



State of Delaware
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware 19901

Council on Greenways & Trails

March 11, 2016

9:30 am to 12:00

Location: Deerfield - 507 Thompson Station Rd, Newark, DE

Welcome & Introductions

Charlie Emerson, Acting Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Charlie welcomed everyone to the March 11, 2015 meeting. He invited members and visitors to introduce themselves and identify their group affiliation.

September Meeting Minutes

Charlie Emerson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2015 Council meeting; and asked if there were comments or corrections. Mary Everhart made a motion to approve the minutes; John Martin seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Continuing Business

Trail Bond Bill Funds Fiscal Report – A fiscal report summary was handed out to Council members. Susan Moerschel summarized the obligation to trail projects in the Division of Parks & Recreation for Fiscal Years 2014, 2015, and 2016. She indicated that the Governor's recommended FY17 budget includes \$3 million for DNREC trail projects. Division of Parks & Recreation and Division of Fish & Wildlife trail projects are outlined in the FY17 project section of the report.

Trail Ranking – Bob Ehemann summarized the Council's December 4, 2015 discussion of the proposed trail ranking evaluation tools. At the December meeting, the Council agreed to take action at the first meeting in 2016.

Part 1 Application – Ranks how well sponsor demonstrates:

- project addressed in a comprehensive or other plan
- degree of public participation
- trail network – how project connects, fills gaps
- recreational asset connections
- support facilities – restrooms, way finding, trailhead parking, other
- natural and cultural/historic site access
- accessibility
- transportation and destination links
- resource protection and environmental impacts
- matching funds
- future maintenance

Model ranking:

- proximity to people
- access to areas previously not connected
- multiple uses
- demographic impacts of proposed trails
- trail classifications
- access to businesses, schools, parks, other facilities
- proximity to public transportation
- State Strategies for Spending
- Applicants history of maintaining existing facilities

Ehemann explained that regional/destination parks are typically larger and may not be close to residential neighborhoods. These parks may score low for the walking models but are still important places to make investments.

John Martin: Group wanted ranking tool to determine difference between trail projects versus a first time trail project for a sponsor.

Charlie Emerson: Inquired about how to educate sponsors via a workshop and giving them the criteria. Martin: Some communities could game the application if they know the criteria.

Moerschel: Generally, granting agencies do not release ranking criteria.

Ehemann: Criteria are designed to evaluate and rank proposals; criteria can change or shifted allowing a fluid and flexible emphasis.

Emerson: Stated that the ranking criteria as presented is a good path forward, he supports it. He asked for a motion on the proposed trail ranking criteria.

Martin: Made a motion to approve the Trail Ranking Criteria as developed by the Committee and presented by staff to be used on all trail projects, regardless of funding sources. Mary Everhart: Seconded the John Martin's motion. Motion approved.

Equestrian Report – Mary Everhart

As is typical, this Council member continues to ride the trails primarily in New Castle County. I, and many of my riding companions are using Facebook to report riding activities. Open and closed groups have formed so that plans may be shared. I personally am a member of two open groups and one closed group for riding. Our local driving club also posts plans online regarding upcoming drives. This use of social media helps individuals make connections to ride and/or drive with each other.

Announcements

Trail user community meeting – discussion of trail-related issues – Susan Moerschel reported that Ray Bivens requested a joint meeting of the trail user community and the Division's Trail Team. The purpose of the meeting will be to share with the user community how trail planning is approached – from evaluating existing park conditions, to gathering new information/data, and determining sustainable alignments. We would like this meeting to include the Council on Greenways & Trails and be scheduled as the fall (October 12th) meeting for the Council. The gathering is likely to be in an evening.

National Trails Day – June 4, 2016 – Gary Kirk is leading a hike. Other activities are in planning stages in parks.

Council meetings – June 10; October 12; locations to be determined.

Rail Bikes – Ray Bivens announced that rail bikes are being tested on the Wilmington & Western Rail line for potential future use out of Auburn Heights Preserve.

Tri-Valley Trail Updates and Field Review

David Bartoo reviewed existing conditions at Possum Hill – the area of the proposed Tri-Valley Trail, including wetland delineation, natural, and cultural resources. The proposed project is set up in Phase 1 and 2; the phases were reviewed. Surface type, accessibility, trail width were covered. Council was briefed on the proposed Phase 2. Components include two trail alignment options, grades, sustainability, and parking lot locations (proposed new trailhead, one to be deleted, and a trailhead to remain). Council questions centered around planned trail width and surface.

Immediately following this overview, the Council members Charlie Emerson, Mary Everhart, Gary Kirk, and Betsy Gant met at the proposed project site with David Bartoo and Mike Krumrine. The proposed alignments were reviewed in the field.

Attendees:

Council Members

Charlie Emerson
John W. Martin
Mary Everhart
Gary Kirk

Agency Members

Raymond E. Bivens, Division of Parks & Recreation, DNREC representative
Betsy Gant, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs representative

Division of Parks & Recreation

Susan Moerschel
David Bartoo
Bob Ehemann
Mike Krumrine