



CITY OF DANBURY

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Town of New Fairfield

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New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

Jean Green
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MEETING NOTICE

Who: Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee

When: **6PM – Tuesday, May 21, 2024**

Where: **Danbury City Hall – Conf Rm 3C**
155 Deer Hill Avenue

Purpose: Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee
Meeting #8

**Original agenda Item on file with the Danbury Legislative Assistant & with the Town of New Fairfield*

Committee Members & Representatives:

Holly Robinson, City Council Member, City of Danbury
Antonio Iadarola, City Engineer & Public Works Director, City of Danbury
& Town Engineer, New Fairfield
David Day, Public Utilities Superintendent, City of Danbury
Corporation Counsel Representative, City of Danbury
Ken Gucker, Alternate, Danbury
Jeff Main, Conservation & Inland Wetland Commission, New Fairfield
Peter Hearn, New Fairfield
Ann Marie Mellas, Alternate, New Fairfield

Posted Notices: Town Clerk, City of Danbury & New Fairfield
Information Board, City of Danbury
City Website, City of Danbury & New Fairfield

Margerie Trail Advisory Committee

AGENDA

When: 6:00 PM – Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Where: Danbury City Hall – Conf Rm 3C
155 Deer Hill Avenue Danbury, CT

1. Call to Order
2. Approve Meeting Minutes from February 27, 2024
3. Public Speaking
4. Status of Start of Work Date for Surveyor and Wetlands Specialist
5. Status of RFP for Trail Design
6. Review of DEEP Status Report #2
7. Set Date for next Meeting
8. Adjournment

**No video or audio of this meeting were recorded. Minutes provided by Peter Hearn.*

Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday February 27, 2024

New Fairfield Senior Center

Members present: Holly Robinson, David Day, Ken Gucker, Anthony Iadarola, Jeff Main, Peter Hearn,

Chair Holly Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM. Jeff Main made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. David Day seconded the motion. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Robinson opened the meeting for public comment.

- Tom Perkins, Selectman of New Fairfield, listed his questions about the trail project as: Has there been an Environmental Impact Evaluation? What is the status of the needed permitting? What is the cost of the project?; Is funding or grants available for it?; Will Route 37 be closed for the construction?; Will there be a sidewalk at the trail's end?.
- Mark Werner of the New Fairfield Economic Development Commission said the Commission is fully in favor of the trail because of the economic benefit it would bring to New Fairfield.
- Dawn Graystein, who lives at the Lakewood Condominiums in Danbury, said she is concerned that the trail would be close to her unit and would deprive her of her seclusion. She also is concerned that the trail would disturb the bald eagle on the site.
- Kelly Lindquist of New Fairfield also expressed concerned about the bald eagle.
- Jean Largis of the New Fairfield Senior Center Walking Club said the Walking Club is in favor of the trail, noting that it is close to the Senior Center.
- Millie Kellogg of New Fairfield said the trail will be a community asset, especially for parents with kids.
- Kerru Ahern of New Fairfield said that her daughter is on the cross-country track team and that they currently run on the roads. She believes the trail will be an amazing asset for runners. She noted that people who use trails also spend money at those locations and the trail should spur economic development for the town.

Chair Holly Robinson said that the comments would be considered in the trail planning. She said she would like to meet with the residents of the Lakewood Condominiums and other nearby residences about the trail.

Ken Gucker read into the record two emails from residents that he had received in support of the trail.

Chair Holly Robinson asked Antonio Iadarola if the Wetlands survey has been initiated. He said that the Purchase Order was issued about two weeks ago and the contractor will now have to incorporate the survey into its work schedule.

Chair Robinson asked Antonio Iadarola to summarize the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the trail survey. Iadarola said that the RFP is only to study the site and recommend a preferred route. It will address the concerns which were raised by the public and is divided into four phases to account for each stage of the study. The final design phase will be initiated only after all the concerns are addressed. He asked Peter Hearn to explain the role of the environmental assessment requirements.

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Hearn explained that there are possibly two environmental assessments in question. Because the funding for the RFP came from the state it is subject to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). It does not appear, however, that the envisioned trail project meets the criteria for an environmental impact evaluation (EIE). Nevertheless, the RFP will produce an equivalent comprehensive environmental assessment of the site. Hearn read all the aspects of the project that the RFP will examine and made a motion to assure that the specific concerns of the public speakers are addressed in the RFP, by adding:

- bald eagles to the "Wildlife" section,
- "privacy concerns" to the "Landowner Concerns" or the "Scenic Values" sections,
- an estimate of traffic disruption during construction in the "Right of Way Concerns" section.

Ken Gucker made the motion. It was seconded by Peter Hearn. **Approved unanimously.**

Antonio Iadarola estimated the timeline for the RFP's recommendations to be October.

Ken Gucker said that the RFP drafting was an exceptionally good job and included provisions for public input. Antonio Iadarola added that he clarified with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection that the minority contracting requirement does not apply to professional services and applies only to construction services. He said that the RFP includes a request that the contractor make an assessment of the need for a state EIE and provide an estimate of the cost to do an EIE should it be necessary.

David Day requested that the RFP include the work needed to obtain a Change of Use Permit from the Department of Public Health (DPH) and made the motion to include it. It was seconded by Jeff Main and passed unanimously. Peter Hearn then moved to approve the RFP with the additions that had been discussed. It was seconded by Jeff Main. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Holly Robinson asked about the status reports to DEEP that are required by the contract. Antonio Iadarola responded that the first one has been submitted and the second is due. Hearn will draft it for discussion at the next meeting. Ken Gucker said that the formal deadline for the project's completion is July 2025.

Robinson set the date for the next meeting as April 23rd. Antonio Iadarola made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Jeff Main. **Approved unanimously at 7:10 PM.**

Below are the two letters read into the record by Ken Gucker.

Received by email on 04/29/2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield

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Hello,

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend your meeting on 2/27 due to College and Career Night at NFHS. So, I am writing to you today in support of the Marjorie Trail connecting Danbury and New Fairfield. I believe that a trail that is easy to navigate would bring so much benefit to the residents in town.

We have so many young families moving here, and I often see posts from new moms looking for a safe place to walk with a stroller. The responses overwhelmingly point them to OUT of New Fairfield to other towns (Sill River Greenway in Brookfield, Maybrook Rail Trail, Putnam County Trail in Brewster/Carmel, Meckauer in Bethel just to name a few). So many moms are looking for a 'meet up' group. Wouldn't it be wonderful for them to go a group walk and then pop into a local spot for lunch.

For seniors, having a paved area to walk is so beneficial to their physical and mental health. I often see groups of 2-3 seniors making the loop on the new sidewalks, through the parking lots, and around again. With the high school track unavailable during the day and very crowded for parking most often on the weekends, it's just not enough. Wouldn't it be wonderful if seniors could go for walk with a beautiful view and then pop into a local store for a coffee and breakfast.

For myself, I'm not much of a hiker, although I LOVE to walk (I'd easily walk from Grand Central to NY Presbyterian Hospital!). However, aside from going around and around in circles at the track (boring), the cars on roads, hills, bears.... I'd much prefer to walk along a beautiful stretch of water.

Please help bring this benefit TO the townspeople of New Fairfield instead of us having to get in our cars to LEAVE town to find recreational opportunities.

Regards,

Eileen Hacaj

Rock Ridge Court, NF

**No video or audio of this meeting were recorded. Minutes provided by Peter Hearn.*

Good morning,

I can't attend the meeting tonight but just wanted to write in my support of the Margarie trail. In a society that has strayed so far from looking up from our screens and enjoying the world around us, there can never be too many places in a community to get out into nature and reconnect both with nature and with our community. Regular access to green spaces has been linked to lower risks of depression and improved concentration and attention. It also allows us to be social with friends, family, and others in the community out for a hike. Besides the positive psychological effects that the trail could have on the community, being out doors also boosts your immune system and provides an opportunity for movement and exercise.

I truly don't see a down side to adding a space in our community that so many people, regardless of age, can benefit from.

Thank you for your time,

Sabrina Gouveia