



AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

March 12, 2014

Meeting Notes

Upcoming Events

- **TBA -Paddle and Bike Day is under consideration in Waterbury.**
 - Will probably be a shorter course than last year, beginning at Riders Café.
- **April 16, 2014 – Bus Maintenance Facility Information Meeting W/DOT**
 - 7pm Watertown High School Lecture Room, 324 French Street.
 - The new CTTransit Waterbury bus facility will be located at the site of the old Watertown Drive-In along the future route of the Greenway. DOT has agreed to include a parking area and trailhead for use by greenway visitors.
- **April 22, 2014 – Margaret Minor from River's Alliance will speak to Watertown Land Trust.**
 - Time/Location TBD (contact the Watertown Land Trust).
 - Will discuss Steele Brook and the Naugatuck River.
- **June 7, 2014 - National Trails Day:**
 - **Harwinton:** Joan Kirchner is organizing a 5K Walk, Wheelchair & Run event. For more info, see web site: <http://tinyurl.com/k8rgfex>.
 - **Watertown:** Steele Brook Greenway event along the Phase II route.
 - **Waterbury:** Fulton Park guided and self-guided walking tours and canoe/kayak in the ponds.

News

- **Watertown:** Chuck Berger presented plans and discussed the CT Transit bus facility that DOT is planning on the site of the old Watertown Drive-in.
 - DOT agreed to include a trailhead and parking lot in their plans after a request was made by COGCNV. The plans that DOT has drawn up only include grading of a 7 space parking lot and the construction of a gravel driveway.
 - Watertown will be requesting that more be done by DOT including a larger finished parking lot and water delivery to the site. They will also be requesting construction of an approximately 2,000 foot section of trail adjacent to the trailhead and bus facility.
 - DEEP may be willing to help since it has previously proposed fishing access on that section of river.
 - A **motion** was made by Sam Gold to write a **letter supporting Watertown's requests to DOT**, seconded by Ingrid Manning, and **unanimously approved** (to be drafted by COG).
 - Chuck also talked about the Watertown to Thomaston section of trail. DEEP has contracted to do an archaeological/ historical review. On a section between Rte. 8 and the railroad tracks, research has discovered the presence of a major water main which supplies water to Waterbury from its reservoirs. This may have an impact on the planning and construction process.
- **Thomaston:** Will Cummings discussed a 14+ acre parcel of land in Thomaston that is adjacent to the location of the future CT Transit maintenance facility. The property is located between the

Naugatuck River and Waterbury Rd. just north of Frost Bridge Rd., and includes a section of blue-blazed trail.

- The property's owner owes approximately \$40k in unpaid property taxes to Thomaston, and has offered to donate the property to the town in lieu of back taxes. Thomaston has refused this offer, and it looks like the property will be auctioned off to recoup a portion of what is owed to the town.
- Will expressed his desire to see the property protected, and explained that since the parcel is not appropriate for a building lot, auction estimates should be low, around \$5k. Thomaston does not have a land trust, and Will stated that if no one else steps up, he might purchase it himself, or start a new land trust.
- Susan Petersen suggested contacting Eric Hammerling at CT Forest and Parks, the association that maintains the Blue-Blazed trail system (CTF&P has since shown some interest).
- John Monroe suggested approaching land trusts in the surrounding area rather than starting a new one. Watertown has a land trust, and Vicki Barnes is on their board.
- **Seymour:** Fred Messorre was unable to attend, but sent updates which Jack Walsh discussed:
 - The Master Plan for Seymour Greenway Plan and Linear Park was finalized in December, and the town has entered into a contract with Milone and MacBroom for Phase 1 (upland trail feasibility). VCOG is investigating federal transportation assistance to construct the initial phases of the greenway.
 - Progress continues on the adjacent \$4.45M Tingue Dam Bypass Channel.
 - Fred was successful in working with DEEP and NOA to secure commitments for EV charging stations at future trail parking areas. He is nominating the Master Plan for CT Main Street's Excellence in Planning award.
- **Ansonia:** Sheila O'Malley is Ansonia's new Director of Economic Development and Grant Writer.

Steering Committee Membership Updates

- Under-Represented Towns:
 - Thomaston and Naugatuck were represented by Will Cummings and Jim Stewart, respectively, while Fred Messorre sent an update from Seymour.
 - John Monroe is working to find a representative from Torrington, while there has been no word from Litchfield.
- The Committee also welcomed Laura Wildman from Princeton Hydro and Jim MacBroom from Milone and MacBroom.
 - Jim MacBroom briefly discussed his experience working along the river on projects in several towns represented on the committee, notably Linden Park in Naugatuck and the Tingue Dam Bypass Project in Seymour.

Updates from Subcommittees:

- Local Relationships:
- State Relationships: Fred Reese (DEEP Environmental Review) will be looking at the CTTransit Maintenance Facility in Watertown.
- Economic Development/ Grants:
- Advocacy/ Lobbying:
- Communications/ Website: Web design consultant hired to update website.
- Signage: Still waiting on grant.
- Engineering/ Design/ Construction: A consultant will be chosen for the Watertown/ Thomaston section in consultation with both towns.

- Events Coordination: Paddle day is under consideration.
- Environment:
- Art!: A great deal of interest was shown in this subject, with the discussion centered around grant availability for art. While it is not certain whether DEEP grant money can be used to fund art, there are several foundations including the Community Foundation, which specialize in grants for public art projects.
 - There are many opportunities to include history education and public art along the river, and art is an excellent vehicle to help connect users to the river's history, most notably the flood of '55.
 - Waterbury is planning a welding festival for September which will feature welders turning scrap metal into art.
 - Grants may be easier to obtain if you work through an art commission rather than just a committee.

Greenway Role in Economic Development and Community Revitalization

- Kathy MacNamara discussed **Waterbury's TIGER Grant Application and Phase I extension of the Waterbury section of greenway.**
 - The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program is a federal grant administered by the US Department of Transportation aimed at incentivizing transportation projects which generate economic growth, reduce energy use, and transform environmentally degraded areas in economically depressed areas. The TIGER Grant request deadline this year is on April 28th (not June 1 as previously thought).
 - The program is tailored to large grant requests (minimum \$10M) which are typically awarded to larger cities. Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport have all successfully applied for TIGER funds. TIGER grants require at least 20% funding match (but to be more competitive, a higher match helps). A 2 year design and 5 year construction allowance provide for larger more complex projects to be completed, in contrast to previous TIGER rounds which favored shovel-ready projects.
 - Waterbury, through its greenway consultant, The RBA Group, will apply for a TIGER grant to fund Phase II of the Waterbury section of Greenway. The approximately \$33 million project, currently in design by RBA, will consist of a bike/pedestrian trail from Eagle Street along the Naugatuck River to West Main St, pedestrian friendly "Complete Streets" connections to the train station and downtown (via Freight Street), and a riverside park adjacent to downtown along Jackson Street. Additional North-South connections will be made in the Freight Street area to make the area more favorable for development. The project could drastically change the look and feel of downtown Waterbury, attract businesses, visitors and residents, and jump-start the completion of the central section of the Greenway.
 - The Greenway project will take advantage of planned improvements to the Waterbury Train Station, which will also be the terminus of the CTfastrack express service from Hartford. The CL&P building adjacent to the station is in the final stages of demolition, and there are planned improvements to the platform, parking lot, and baggage room. The Waterbury line is one of DOT's top priorities for economic development, and the Steering Committee should continue to work with the DOT with regards to it.
 - If successful in securing the grant, this project could have regional benefits, not only jump starting construction on the greenway, but also attracting business, industry and residential development that will benefit the entire region.
 - The next SEDS
- Waterbury requested a **letter from the NRG Steering Committee in support of Waterbury's TIGER Grant application.** A **motion** was made by Sam Gold, seconded by Will Cummings, and it was **approved unanimously** by the committee to provide said letter (to be drafted by COGCNV).

- Waterbury also requested that the COGCNV become a partner with Waterbury in the application for the grant. I am happy to report that this partnership was unanimously approved by the COGCNV at their monthly meeting on March 14.

NaugatuckRiver.net Update

- New NaugatuckRiver.net promotional cards were introduced and passed out. They will be placed at points of interest and area businesses to help bolster website visitation.
- A contract has been signed with a website designer to update the website to be more user-friendly and to focus on getting information to those looking to get out on the river.

Other Business

- The youth involvement workshop offered by Jim O'Rourke from the Waterbury YMCA was postponed, and a new date will be scheduled (possibly following the May meeting depending on interest).
- Updates to the greenway route maps are needed. Trail sections should be categorized by their status (completed, in design, under construction, etc.), and updated regularly. COGCNV Staff will begin this process.
- Seymour was discussed for the location of next month's meeting, allowing for a field trip to the Tingue Dam Bypass project (facilitated by Jim MacBroom).

Next Meeting – May 14th - Location to be determined (possibly Seymour)

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

(Present in **Bold**)

Aaron Budris- Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

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 Messoro - Town of Seymour

Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation

***Chair* Jack Walsh - Valley United Way**

Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jim Whitney - Western CT Convention & Visitors Bureau

Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission

Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW

John Monroe – National Park Service: Rivers & Trails Program

Kate Rattan - CT DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury

Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group & Housatonic Valley Association

Kim Barbieri - City of Torrington

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

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)

Sam Gold - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

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

Yi Ding - Valley COG