



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Torrington • Harwinton • Litchfield • Thomaston • Watertown • Waterbury • Naugatuck • Beacon Falls • Seymour • Ansonia • Derby

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 9th, 2018 – 9am

Ansonia City Hall

253 Main Street, Ansonia

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

Co-Chair Jack Walsh opened the meeting, and introductions were made. Mayor David Cassetti welcomed the group to Ansonia.

Mayor Cassetti and Sheila O'Malley discussed recent **progress in Ansonia**. Work is wrapping up on a pedestrian bridge over the Metro North Railroad Line that will connect the existing section of NRG to Pershing Drive. Previously, the trail dead ended at the rail, and NVCOG recorded that there were approximately 1/10th of the usage on the Ansonia section of trail as compared to the adjacent Derby section just on the other side of Division Street. The purpose of the bridge is to connect the NRG to the sidewalk network and downtown Ansonia. The 130 foot bridge was prefabricated in 2 pieces and assembled on site. The 80,000lb span was then lowered into place on new abutments with a crane, requiring calm weather and a break in rail operations that was provided on April 21st while Metro North service was suspended for track maintenance. Since being put in place, a concrete deck has been poured, leaving only paving of the approaches and landscaping to be completed before the bridge is opened for use. See CT Post coverage of the bridge placement [HERE](#). The \$2.3 million project was funded by the FHA and CTDOT with a 20% town match. (A tour of the site followed the meeting - photos [HERE](#)). Mayor Cassetti plans to name the bridge "The Copper City Pass".

Ansonia also received a \$900,000 Transportation Alternatives Block Grant to complete segments 3 and 4 of their [Riverwalk Design Plan](#). Segment 3 includes construction of "Lighthouse Park" adjacent to the Naugatuck River Levee just south of the Target parking lot. The park will include a 12' wide walkway leading from South Main Street to a lighthouse tower landmark feature that will provide views of the river and beyond. The park will also provide access to segment 4, a paved multiuse trail on top of the levee on the east bank of the Naugatuck River, much like the existing NRG on the west side of the River. The trails on either side of the river will be linked to the north by sidewalk along Pershing Drive, Bridge Street, West Main and Main Streets. A Loop will be completed on the south side along the sidewalks on Main Street and Division Street, connecting to the Trailhead on N. Division Street. DeCarlo & Doll is currently working on the design.

Aaron Budris discussed the DEEP Recreational Trails grant funded **Signage Procurement Project** which will design, purchase and install interpretive and directional signage for the NRG as prescribed in the [NRG Signage Design and Wayfinding Manual](#). The grant will pay to purchase interpretive signs for open sections of trail, as well as trailhead wayfinding signs that will help potential trail users locate trailheads. NVCOG will be designing and assisting with sign siting (see [interactive sign siting map](#)) and developing a sign inventory to keep track of trail related signage. Installation will be the responsibility of each municipality. Aaron explained that he has been working since the grant was received to get confirmation from CT DOT that the designs meet DOT standards and would be allowed along state routes. After months of no reply, a traffic engineer finally returned a call, and the conversation seemed promising. She did point out that the typeface used on some of the signs was likely not compliant, and NVCOG made changes to reflect that comment (revised signs [HERE](#)). Aaron explained that the project was being discussed by CT DOT, and he expected a call any day. He also welcomed any comments or suggestions about sign type and

"The Naugatuck River from Torrington to Derby is rich with history, stunning scenery and wildlife. Just as the river built and shaped our towns and cities, the Naugatuck River Greenway will be a driving force for the next century and beyond.

Our mission is to harness the vitality and protect the health of the river for economic development and quality of life for all."

siting. **UPDATE:** CT DOT responded on May 11 that trailhead wayfinding signs will NOT be allowed along state routes, and would likely not be allowed into the attractions signage program. NVCOG is looking at alternatives to the original plan.

Jack led a discussion about upcoming trail openings. Ansonia and Seymour are both nearing completion on NRG projects. Rory Burke, Assistant to First Selectman Kurt Miller, explained that the town is still working with Milone and MacBroom on a few punch list items before they sign off that the project is completed, but would be planning a ribbon cutting. There was discussion about coordinating events in Seymour and Ansonia, and holding them on the same day to highlight progress on the larger NRG. There was agreement that coordination would be beneficial, and Jack suggested that NVCOG help facilitate. Contact Aaron.

The **Thomaston-Torrington Routing Study** is underway, and consultant BSC has completed initial data gathering and compilation. NVCOG assisted by gathering all relevant GIS data and existing reports, including from USACE which required a FOIA request. BSC has also conducted field walks of all identified potential routes on both sides of the river, collecting GPS data and photos along the way. You can see some photos from the site walks [HERE](#). BSC is working on integrating that data into the base maps that were developed with the existing information, and will be developing a matrix with stakeholders to help assess potential routes. BSC Project Manager Rob Pinckney announced that he is leaving the firm. Bill Paille, PE will be taking over as PM, and BSC has promised no change to the scope or schedule. Bill has extensive experience on multiuse trails, and should be a good fit for this project.

Outreach for the NRG **Economic Study** continues. To date, meetings have been held with the CEOs of Naugatuck, Derby, and Ansonia, and a presentation was given to the Beacon Falls Board of Selectmen. Meetings are scheduled in Torrington and Seymour. The discussions have covered other greenway related issues as well, and have served as an opportunity to help shore up representation in towns that do not have regular attendance at meetings. Aaron also presented the Economic Impact project recently at a meeting of the CT Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects in a panel about multiuse trails and greenways.

The **Watertown Thomaston Recreational Trails** project is also underway. The project scope includes design of critical elements in Watertown, and design and construction of a section in Thomaston connecting a trailhead on Old Waterbury Road near the dog pound to the future crossing of Branch Brook. VHB has presented a [Draft Concept Plan](#), and NVCOG and the towns have provided feedback. The plan includes two parking areas along York (Old Waterbury) road to accommodate 13 vehicles with additional parking available along the road shoulders. A 10 foot wide stone dust trail will extend 1100 feet from the parking area following along the northern edge of the WPC facility property, turning south parallel to Branch Brook, then turning toward the river at the preferred crossing location. VHB is investigating bridge types and costs, and NVCOG is exploring funding options (the bridge will not be covered by the Rec Trails grant). A field walk was conducted on April 20th to review the plan and discuss concerns including the proximity of the trail to shallow sewer lines, and the potential for impact to the Waterbury water supply main near the proposed bridge landing site. A City of Waterbury Water Department and Thomaston WPC officials were on hand to discuss and were assured that precautions will be taken to avoid impact. Any comments from the committee can be sent to Aaron. NVCOG's contract with DEEP ends in August and an extension has been filed to allow for construction in spring 2019.

Roundtable Discussion:

Thomaston: Jeremy Leifert explained that the town has discussed the inclusion of the NRG in development plans with the owner of a property on Hill Road across from USACE property at Thomaston Dam. The town is looking forward to routing developed during the routing study to help determine the proper location of an easement on the property, and Aaron said that he will ask BSC to look at that area first. The owner of the Plume and Atwood property has also expressed willingness to include the trail in the redevelopment of that property. That would

almost allow passage from Downtown Thomaston to Thomaston Dam, with the exception of two private properties on Railroad Street Annex. The routing study is looking at this area.

Watertown: The Steele Brook Greenway pedestrian bridge over Steele Brook in Oakville has been placed, and work is ongoing to complete the approaches.

Waterbury's consultant NV5 is currently designing Phase I from the Naugatuck Line to Eagle Street with a construction start date of spring 2019. The project is fully funded for construction.

In **Harwinton**, Joan Kirchner is planning the 5th annual Wheels and Heels Road Race in memory of her son Jamie. The race will be held along Valley Road (a proposed NRG Route) on June 2nd. Details at www.wheelsandheels5k.com.

Membership Changes were discussed. Rory Burke, Assistant to First Selectman Kurt Miller in Seymour, will be replacing Fred Messoro who no longer works for the town. There is an ongoing discussion about membership in Beacon Falls, with the likely outcome that Josh Carey, a committee member representing the Connecticut Community Foundation and Beacon Falls Resident, will share the role with Liz Falzone, who is often unable to make it to meetings, but would like to be engaged with the group.

A discussion about **increasing participation** included inviting speakers to future meetings. One idea that was brought up again was asking one or several public works directors that manage existing trails to discuss maintenance issues, and real costs of upkeep. Jack also suggested trying to get membership in Shelton since their Riverwalk will connect to the NRG.

Next Meeting: August 8th at 9 am

Location – TBD

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Present in **bold**

Municipal Representatives

Torrington	Rista Malanca*
Litchfield	Cleve Fuessenich
Harwinton	Suzanne Stitch
	Joan Kirchner
Thomaston	Jeremy Leifert
Watertown	Roy Cavanaugh
Waterbury	Kenny Curran
	Sal Porzio
Naugatuck	Jim Stewart
Beacon Falls	Liz Falzone
	Josh Carey
Seymour	Rory Burke
Ansonia	Sheila O'Malley
Derby	Jack Walsh*

Stakeholder Representatives

Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Bill Purcell – Valley Chamber
Bob Gregorski - Naugatuck River Watershed Association & Trout Unlimited
Christopher Way - US Army Corps of Engineers
Chuck Berger – Retired Watertown Town Engineer
Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway
Courteny Morehouse – Housatonic Valley Association
Dave Faber –Naugatuck Valley Outdoors Club
Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom
Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y
Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW
Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation
Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group
Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways
Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Melanie Zimycki – CT DOT
Rick Lynn – Northwest Hills Council of Governments
Steve Casey – Railroad Museum of New England
Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Program
Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

*Indicates Co-Chair

Also Present

David Casseti – Mayor of Seymour
Billy Taylor – Rep. Esty's Office