

Economic Development Commission

Trails Subcommittee

May 3, 2016

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Bill Baxter, Jim Brett

Others Present: Land Use Administrator Ruth Mulcahy, Recreation Director Christy Tellier, Selectman Laura Garay, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

The meeting began at 1:00 PM. Mr. Jerram stated that this meeting was being held to discuss strategies for moving forward. Jerram noted that the State had awarded the Grant for Road Safety Audits (RSA) to be performed in New Hartford. Jerram and Baxter had worked collaboratively on this successful endeavor.

Baxter interjected that the framework of communication, collaboration and coordination should continue to move this trail project in the right direction. He stated that he had been corresponding with Neal Pade in Canton seeking information as to how New Hartford and Canton can come together and be successful in linking their individual trail locations into one adjoining trail network.

Jim Brett remarked that it is very important for everyone in the group to be unified and work together, keeping each other informed as to who they are reaching out to and who they are contacting. He stated that duplication of efforts is not a good thing; it waste's peoples' time and energy. Mr. Brett felt it will be important to include representative s from some other Boards, such as Finance and Recreation (in addition to the current members from the Economic Development Commission). He also stated that Mr. Pade from Canton suggests a liaison from the Farmington Trail Committee be involved with New Hartford planning.

Discussion turned to the proposed trail lay –out; with Mr. Jerram clarifying the 3 proposed routes that had been presented to the State for consideration of the RSAs. Jerram noted that the feedback from the State will be critical in providing guidance as to the best route to consider. There was discussion among the group as to the best way to proceed with a trail in the Satan's Kingdom Bridge Area. There are unanswered questions as to the ownership of the land that would provide a path under the bridge. Mr. Brett noted that the "tricky spot" will be at the gorge; and wondered if anyone has any knowledge of floodplain elevations at that location.

The connection of the New Hartford to Canton was also discussed. The concept of having the trail connect in the area of Powder Mill Road; in the vicinity of the nursery known as Twin Gardens appeared to the group to be feasible. Jerram commented that there is a large parcel of land on the New Hartford side that is anticipated to go to Tax Sale in July due to the owner being delinquent with his taxes. This parcel could serve to connect Satans Kingdom to the State forest and out to the Twin Gardens locations.

The group agreed that there are technical and legal questions that need to be answered before an actual trail location can be secured. Feasibility of grade challenges and ownership of property are some unknowns.

Jerram felt that one of the most important steps to be taken is to notify the private property owners in the area of any proposed trail location. Jerram stressed the importance of having the consensus of the abutting property owners at the start of any project. He remarked that Canton was in a better position than New Hartford is currently in when they planned their trail due to the fact that Canton already owned the majority of the land/Rights of Way along the proposed trail. The group agreed with that statement. Jerram stated that a resident owns the “aqueduct” that is in existence in the Wickett Street area of one of the proposed trail paths and that resident has come forward to discuss transferring that property to the town. Jerram informed the group that he had engaged the services of Michael Klein, Soil Scientist, to evaluate the area for wetlands to see if there are any located in that area; the presence of which might disqualify the use of that area; or in the very least, make the area subject to permitting.

The group agreed on five steps that need to be taken in order to move forward:

1. Written correspondence to the State seeking a timeframe for when they expect to conduct the RSAs.
2. Written correspondence to the property owners in the vicinity of the proposed aqueduct trail area if the soil testing results support the potential for a trail, alerting them to this undertaking.
3. Determine ownership under the bridge (the thin strip).
4. Toffolon property – consider having the town take the property if there are no bidders at the tax sale.
5. Draft an RFP for a feasibility study - technical, logistical questions need to be investigated.

The Committee set a date to meet again on May 24 at 1:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant