issues such as signage and joint promotion, I think that we could also do more with showing the economic value of the Greenway and help with economic development issues in each of the towns.*

## Appendix C – Thomaston Questionnaire Answers:

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up-to-date map in 2014.)

None of the Thomaston Greenway has been built - we are in a "holding pattern". We have a good feel for where the first 2000 feet of trail will be built. Before this fall, we hope to hike and explore the 4 miles of the Naugatuck River in Thomaston and review the the 2010 "*Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study*" to come up with our best route thru the entire town.

2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?

Working with Watertown, we hope to begin construction of the south end of our trail in 2014. The DEEP Grant will provide funding for design and building our first 2000 feet of trail in Thomaston and design of the Watertown trail.

3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?

We need money to build the beginning of our trail. As noted above, we will be coordinating our effort with the town of Watertown to accomplish the first part of our trail. By the end of 2014 we hope to have a good idea where we want the trail, so we can begin approaching land owners. At the north end of Thomaston is the Thomaston Dam which is operated by the Army Corp. There are existing roads behind the Dam that will be excellent trails.

4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for clean up etc., Other?

Defining economic benefit for your town would be helpful. Information on how many people use biking/hiking trails.

5. How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.

1. Coordinate plans among the towns.
2. Develop economic benefit statistics
- 3. Research funding opportunities and assist with applications.**
- 4. Advocate for projects at state and federal level.**
5. Assist with marketing and/or events for the river and greenway.
6. Encourage participation and use of greenway/river - better access, other.
7. Strengthen local greenway committees/organizations.
8. Other - **Fundraising**

Numbers 3 and 4 are the most important to Thomaston because our town will not fund the trail due to limited resources. Without funding there is no trail.

We'd like to do some fund raising in partnership with the town of Watertown. Some thoughts: duck race; a tour de Thomaston/Watertown bike and hike day; develop NRG merchandise to sell [bandanas with the NRG trail logo or trail maps would sell]; and perhaps an *adopt a trail program* [50\$ a foot]

We could also explore other partners that could help fund/maintain trails: Equestrian groups - [horseback riders, like pedestrians and bicyclers] have been pushed off highways and need places to ride. Discuss our plans with them.

## Appendix D – Naugatuck Questionnaire Answers:

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up- to- date map in 2014.)

The route shown in the 2010 Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study is the proposed route.

2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?

Naugatuck River Walk Phase 1 is substantially complete and the next proposed phase is northerly from phase 1 to the Platts Mills Boat Launch and connecting to Waterbury's project. The Borough is actively seeking grant funding for the completion of phase 2.

3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?

Funding

4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for clean up etc., Other?

5. How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.

1. Research funding opportunities and assist with applications
2. Advocate for projects at state and federal level
3. Develop economic benefit statistics
4. Coordinate plans among the towns.
5. Assist with marketing and/or events for the river and greenway.
6. Encourage participation and use of greenway/river - better access, other.
7. Strengthen local greenway committees/organizations.

## Appendix E – Watertown Questionnaire Answers

1. At this time what is the completed and proposed route for the greenway in your town? (We want to create an up-to-date map in 2014.)

Watertown's proposed route still follows the route outlined in the Routing Study completed by Alta. Minor changes are contemplated to move the existing trail away from Route 8

2. What specific plans for portions of the greenway are in development now?

We are awaiting approval of the Recreational Trail Grant jointly submitted with Thomaston. We will use our share of the grant to perform a conceptual design, design the waterway crossings and conceptual design of the relocation away from Route 8. Watertown will assist Thomaston in utilizing their portion of the grant to design and build approximately 1,200 feet in Thomaston

3. What are the primary barriers to completion? Is there sufficient coordination and interaction between you and your neighboring towns?

We will have to negotiate with DOT for easements adjacent to Route 8 and the Rail Line. We will have to provide a safe trail on State property and provide at least one at grade crossing of the rail line. It will likely require significant coordination with DOT. Good coordination is taking place between Thomaston and Watertown.

4. In addition to the actual greenway itself, what other projects are important for the greenway and the river? Better access points? More marketing? Defining economic benefit for your town? Volunteer efforts for clean up etc., Other?

DOT Bus Maintenance facility to be constructed at Frost Bridge Road

How can the Greenway Steering Committee be of most assistance? Please list in order of priority.

1. Coordinate plans among the towns. 4
2. Develop economic benefit statistics 7
3. Research funding opportunities and assist with applications. 2
4. Advocate for projects at state and federal level. 1
5. Assist with marketing and/or events for the river and greenway. 6
6. Encourage participation and use of greenway/river - better access, other. 5
7. Strengthen local greenway committees/organizations. 3
8. Other