



## Meeting Notes

Wednesday, January 19, 2015 - 9 to 10:30

NVCOG Conference Room  
49 Leavenworth Street 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Waterbury, CT 06702

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

Co-Chair **Ingrid Manning** opened the meeting and introductions were made.

**Mark Nielsen**, NVCOG Director of Planning gave an overview of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. The new region consists of the 13 towns originally part of the COG of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV), the 4 towns that made up Valley COG(VCOG) (Ansonia, Derby, Seymour and Shelton), and Bristol and Plymouth, formerly part of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), which was dismantled.

- Rick Dunne, previously the Executive Director of Valley COG, was selected to be the Executive Director of NVCOG. The staff from VCOG has joined COGCNV at their office in Waterbury, and a planner formerly with CCRPA has been hired on. The plan is to expand the office into the entire third floor at 49 Leavenworth.
- Mark gave assurances that support for the Steering Committee and greenway planning would continue. In fact, with a larger staff and increased capacity, NVCOG may be able to provide more support in the future.
- Having worked on transportation issues and trail development in the past for the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council, and Valley COG, Mark gave an overview of the state and federal government support for trail development.
  - Today there is much more funding available federally and at the state level for trail projects than there was even 10 years ago. The DEEP administered [National Recreational Trails Program](#), and the DOT administered [Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program](#) are two examples of trail funding sources, and were briefly discussed.
  - Mark explained that the length of the trail and the number of communities which it will serve bode well for future grant acquisition. He also recognized that the Steering Committee's work, and the ability to bring stakeholders together to prioritize projects and speak with one voice will make grant requests stronger, and will prevent fighting over the limited grant dollars available.

**Ingrid Manning** gave an overview of the **NRG Economic Impact Study**

- Ingrid and Josh Carey announced that NVCOG has so far received a total of \$25k to conduct the study. The Connecticut Community Foundation in Waterbury has awarded \$15k, and the Valley Community Foundation in Derby has awarded \$10k. The Community Foundation of Northwest CT denied our original grant request, but we are working with The Northwest Hills Council of Governments to resubmit an application in April.
- The purpose is to study the impacts that completion of the greenway will have economically, giving municipalities more leverage when applying for grants or when bonding for funds to construct greenway sections. The study will provide information specific to each municipality about:
  - Potential trail usage and visitor spending
  - Property value impacts near the NRG
  - Development and redevelopment possibilities
  - Possible tie-ins with brownfield remediation
  - Health/ quality of life impacts
  - How municipalities can capitalize on the greenway's construction
    - Specific features that will draw visitors
    - Marketing strategies

- **Nearby amenities**
- The estimated cost of the study is \$60,000. A consultant would be hired to conduct the economic analysis portion, with technical support, trail counts, data collection, and surveys conducted by NVCOG staff.
- Mark Nielsen discussed some funding options to make up the difference between the grant awards and the total cost of the project. He explained that if the budget allows, the grants might be used to leverage NVCOG federal transportation planning funds to be used for consultant fees. If this is not possible, the scope of work for the consultant might need to be reduced with more work being done by NVCOG Staff.
- An Economic Study Subcommittee will be formed to begin scoping the project and preparing for an RFP. Anyone interested in serving please contact Aaron.

**Rista Malanca** was elected the NRG Steering Committee's representative to the [CT Greenway Council](#) at the November meeting, and reported on her first meeting with the group. The meeting was held remotely due to the weather. The council is looking for a location for the 2015 Greenways Day, an event at which awards will be presented and new greenways will be designated. This may be a good opportunity to draw attention to a community along the NRG, so please let Rista know if you can offer a location.

**John Monroe** discussed the **NRG Uniform Trail Signage & Wayfinding Project**, which will be conducted in 2015. The project's purpose is to provide enhanced visibility for the Naugatuck River Greenway by promoting a consistent, shared identity in the 11 communities of the greenway corridor.

- The signage needs for the trail will be assessed, including sign locations, functions, types and materials, and a signage designer will be hired to create a signage manual that can be used by all 11 municipalities to coordinate signage along the greenway. 1000 plastic confidence markers will be purchased for each town, and interactive maps and apps will be explored and implemented to provide information to the public specific to locations along the trail. Press events and ribbon cuttings will be held for newly signed sections of trail.
- John Monroe and NVCOG have received, and will be administering a \$15,000 grant through the National Recreational Trails Program for the project.
- The project will be executed by John and the NPS, NVCOG staff, a signage design consultant, The NRG Steering Committee, and volunteers. John is looking for volunteers to serve on a subcommittee which will oversee the project. Please contact him if you are interested.

**Chuck Berger** and **Will Cummings** discussed the Watertown/ Thomaston DEEP Recreational Trails Grant, which is still pending as a result of required wildlife and archaeological reviews. The grant is for the design of the Watertown section and construction of a 2000' section of trail in Thomaston from the Watertown border to the vicinity of the Thomaston water pollution control facility.

- State Archaeologist Brian Jones walked the site, and noted that the majority of the route in question was previously disturbed due to previous activities, and is of no archaeological concern. One of the trail route options however, which would more closely follow the edge of the river, is in an archaeologically sensitive area, and would require additional archaeological testing should the trail be proposed to impact this area. Sticking to the more disturbed route, however, should avoid any additional archaeological concerns. Dr. Jones also identified the concrete trolley bridge as potentially eligible for the state Register of Historic Places.
- A preliminary review of the National Diversity Data Base (NDDB) indicated the possibility of 7 endangered, threatened or special concern species in the vicinity of the trail. DEEP has requested that a wildlife survey be done before it will release the grant money. Since the grant money will only be used for design on the Watertown section, the town requested that the survey be held off until after the design and before construction. There were no listed species indicated in Thomaston during the NDDB review.

**Sam Dziekan** gave an overview of the NaugatuckRiver.net redesign project. Progress is being made, and Sam showed the committee a preview of the site.

- There is a need to make the website self-sustaining. The maintenance and update of the website has been facilitated through grants from the Connecticut Community Foundation over the last few years, but will not be available going forward. which would involve long-term sponsorships and possibly advertising. Some ideas

were proposed including the Boy Scouts of America. Andrew Martelli at the Waterbury Development Corporation was suggested as a good contact to facilitate future sponsorship requests.

- The internal website maintenance will be minimized by giving several stakeholders the ability to post information and update the calendar.

**John Monroe** and **Rista Malanca** discussed the **Torrington Walks!** Design Charrette held on 1/21.

- UPDATE- The program was held in the City Hall in Torrington, and was attended by 40+ people. The Mayor, City officials, Torrington residents, State and Federal government officials, local business owners and other stakeholders were in attendance, and offered ideas on all aspects of the future of Torrington's bike and pedestrian network. Landscape architects from Milone and MacBroom were on hand to turn ideas into conceptual drawings, and to offer suggestions. The city will be compiling the information gathered, and it will be passed on to the committee.

**Susan Peterson** mentioned that DEEP is currently accepting applications for two grant programs that may be useful in acquiring land for the construction of greenway sections, or for improving parks along the greenway route. The Deadline for both grant applications is **March 1**. More information [here](#).

- **The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program** provides funding to municipalities and land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space and for water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property.
- **The Urban Green & Community Garden Initiative Grant Program** is open to municipalities and land conservation organizations in Targeted Investment Communities and Distressed Municipalities to construct, improve, or restore a community garden or urban green.

**Fred Messore** reported that the town of Seymour has committed to the design of Phase I which includes 800 feet of trail under the Route 8 overpass which will connect to the Tingue Fish Bypass and park.

**Mark Lewis – DEEP Brownfields Coordinator** – discussed the State's brownfields program, and expressed his personal interest in the NRG, he lives locally, and has paddled much of the Naugatuck River.

- The Connecticut Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development is housed at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and provides financial (funding and liability relief) and technical assistance to municipalities and economic development agencies as well as brownfield owners and potential developers. The ultimate goal of the program is to return contaminated sites across the state to productive re-use. Mark and DEEP are partners in the program, and serve to ensure timely and effective project review.
- NRG's planned route will traverse many brownfield sites, since the valley's industrial concerns relied so heavily on the river for water, power, and waste disposal, and were clustered along its banks. While this will undoubtedly be an obstacle to overcome, there is assistance available, and the greenway may help drive the redevelopment of the valley's former industrial areas.
- Mark suggested a "brownfield paddling tour" of the river.

**Jack Walsh** discussed conversations that Derby and Ansonia have recently had with artist Danielle Mailer, who is designing a large trout mural that will overlook the Naugatuck River and downtown from the exterior back wall of Staples. A river-long art project was discussed, and Jack suggested that art should be a major topic at an upcoming meeting.

**Kathy McNamara** discussed the **Waterbury Greenway Phase I** delays.

- An archaeological survey in the vicinity of the park which will be constructed at the corner of South Main and Platts Mill Rd. uncovered some prehistoric artifacts, and further investigation by an archaeologist will be necessary before construction can begin so that it does not impact a cultural resource.
- CT DOT will also be replacing a crib wall that will hold up a section of the trail along S Main St. The wall is nearing the end of its useful life, and will be replaced before construction of the greenway.

## Next Meeting: March 11<sup>th</sup> at Valley United Way in Shelton

- Details will follow.

## Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Present in **bold**.

### **Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments**

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 – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments**

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 Dziekan - Housatonic Valley Association**

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:

**Mark Lewis - CT DEEP Brownfields Coordinator**

**Ken Shooshan-Stoller – FHWA Transportation Planner**