



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

Special Meeting Notes

Wednesday, November 10th, 2018 – 9am

NVCOG Conference Room

49 Leavenworth Street, Waterbury

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

Co-Chair Jack Walsh opened the meeting, and introductions were made.

Aaron Budris explained that this special meeting was called to discuss grant applications to the upcoming Rec Trails grant program. DEEP has announced a new round of grant funding through the Recreational Trails program, and a request for applications has been sent out with a deadline of October 31st. \$3 million will be awarded in what will surely be a very competitive process. More information is available on the DEEP Rec Trails page [HERE](#). NVCOG is aware of five applications being submitted that directly relate to the NRG, and several that may be tangentially related or unrelated to the NRG.

Jack requested that the committee go through the directly related projects first, including submissions from Derby, Ansonia, Thomaston and NVCOG on behalf of Waterbury, and UConn.

Jack explained that **Derby** will be submitting a grant application request in the amount of \$250,000 for replacement of the wooden round rail fence that lines much of the trail, and the addition of some interpretive signage about the history of the City. Jack explained that the trail is now more than 13 years old, and is heavily used. The wood round rail fence was untreated, and has been slowly deteriorating over the last few years. Public works have been replacing rails as needed, but the fence will need total replacement soon. The City is planning to replace the fence in kind, but this time use pressure treated lumber for an extended lifespan.

Kathy MacNamara and Judy Mancini from the explained the City of **Waterbury** proposal to be submitted by NVCOG on behalf of the City. Phase I of the Waterbury NRG (Naugatuck Line to Eagle Street) is in final design and set to go to bid for construction in the spring. The City's next priority is what they are referring to as Phase I extension, which would bring the trail from Eagle Street to West Main Street, and into downtown. There was some initial routing and design work conducted in 2013 on this segment as part of the City's Federal TIGER application. The route is very complex. It crosses several active and legacy industrial properties, and will require several bridges and complex engineering to make connections. The City hoped to design and construct the greenway as part of the TIGER funded WATER project, but funding for the trail was not included in the City's award – partially due to the complexity of the project and the tight deadlines tied to the federal funding. The City is proposing to hire a consulting firm to conduct a study to build on the initial work done in 2013. This project would re-establish the trail's route in light of new information, investigate property ownership, conduct environmental due diligence, investigate engineering needs, and conduct some preliminary design work. The consultant will prepare detailed environmental, engineering and construction cost estimates to prepare the City for future funding opportunities. The City has asked NVCOG to submit the application and administer the grant if it is awarded, and has pledged cash to cover the match requirements. NVCOG would contract with and oversee a consultant.

Bill Luneski summarized **Ansonia's** proposal to conduct a routing study of the NRG from Pershing Drive north to the city boundary with Seymour with a request for \$70,000. This is one of the last sections of trail where routing has not been established, and the City is committed to expanding the trail. The Greenway has been completed

"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."

from the Derby/Ansonia border north to Pershing Drive. The City remains committed to completing the Greenway north to Seymour. Identifying a route from Pershing Drive to the municipal border with Seymour is critical in positioning the City for design/construction funding to ultimately complete the construction of the NRG in Ansonia. Mark Nielsen asked if the City considered working with Seymour. Bill said that they would be to ensure that they are both on the same side of the river with plans going forward.

Aaron explained that Jeremy Leifert was unable to make it to the meeting and asked him to give a summary for the **Thomaston's** project. The town is submitting a request for approximately \$200,000 to design a section of the Naugatuck River Greenway trail. The trail section would begin at the trailhead parking lot currently being designed (and expected to be constructed in 2019) just north of the town animal control facility. It would follow Old Waterbury Road and Waterbury Road north to the Route 8 access ramps and a northern terminus to be determined. The project would provide design and construction documents necessary to construct the next phase of the NRG, and would provide access from the town's sidewalk network to the NRG and Mattatuck State Forest trails.

Aaron explained that there was one more project that is directly related to the NRG, but that is a bit different from those previously discussed. NVCOG has been administering a Rec Trails grant funding the pilot of the **CT Trail Census Program** over the last 2 years. Partnering with UConn and the CT Greenways Council, NVCOG has developed a program that is collecting trail use and user data statewide at over 15 multiuse trail locations. Infrared pedestrian counters and volunteer led in-person intercept surveys are being used to compile important information about how many people are using trails when and for what purpose, as well as collecting demographic and economic information about trail users. The 2-year pilot has demonstrated the efficacy of the study and the usefulness of the data being collected. It has also shown that additional staffing and capacity will be necessary to gain the most benefit from the program. UConn has agreed to take over the program and expand it, and is submitting a grant proposal for two years of funding for one full time faculty and one part time staff to be dedicated to the program at a cost of appx. \$200k/ year. NVCOG would remain involved as a contracted partner. The NRG in Derby is currently one of the data collection locations, along with several other multiuse trails in the region.

Jack explained that there were several other projects that may not be directly related to the NRG, but should still be discussed. Roy Cavanaugh from Watertown and Kathleen O'Neil from Oxford were present to discuss their grant submissions.

Roy explained that **Watertown** recently opened a new bridge in Oakville over Steele Brook which is already seeing substantial traffic. The town is currently working to connect the bridge location to Unico Field along an abandoned rail line. The town's next priority will be connecting Unico Field to French Street. Funding in the amount of \$160,000 is being sought for performing Phase I and Phase II ESAs on 4 parcels comprising former railroad rights of way along Steele Brook, acquiring properties at IAW appraised values (appraisals have been done), legal and closing costs. Included is approximately \$66,000 for soil scientist and design efforts towards installing a pedestrian bridge on land town recently acquired along Steele Brook. This represents an extension of trail previously acquired and constructed using state and local funds.

Kathleen O'Neil explained that **Oxford** will submit an application for the 2018-2019 Recreational Trails Grant for the 3300 x 8 foot Little River Nature Preserve Trail. The application will request funding of between \$120,000 and \$150,000 for the construction of the trail. Other funding both in cash and in-kind will be available for the bridge, trail entrance, signage and related tasks. The Little River Nature Preserve is located opposite City Hall across route 68, and figures prominently in the town's Main Street plans. Thule has recently volunteered staff to assist with invasive plant removal on the property, and has pledged additional help in the future.

Jack asked Aaron to summarize additional project proposals being submitted in the NVCOG region.

Bethlehem is requesting a Rec Trails grant for the upgrade, extension and refurbishing of the trail system at Swendsen Farm Trail Preserve. This will include adding 250 feet of wooden walkways across wet areas on existing trails; clearing overgrown sections of 2500 feet of additional trails; diseased and dead tree removal, building a new 80-foot elevated wooden walkway to provide birdwatching access to the pond; clearing a section of stream bed near the entrance; and adding several new trail signs. The total cost is estimated at \$26,000, which will be supplemented by \$5,000 of in-kind and volunteer contributions.

Naugatuck is requesting \$65,000 for construction and improvement along Nichols Road with connections to existing trails and the Larkin Bridle Trail. The project will establish and refine trails on two parcels totaling about 95 acres located on Nichols Road that were deeded to the borough to be utilized as open space by Connecticut Water Company. The plan is to create a paved parking area on Nichols Road and have the trails emanate from there. There will be an ADA trail directly linking to the State owned Bridle trail. The existing Nichols Road right of way will be improved and be utilized as a trail that will connect Allerton Road to Shadduck Road in Middlebury.

In **Woodbury**, the town is requesting \$50,000 for design work for drainage and erosion repair work on the Trolley Bed Trail. This project is to address the top priority issues identified in the recently completed Trolley Bed Preserve Management Plan which are to stabilize the primary trail by keeping the water off the trail while minimizing the impact to South Brook. After years without any maintenance, there has been serious erosion damage to the trolley bed and culverts, resulting in environmental impacts. The town is pursuing this funding to engage a Landscape Architect and Engineer to develop a remediation design.

Mark Nielsen explained that the town of **Thomaston** was working with NVCOG to submit an application to the Department of Transportation requesting funding through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTCIP). The funding will be used for construction of a trailhead and trail from Old Waterbury Road to Branch Brook, and construction of a new pedestrian bridge over Branch Brook. The trail was designed with a federal Recreational Trails grant, and the LoTCIP funding will allow for remaining Rec Trails funds to be used for design of the river crossing. The NVCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and the NVCOG Board have endorsed the application. Mark asked for a letter of support from the committee.

Jack opened the floor for discussion, asking whether the Committee should consider support letters for all of the submissions, or just those directly related to the NRG.

Roy asked that the committee consider supporting the projects that may not be directly on the NRG. He explained that there are plans to eventually connect the Steele Brook Greenway to the NRG.

Kathleen O'Neil agreed, explaining that the project in Oxford is part of the town's Main Street project. She explained that Oxford does not have a proper downtown, but that Route 68 is not friendly to pedestrians or cyclists. NVCOG will be conducting a corridor study looking at how to improve the corridor and make it more accessible to more users. One of the town's goals is to connect Seymour's train station and the NRG to Oxford Town Hall and the Larkin Bridle Trail with sidewalks and multiuse trails where possible.

Jack suggested a motion to support all Rec Trails projects and the LoTCIP Application as presented. Roy Cavanaugh made the motion, second by Rista Malanca, and approved unanimously by members present. The Co-Chairs will work with Aaron on letters of support for all rec trails submissions and for Thomaston's LoTCIP Application.

Next Regular Meeting: November 14th at 9 am, Cheshire Town Hall

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

*Indicates Co-Chair - 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 Bill Luneski
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 Zimyeski – 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

Also Present:

Kathy MacNamara – City of Waterbury

Judy Mancini, City of Waterbury

Kathleen O'Neill, Town of Oxford

Robbi Costigan, Town of Oxford