



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

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AD HOC ELLINGTON
TRAILS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2019
Town Hall Meeting Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pam McCormick, Valerie Amsel, Cynthia van Zelm, Linda Anderson, Judi Manfre, Rachel Dearborn, Cheri Murphy

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lois Timms-Ferrara, Erin Stavens, Lauren Desrocher

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Dinnie, Dustin Huguenin, Shay Drake, Kesavu Kapu, Denise Anamani, Emily Boone

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Rachel Dearborn called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. CITIZENS FORUM:

Kesavu Kapu was present on behalf of the Boy Scouts; he mentioned that scouts are looking for conservation projects to complete service hours for badge requirements. Bruce Dinnie stated that a clean-up day at the Batz Property may be a perfect project for them. The troop would be available on a Saturday in later May or June; they are not available on April 27, May 18 or June 8. Mr. Kapu also stated that he would talk to Eagle Scouts who also need service projects about building kiosks.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED (DEARBORN), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MARCH 6, 2019 MEETING MINUTES.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Appointment and Discussion of Kimball Forest Steward: Emily Boone

The Committee thanked Emily Boone for volunteering to look after the Kimball Forest Trail; her contact information was exchanged with Valerie Amsel. It was mentioned that the trail was being utilized for the Trails Day hike, and that Cub Scouts would be going through it as well; Ms. Boone was given a schedule of events for Kimball Forest. Ms. Dearborn had some helpful ideas regarding spots that tend to get backed up and areas that trash gets collected. Ms. Boone will also be given maps of the trails.

MOVED (ANDERSON), SECONDED (MANFRE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPOINT EMILY BOONE AS KIMBALL FOREST STEWARD.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Bird Walk – Denise Anamani

Cynthia van Zelm is coordinating this event, which is planned for Sunday, May 5 at the Windermere Trail, beginning at 7:30 am. Denise Anamani suggested having an alternate date in case of bad weather. The plan is to park in the back of the YMCA lot and walk back from there; it was recommended that walkers wear bug repellent and good footwear, and to bring binoculars. Ms. Anamani stated that she usually starts out gauging people's ability to look for and find various birds; she has a spotting scope but the Windermere Trail may not be the best location to use it. It was agreed that May 12 would be the rain date for this event. Ms. van Zelm will publicize the event as the date gets closer. Ms. Anamani requested that she be added to the contact list, as she is interested in attending more meetings and events.

B. Decide to Be Kind Partnership Opportunities –Shay Drake

Shay Drake introduced herself and her daughters to the Committee. The Youth Services Decide to Be Kind Committee is interested in doing more work in conjunction with the Trails Committee. Some ideas that were discussed were letterboxing and geocaching; perhaps small waterproof shoebox-size boxes with notebooks inside could be placed along the trails, where people could write notes of kindness for others. The symbol of the Decide to Be Kind movement is a small cow; one of the toy cows could be placed in the box alongside the notebook, and the writer of the note could take a selfie with the cow and post it on the Trails Committee Facebook page. This would be a new idea and a way to promote kindness and also familiarity with the different trails. The Decide to Be Kind website would be a good spot to advertise this as well. Linda Anderson stated that the Senior Center participated in some geocaching and the placements of items need to be extremely accurate, so letterboxing may be a better project to start with. The Committee agreed that the Batz Property would be the best location for a letterbox.

Ms. Anderson recommended that the Decide to Be Kind Committee consider assisting with the children's garden at Batz, perhaps building toad houses, which may be a fun activity for kids and something that may promote the trails as well. Decide to Be Kind will have a booth at the Earth Day event as well as the first Farmers Market, so if promotional material about the letterboxing is ready by then, they could distribute that.

VI. Sub-Committee Reports

A. Treasurer: No report was given.

B. Planning & Development: Ms. Dearborn reported that some formal plans were being drawn up to present the idea of dedicating the Batz Property in Bob Tedford's honor. Ms. Anderson mentioned that it's a great location to camp, as the Scout groups regularly have campouts there. Permits are available for campouts and campfires. The Committee may reach out to the First Selectman to see if grills and a farm table could be added for a "farm-to-table" type event. Ms. Dearborn stated that one of the requests in the deed when the land was donated to the Town was that it be used for education.

C. Maintenance: Ms. Dearborn stated that the Moser property is almost ready to be brush-hogged and cleared. The hope is to keep it a neighborhood trail, but clear some of the fields so there is a beautiful view. First Selectman Spielman is planning on walking the neighborhood and meeting with the neighbors to give them more information in the near future. Ms. Amsel asked if she can continue with conversations and event planning with the Boy Scouts or if she should check with the Committee before each one. Ms. Anderson shared that Lauren Desrocher may have an individual interested in being the steward of the Batz Property; they have a lot of experience building bridges and kiosks and blazing

trails. Mr. Dinnie asked if there was anything the Scouts could do at the Moser property at this time; Ms. Dearborn answered that they need to figure out next steps before anyone can assist. She also reported that the Girl Scouts are cleaning up the Metcalf Property for Earth Day; they may be working on the entrance as well. Ms. Anderson stated that the Committee has been discussing blazing the Windermere Trail so that could be a good project for the Boy Scouts but that they need to check with the people from Hockanum Valley; no power equipment is allowed on the property.

D. Community Outreach: Ms. van Zelm has a deadline of Friday to get information submitted for the next Ellington Connection edition, which comes out in May. The May and June events will be focused on. She also has press dates ready for the Girl Scout clean-up, Earth Day, the Bird Walk and Trails Day.

Ms. Anderson asked if anyone had a fish bowl, as she would like to bring some tadpoles for the Earth Day display on April 27 on the Town Green. Ms. Dearborn shared that the Committee was getting some maps from Ellington Printery to hand out at Earth Day. Linda requested 200 brochures for Kimball and 300 flyers for the Bird Walk as well; Hall Memorial Library has offered to do a display for the Committee events. Flyers would also be distributed at Public Works, Parks and Recreation and the First Selectman's Office, with public event calendars at each location as well. Ms. Anderson will create the calendar and Ms. Dearborn will put together a flyer for the Bird Walk.

Bill Yuel will be hosting a Mushroom Walk on September 14 at Batz, beginning at 10:00 am. He has a lot of experience with the topic and will send the Committee his information.

A Moonlight Walk is scheduled for August 15 beginning around 7:30 pm, as the sun will be going down around 8:15 pm. 2019 is the 50th anniversary of the historic moonwalk; there is a documentary of Apollo 11 that the library is trying to get to play the week of the Moonlight event.

The Committee is also looking into holding a Botany Walk at Batz; Gwen Feldman is a well-known botanist at UConn that may be a good resource for this event.

E. Trail of Treats:

Ms. Anderson met with Dustin Huguenin, Director of Recreation, and Brookside Park will be location for the event. Lights will be turned on in the parking lot and the tennis court/football field area as well. A portable spotlight will be needed for the grass parking area. Ellington Volunteer Fire Department may have one the Committee could borrow; Ms. Anderson will reach out to them. Ms. Boone also stated she may have access to a spotlight that could be used. Ms. Dearborn figured that they would have 80 sponsor spaces if the bigger path is used. A formal application will be provided to busses, which will be send out via email. The Committee will need to know if any interactive booths will be there so they have more space. There is no wholesale number for the Town but there is a tax-free number. It was asked if anyone knows of a face painter that would volunteer their time, perhaps art students from the high school. Mr. Huguenin said that the Committee could use the inflatable arch again this year. Public Works has expressed that they do not want some of last year's parking spots used; they don't want kids to have access to the playing fields. Only service dogs will be allowed, no pets. The time is being extended from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm to alleviate some of the congestion. The Committee is planning to ask for a tax-deductible "suggested donation" of \$25 per sponsor as a set-up fee. Ms. Timms-Ferrara previously stated that she will look into a separate account so the funds aren't lost and will figure out exactly who checks should be made out to. The Committee will have a table at the event. Mr. Huguenin suggested thanking the sponsors by taking out a full-page ad in the Ellington Connection, as well as promoting them in a few other places. The Committee agreed to keep sponsorships at a single level for this year. There will also be a table at the entrance for Ellington Food Bank donations.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (DEARBORN), SECONDED (MCCORMICK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:16 PM.

Submitted by Julia G