

**Town of New Hartford
Rails to Trails (Multi Use Trail)
Tuesday, February 7, 2023**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Greg O'Brien, Jeremy Schaller, Jeff Peltier, Pat Cunningham, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

Others Present: Alesia Kennerson, Shelly Lloyd, John Lloyd, Steve Worthington, Elise Crowston, Eric Perotti and others

While allowing time for members of the Committee to arrive at the meeting, Dan gave a brief overview to those assembled of the history of the trail development. He stated that the original goal of this trail was for it to extend from the Village Center to the Canton Town line (with the dream that someday this trail would connect with the existing Farmington River Trail System).

From the onset, it was known that there would be challenges along the way. The committee recognized that it would be best to develop the trail in phases. The meeting tonight will focus on the initial phase. Mr. Jerram explained that the phase I goal was to get from the Village Center to the Waring Plaza (Brewery Legitimus would make a nice stop for trail users). The consultants studied this and learned that the slopes behind Pine Meadow Farms are too challenging for this initial phase and drew plans that depict the trail end at Church Street. A second challenge to the initial phase was access to the old rail bed behind Route 44 in the area of High Street. A switchback access along the embankment was discussed, but the consultants have stated that it is not feasible. A stairway access has been drawn on the plans for the committee to discuss.

After this introduction, First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

Review of Proposed Phase 1 – final draft:

First Selectman Jerram shared the drawings dated 12/09/2022, 12/13/2022 and 12/16/2022 prepared by Kevin Grindle (Barton & Loguidice) in consultation with Val Ferro (Good Earth Advisors) to the committee. The drawings showed the proposed 1st phase of the trail from High Street to Church Street. Also shown was the topographical challenges that are present behind Pine Meadow Farms and 238 Main Street.

Discussion ensued regarding access to High Street. The consultant has included a staircase at High Street to get to the trail head. There will be the need for an easement if the staircase is used as an option for access. It was noted that the First Selectman has been in discussion with the abutting property owner on High Street and has another meeting scheduled with him on the day after this meeting. Committee members were divided as to whether or not a staircase is a viable option for access. There was concern expressed re ADA access. First Selectman Jerram explained that ADA access is available at the Church Street end of the trail. Bikes and strollers would also be able to get to the trail using this as a starting point. An additional option of alleviating the staircase and having a "cul-de-sac" type of turnaround in the High Street area was also discussed. This was not seen as ideal, either. Some members of the committee were of the strong opinion that a switchback along the embankment in the vicinity of High Street should be studied further. Mr. Jerram explained that the engineer has stated that the costs would be astronomical and this initial phase would not get completed if that were to be a "must." Discussion continued and the members agreed that getting a first phase of this trail is the goal.

They see this as a starting point. There can be investigation of alternatives at a later date. All members eventually approved of including the staircase as access to High Street, if terms can be agreed to with the abutting property owner. The challenges with the slopes at Pine Meadow Farms and the extension of the Trail behind 238 Main Street could come later as momentum and support for a trail system grows.

Members of the public offered commentary. Mr. Lloyd questioned the access to Church Street. He would like to see access to Route 44 (Main Street). He was in support of using Main Street as part of the trail system to gain access to the businesses along Route 44 down to the shopping plaza.

A resident on Church Street was concerned about parking along Church Street. Mr. Jerram replied that measures could be taken, if needed, to curb this if it becomes an issue.

Resident Shelly Lloyd offered thanks to the committee for their determination to create a trail. She was pleased that there is a plan to move this forward. She made the comment “beginnings can grow.”

Any Actions necessary to move this portion of the trail forward for consideration of construction grant funding

First Selectman Jerram informed the committee that he had spoken with consultants Kevin and Val regarding funding for construction using grant money from the next round of Trails Grants. They have agreed to gather the necessary information and submit the Grant paperwork for a fee of \$5,000. Submittals are due in March. Mr. Jerram explained that he and his assistant usually do the applications, but there is currently a lot of administrative work to be done with respect to the sale of the water and wastewater assets; which is very time consuming. He asked the committee for approval to pay the consultants for this work.

MOTION: by Schaller to approve the expenditure of \$5,000 to be used for services provided by consultants Kevin Grindle and Val Ferraro to prepare and submit an application using the design to the State of Connecticut DEEP for a trails construction grant; seconded by O’Brien.

Unanimous

MOTION: by O’Brien to adjourn at 7:55 PM; seconded by Cunningham.

Unanimous

*Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*

*Attachments will be filed with the Town Clerk and are available upon request:
Phase I of New Hartford Multi-use Trail – Cover Sheet and 5 additional pages
New Hartford Multi-use Trail Proposed Stair Access – 1 sheet
New Hartford Multi use Trail – Phase1A preliminary lay out – 1 sheet
New Hartford Multi use Trail – Phase 2 Preliminary Layout- 1 sheet*