



## Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 9, 2015 - 9 to 10:30

Cass Gilbert Room – Waterbury City Hall

235 Grand Street, Waterbury, CT

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

Co-Chair **Jack Walsh** opened the meeting and introductions were made.

**Two letters submitted in support of Recreational Trails Grant submissions were presented** (see letters attached to the agenda). The letters were endorsed at the July NRGSC meeting (actually held June 25<sup>th</sup>) and were submitted on July 1. The letters supported the City of Torrington's bid for funding for 2.6 miles of trail, and NVCOG's bid (submitting on behalf of the Connecticut Greenways Council) for funding to conduct a Statewide Multiuse Trail User Survey

Mark Nielsen discussed **project prioritization** for trail sections along the NRG. [VHB](#), a consultant for CTDOT's [Transportation Enhancement Program](#) that is assisting the department in developing bikeways and trails across the state, has requested a list of NRG priority projects. The list will be used to help the DOT identify bike/ped projects that are ready to proceed to construction, and are worthy to be considered for state funding. Mark presented the following list of projects that: a) have some advanced plans, b) have few ROW concerns, c) have a well-defined route, and/or d) connect to scheduled or existing sections.

- Waterbury Phase I from Platts Mill Rd. to Eagle St. – 2.2mi.
- Waterbury Phase II from Eagle St. to Freight St. - 2.3 mi.
- Seymour from Bank Street to Tingue Bypass Park - .3 mi.
- Ansonia bridge over Metro North ROW to Pershing St - .1 mi.
- Naugatuck from Pulaski footbridge to Waterbury Town Line - .9 mi.
- Watertown from Frost Bridge Road to Thomaston Town Line – 2.4 mi.
- Beacon Falls from Route 42 (existing greenway) to Toby's Pond – 1 mi.
- Torrington from Franklin Street to Bogue road – 2.6 mi.

Discussion followed, revealing a few shortcomings of the list that should be resolved before sending it on to VHB. It was raised that the list contains both projects that already have funding for construction and those that do not. Mark explained that the purpose for this was to show the department that there is progress being made, and there might also be aspects of those funded projects that DOT can still assist with (ex: the crib wall that has held up Waterbury Phase I). It was decided that funded and unfunded projects should be separated and clearly identified. Kevin Tedesco from DOT suggested presenting all sections to DOT, not just those that we see as a priority. He said that the more information that DOT has in front of them the better, and the consensus of the group was to make the list inclusive of all sections of trail.

**UPDATE:** Following the meeting, in consultation with the co-chairs, and with input from the NRGSC, recommended revisions were made. The final NRG Project Priorities document can be found [HERE](#).

The **NRG Economic Impact Study** was discussed:

- Aaron Budris announced that the [Bank of America's Katharine Matthies Foundation](#) awarded \$5,000 to the project. This brings the total project funding to \$35,000 when added to funding received from the [Connecticut Community Foundation](#) (CCF), the [Valley Community Foundation](#) (VCF), and the [Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut](#) (CFNWC) through the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG).

- NVCOG has been in continuing discussions with UConn Extension (Laura Brown) to provide project support and UCONN's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA, Fred Carstensen) to perform the economic analysis. A draft Budget and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been negotiated and are currently awaiting legal approval before they are signed. Approximately \$32,500 of the grant budget is slated to go toward services provided by CCEA in conducting the economic analysis. UConn Extension and NVCOG will provide project support through survey authoring, data collection, reviewing literature, wrangling volunteers, overseeing survey work, and providing public outreach, etc. through in-kind services as part of their normal operational duties (much of this work has already been begun, and in some cases completed). The remaining grant money will be held in reserve for incidental costs such as printing or materials for public outreach.
- Laura Brown and John McDonald presented ***"The Economic Impact of Greenways and Multi-Use Trails – A review of literature prepared as part of the Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study"***. The Literature Review was conducted as part of John's semester long internship with UConn Extension, and will be the foundation on which the remainder of the study will be built. The report defines and gives a history of greenways, explains the economic impacts of greenways and similar community features are calculated, and looks at several case studies of similar projects. The full updated report can be found [HERE](#).
- **Progress in developing the intercept survey** was discussed by Aaron and Laura. The survey has been finalized through input from the NRGSC and the Connecticut Greenways Council. The decision was made to make the intercept surveys short in order to receive as many respondents as possible, with those intercepted referred to a more in-depth online survey. Volunteers were called on to assist in conducting the surveys on 3 sections of NRG (Beacon Falls, Derby, and Naugatuck), and at two comparable multiuse trails in the area (The Sue Grossman Trail in Torrington and the Middlebury Greenway). **UPDATE:** As of 10/14, the surveys are underway and the response has been very encouraging. We are still looking for volunteers in Derby and Torrington....sign up [HERE](#).
- Aaron presented **preliminary trail count data collected in Naugatuck**, and also re-presented the data from Derby. The 4 week totals in Naugatuck were 6,015 uses at the Pulaski Footbridge, and 4,722 uses at Linden Park, extrapolated to an annual estimate of 50,095 and 39,336 uses respectively (using the National Bike and Pedestrian Documentation Project Methods). While the Naugatuck section of trail receives far less use than the Derby section, it is still used quite regularly. Casual observation also suggests that many people are using the Naugatuck section to travel to work, school, or shopping, and we hope that the intercept surveys can shed some more light on this. The presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

An update was given on the **Uniform Signage and Wayfinding Project** being administered by NVCOG funded by a \$15,000 grant through the National Recreational Trails Program. Terms have been reached with consultant [Milone and MacBroom](#) to develop a signage and wayfinding manual, and a contract will be signed following legal review. John Monroe will be working closely with the consultant to guide the process.

Chuck Berger gave an update of the **Watertown/ Thomaston DEEP Recreational Trails Grant**. The project was approved in a town meeting in Thomaston, and a contract has been signed and approved by DEEP. Since this is a multi-town project, NVCOG has agreed to act as the fiduciary agency, and will be waiving administrative fees. Work done by NVCOG staff will be applied toward the in-kind match. NVCOG will be issuing an RFQ for design services for the trail sections in both towns.

**UPDATE:** The RFP has been issued, and closes on October 30<sup>th</sup>. You can review a copy of the RFP [HERE](#).

**Aaron Budris** discussed the **Waterbury Greenway Phase I** delays. The phase II archaeological survey in the vicinity of the park planned to be constructed at the corner of South Main and Platts Mill Road uncovered additional prehistoric artifacts. It will be recommended that the archaeological deposits be preserved in place for future study. This may limit the amount and type of trail and trail feature development that will be allowed in the area of the finds.

Typically sites can be capped, and limited development can take place without impacting archaeological context. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be put in place between the city, DOT and SHPO outlining how the archaeological site will be protected including the following:

- The pedestrian footpath and “Reading Circle” will be re-designed to avoid impacts to the site.
- Possible additional data recovery (archaeological excavation) may be required.
- A sign or monument will be constructed on the site to acknowledge the native people that once inhabited the area and inform the public of how the land was used prehistorically.

DOT cannot proceed with ROW negotiations or allow the city to proceed with final design until the MOA is in place. Construction is now not likely to start until 2017.

Rista Malanca discussed the upcoming **Torrington Walks! Talk** being held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am to 1pm in the City Hall Auditorium in Torrington. The talk is a follow-up to last winter’s successful Torrington Walks! Charette, and will feature several speakers including John Monroe, Bruce Donald, Laurie Giannotti, Clare Cain, Beth Critton and Bruce Dinnie presenting on a wide range of trail related topics. Please see the attached agenda and invitation.

Rista also talked about recent interest in **extending the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway** south into downtown Torrington and north to Winsted then turning east along route 44 through the towns of Barkhamsted, New Hartford and Canton. A committee has been established to discuss options and they are looking at incorporating the trail into town POCDs and development plans. This opens up the possibility of connecting the NRG with the East Coast Greenway and Farmington Canal Heritage trail via the Sue Grossman Trail.

Kevin Tedesco discussed CT DOT’s upcoming **Community Connectivity Program**, a grant program that is being designed to help communities pay to design bike and ped safety improvements in problem areas. More information will be sent as the program takes shape.

**Next Meeting: November 18<sup>th</sup> in Beacon Falls– Details to 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**

Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation

## **\*Chair\* 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

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

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:

**Laura Brown - UCONN Extension**

**John McDonald – Uconn Extension**

**Kevin Tedesco – CT DOT**