



P.O. Box 57 Durham, CT 06422-0057

Meeting Minutes for March 8, 2011

Attending:

Leslie Lewis, Laurie Giannotti, Judy Beliveau, Diane Ciano, Ruth Beardsley.

Call To Order:

The meeting was held at the Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin, CT. Meeting called to order at 6:15PM.

Review Meeting Minutes:

The minutes were unavailable from the last meeting.

Web page for EAC update:

Laurie has worked on the web page and will e-mail members the page to review and make final comments.

Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp Update - & Map

Diane reported that CHC members Meg, Bruce and herself met with DEP Laurie and Scott Dawley the morning of 3/8 to discuss work to be started for the project of the Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp and a marked trail system approval for multi-use. A copy of the 4th Qtr. RTP report was given to Scott regarding problems encountered on getting the project started: the inconsistency of information and lack of communication, the inconsistency on the number of campsites that were originally designated for the horse camp on the DEP website and approval of a 5-10-15 mile marked loop trail system submitted over 2 years ago.

Campsite:

CHC plans on getting equipment to the campground that would get the bulk of work done in a timely fashion in order to get a large amount of the money reimbursed from the RTP to repay the contractors. The contract was reviewed again and Scott will work with CHC in getting the project started. Scott said there may be a possibility to have the large trees cut as a forestry operation to help open up the sites for the trailers and trucks to get in and that there still may be the possibility to have solar toilets installed with the cooperation of DEP. Laurie, Scott and CHC members will walk the campsite this spring to review the camp and finalize the project.

Multiple – Use Trails:

Laurie gave copies of the proposed trail route map and it was agreed that CHC members, DEP and someone from CFPA will walk the trail sections that utilize sections of the blue blazed trail that connects Goodwin State Forest to Natchaug State Forest. Diane stated that the blue blazed trail sections that were being proposed as multi use were the most sustainable connecting trails that would coincide to support other uses and some of them utilize old dirt roads.

A site walk for the Shenipsit Trails is also planned in the spring.

DEP Web Site:

As reported earlier, the campsite has 28 sites - the DEP website was changed to 15 and then back to 22 and information promoting the camp was taken down and now is difficult to find on the website.

Laurie will work with the DEP web person to get the information back up and easier to find.

Legislative discussion:

Discussion was on the Liability Bills proposed concerning municipal liability and other entities for recreational activities. CHC has worked with several legislators in supporting the bills as well as CFPA.

Leslie brought up the Bill proposed by Rep. Hovey regarding protection of horseback riding on trails: **HB 5010 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN TRAILS FOR EQUINE USE**. Purpose: To preserve certain horse trails in the state. *NOTES*: This bill would expand the list of specifically named trails available for equestrian use. The bill is designed to protect equestrian access to multi-use trails by preventing those trails from ever prohibiting equestrians. She reported that someone from the Environment Committee (not the whole Committee) would like EAC to send a report to the Committee indicating what trails EAC and the DEP agree are multi-use and should be included in a bill like this, and that this report be done annually.

Old Business:

EAC Appointments:

Judy reported that she has been in contact with her local federal legislator – Rep Hines, for help in getting her appointment to the EAC for the 4th congressional district, as no appointment has been made to fill this position since Gail's passing. The appointment comes from the House Republican Leader, Larry Cafero. That office has been contacted and the executive assistant will be getting back with her.

It was suggested that Amy write a letter as the Chairperson for EAC to recommend that members on the Council be reappointed if the Legislative Appointees have changed since the election. Amy, Leslie, & Diane are all set. Ruth's appointing legislator (Denise Merrill, then the House Majority Leader) is now the Secretary of the State. She will have to get reappointed by the current House Majority Leader and will contact the new one and her local state legislators about reappointment. Jan and Meg were not available to report if their legislators have changed.

New Business:

Ruth reported that Diane, Meg herself and the CEO of Ebony Horsewomen, Pat Kelly spoke in favor of the "River Walk Trail" at the public hearing in Windsor regarding town approval for appropriating \$870,000 for costs in connection with the construction of a riverfront paved multi-use trail from the CT DEP boat launch at East Barber Street south to the Hartford City line. Most people spoke in favor of it. Equestrian use and natural surface was the point that was made at the meeting as it has been promoted as a paved trail. Concerns were brought up that the area is a flood plain and that asphalt may be washed away into the river as flooding occurs yearly. Diane asked who owned the property and what trail surface it recommends – Laurie said the property is owned by DEP and stone dust or other suitable surface is recommended. Discussion was also on street bikers wanting to utilize the trail for transportation that would want pavement. Laurie will check into other porous/soft materials (recycled rubber?). It was mentioned that Ruth contact UConn professor of landscape architecture Mark Westa and a Post Univ. student about the surfacing material research.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 14th at 6:00 PM Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin, CT

Respectfully Submitted By: Diane Ciano, Acting Recording Secretary – March 9, 2011