



## City of Shelton Trails Committee

Meeting Minutes for May 1, 2024

Held at the Trails Barn, 316 Nells Rock Road (Dog Park)

**Present:** Bill Dyer, Mark Vollaro, Ellen Cramp, Val Gosset, Terry Gallagher

**Absent:** Michael Flament, Bob Wood

**Also Present:** Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resources Manager; Luis Isaza, Trail Volunteer; Jeff Baryla, Trail Manager for the Seymour Conservation Commission

The meeting was called to order by Bill Dyer at 5:00 PM.

**Ellen Cramp made a motion to approve the April 3, 2024 meeting minutes. Seconded by Val Gossett. All were in favor with Terry Gallagher abstaining.**

**Public Portion:** Jeff Baryla reported that Seymour held an Earth Day hike recently in an area directly across the river from Birchbank Mountain and enjoyed a display of Dutchman's Breeches and Trillium.



600 feet of the Paugussett Trail was covered with processed stone.

### Recent Trails Activities

- Four work parties were held to cover a 600-foot section of the Paugussett Trail with processed stone with wheelbarrows (197.5 hrs Paugussett South)
- A work party has held to replace half of the Eklund Garden deer fence and spread wood chips with Teresa Gallagher, Mark Vollaro and employees from MacDermid Alpha (91 hrs)
- Bill Dyer worked on administrative issues and cleared the yellow trail near SIS (6 hrs)
- Mark Vollaro and Ray Hansen cleaned and organized the barn (25.5 hrs)
- Terry Gallagher worked on blog posts, purchased and repaired wheelbarrows, delivered tools, and handled other tasks (10 hrs)
- Mark Vollaro and Ray Hansen put gravel down along the shoreline of Pine Lake (12 hrs)
- Mark Vollaro and Ray Hansen traveled to Tractor Supply to purchase and hand truck (3.5 hrs)
- Ellen Cramp cleaned up Oak Valley Trail (2 hrs)
- Val Gosset handled communications (2 hrs)
- Mark Vollaro, Ray Hansen, and Terry Gallagher worked on preparing the Paugussett Trail for future work parties (clearing for a gravel stockpile and reinforcing a muddy trail entryway with temporary wood bridges and strand board) (22 hrs Paugussett South)
- *Staff organized and managed work parties for the Paugussett Trail and Eklund Garden, cleared a Paugussett reroute at an Eversource crossing, identified and partly cleared a potential reroute of the Paugussett at the Maybeck wall, and created medallion prizes for the Trails Challenge.*

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS: 371.5 hours (including 219.5 hrs Paugussett South)

Terry Gallagher noted that the preplanning for the Paugussett work parties was great. They should consider having breaks for future work parties that involve heavy work.

**Mini-Park and Fishing Spot at Pine Lake:** Bill Dyer reported that Ray Hansen, with assistance from Mark Vollaro, had created a mini-park and fishing spot on the shoreline of Pine Lake. They did a great job. Terry Gallagher responded that he was not happy with the lack of prior review of this project. No one had asked his opinion before it went in. Something of this scale should be brought before the entire Committee, even if it might be a project that everyone likes. Dumping gravel along the shoreline of a reservoir is a major project involving wetlands and changes to the character of the open space. There are several new benches, and piles of logs and sticks were made. There could be considerations such as kids coming in and making a fire. These may be changes that people like, but it still should have been reviewed first.

Teresa Gallagher said she had not seen the project area and therefore had no opinion of it, but did agree that any such project should be reviewed by the entire committee so that every member has a chance to weigh in. No one or two members have the authority to grant permission for projects on City property. She always brought her proposed trail

reroutes before the entire Committee prior to working on them. She had emphasized several times earlier during meetings, as the Natural Resource Manager, that unless the Mayor wanted it cleaned up, removal of dead wood along the Rec Path should be confined to within ten feet or so of the Rec Path because the dead wood provides important habitat for wildlife and builds soil. Yet a large area was cleared of dead wood. Anything like a “Mini Park” should probably go before the Conservation Commission as an alteration of the open space. Mark Vollaro and Bill Dyer responded that they really liked the work that was done and therefore no permissions or reviews should be required.

**Eversource Rebuild Project Update:** Mark Vollaro said the Derby Junction is impassible with the gator due to Eversource disruptions. He also cannot get the gator across the bridge near Turkey Trot Trail due to the abrupt grade change. Their work created a dam and now the water is ponding up on the old utility access road. Val Gosset reported that the gully over the gas line near Independence Drive had been repaired. Bill Dyer said he had emailed Heather at Eversource about the steps again, and Teresa Gallagher said she had asked Eversource to restore the gate near Buddington Road where a quad kept coming through. These items don't seem to be getting addressed.

**Barn Status:** Mark Vollaro cleaned up and organized a portion of the new barn. He installed hooks for the brush cutters and cleaned up messes left by mice. Bill Dyer said he would be reminding Parks & Rec about the need to scrape and paint the old barn.

**Huntington Wellfield Property:** Teresa Gallagher had emailed a map showing a system of ATV trails on the open space location along Huntington Street opposite Maple Lane. She said previous sporadic ATV activity had turned into daily activity and the creation of a defacto ATV track along with a fire pit. Many walkers are also seen going into the property. She installed prominent “no ATVs” signs out by the road and the quad activity has stopped. There is a perimeter trail that is scenic, going through tall pines next to the Far Mill River, and a spur trail that leads to the back of the new cemetery. Trail apps are showing the perimeter trail and spur. She encouraged members to visit the property. The trails could be blazed and mapped, or they could stay as is, it didn't really matter.

### **Upcoming Work Parties**

A work party was scheduled for May 11 at 8:30 am, meeting on Oak Valley Road to work on clearing the trails under the powerlines, including Nells Rock Trail and the Paugussett, and replacing the small bridge on Basil Brook Bypass. Members may also look at a potential bypass of the Eversource steps if time allows.

Terry Gallagher noted that some boards on the Lane Street boardwalk need to be replaced soon. Someone highlighted the soft spots and holes with pink paint. Teresa Gallagher said there are also some boards that need to be replaced on the Paugussett bridges near Independence Drive.

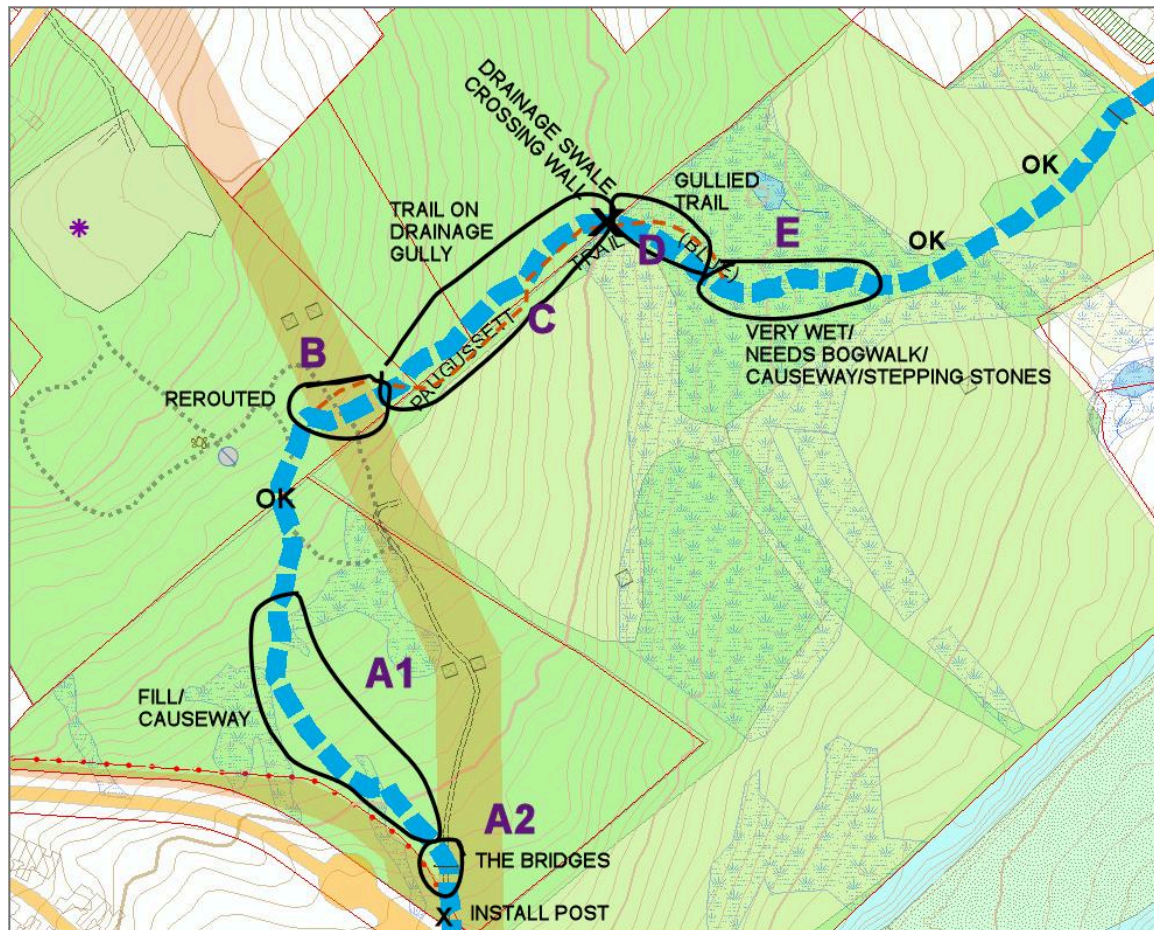
No work party was scheduled for May 25 because it is Memorial Day Weekend.

## Eagle Scout Projects

Colin Edwards began installing the kiosk at French's Hill, and completed installation of bog walks there.

## Expenses

- Mark Vollaro submitted expenses of \$106.34 for a hand truck and \$91.68 for wood used on the Paugussett project.
- Terry Gallagher submitted expenses of \$53.66 for gloves and other supplies and \$55.21 for Spax bits and screws, a 25' measure tape and 2 rolls of survey tape.



## Paugussett Trail Potential Reroute at the Maybeck Wall:

Teresa Gallagher said she had identified a better route for a section of the Paugussett that has water and erosion problems (Section C on above map). This is north of the High School, between Constitution Blvd and Meadow Street, where the trail runs along the north side of a large stone wall. The trail is on the uphill side of the wall and the wall blocks the water from draining away down the hill. The trail is now a gully with seeping and standing water for part of the year. She proposed moving the trail to the opposite side of the wall, where there are nice views of the meadow and drainage is better. This can be

a scenic destination for people coming in from Constitution Blvd and the Summerfield Condos over the newly improved section of the trail that was just covered with gravel. Members approved of the reroute.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

*Minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher and should be considered a draft until approved by the Trails Committee.*