

Thompson Trails Committee MINUTES February 6, 2017

In attendance: Karen Durlach, Mike Lajeunesse, John Kochinskas, Lucille Langlois, Charlie Obert, David Ostrowski, Lynn Landry; Brian Loffredo, Ken Pickren, Ken Butkiewicz.

The Regular meeting was called to order in the Merrill Seney Room at 7 PM by Moderator Charlie Obert.

Motion made by Karen Durlach, seconded by John Kochinskas, to accept the minutes of December 5, 2017 as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Letter from Wyndham Land Trust, to be discussed this evening.
- Letter from David Barber about Genesee & Wyoming Railroad, to be discussed this evening.

Finance: Charlie reported that the Turkey Trot 2016 was a success and he will send exact figures by e-mail. He will also request information from Finance Director Orla McKiernan-Raftery for the next meeting.

Citizens' Comments: Brian reported that one of the bridges on the Airline Trail near Sunset Hill Road needs an upgrade. Karen will assess with our State contact.

DEEP Grant: Karen had sent copies of the grant application to the committee after it was submitted by Town Planner Mary Ann Chinatti. We reviewed and discussed the content of the grant for tools and trail repair equipment, how to identify, monitor, store and transport the equipment.

*Motion made by Charlie Obert, seconded by Lucille Langlois, that we approve to disperse Thompson Trails Committee funds in the amount of our 20% share of the DEEP Connecticut Recreational Trails Program Grant to acquire equipment to maintain Thompson trails. We also recommend the purchase of an enclosed secure trailer for storage and transport. **Disperse Trail Committee funds of 20% of the total 2016-17 Connecticut Recreational Trails Program Grant awarded by DEEP after fully executed and signed contract by DEEP.***

Discussion on Motion: Any vehicle would be owned, insured and registered by the Town of Thompson and the Trails Committee shall develop policies for usage, safety and volunteers. All in favor, motion carries.

Wyndham Land Trust / Thompson Tract Purchase: The Wyndham Land Trust is considering the purchase of 254 acres in the Bull Hill area. Trails are existing and could be further developed.

Motion by Charlie Obert, seconded by Mike Lajeunesse, to send a letter to Wyndham Land Trust. Karen Durlach will draft the letter stating our support of the project for trail development and stewardship, and protection of habitat and open space. The letter will also ask if specific support is needed.

Discussion on Motion: If funding is needed before our next Regular Meeting, a Special Meeting shall be called. All in favor, motion carries.

Connectivity Efforts, Events: There was a discussion of the letter regarding the Genesee & Wyoming Rail bed and Karen will contact Mary Ann Chinatti for clarification. This is a 3.3 mile loop from Quinebaug to LaPort/Linehouse Road. The connecting Mass. portions of the rail bed have been improved and are in use. There was a discussion of ownership, abutters, width of the rail bed and taxes. There was a consensus to pursue this topic. Karen will draft a letter and share by e-mail.

- Charlie will organize a Ribbon Cutting of the Airline Trail Bridge for CT Tails Day, June 4, 2017.
- John will organize a canoe paddle or hike with The Last Green Valley for TLGV spring events.
- John and Rob Paton attended the January 1 Airline Trail event, which was well-attended.

Trails Updates: John will monitor the Airline Trail for overhead hanging trees. He recently worked on the Tri-State Marker Trail and has placed 49 geo-caches on the Airline Trail, with a good response. He has also been working with US Army Corps of Engineers for geo-cache sites at West Thompson Lake. There was a discussion for an alternate site for the Ithiel Towne Bridge.

Reports from Neighboring Towns:

- Ken Butkiewicz described the installation of 16 Natural History signs from Quinebaug to Southbridge and ongoing work on the French River Bridge in Dudley/Webster.
- Ken Pickren described the Rail Trail in Mass. and talked about the construction of the trail between Dudley and Route 131. The trail in downtown Southbridge has been opened up to increase visibility. Litter remains a problem.

Mapping/GPS Unit/Website/Brochures/Facebook Page: There are 4 map holders to be mounted on kiosks. Samples of the new maps brochures are being shown around by Charlie recruit sponsors for printing. There was a discussion of adding a QR Code and linking to the website. Charlie will contact Marie Mongeau, Executive Assistant to the First Selectman, to clarify website concerns.

Other Business/Next Meeting: The next meeting is April 3, 2017.

Adjournment:

Motion made by Lucille Langlois, seconded by John Kochinskas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM. All in favor, motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted, Lynn Landry