

Public Information Meeting - Greenwoods Recreational Path

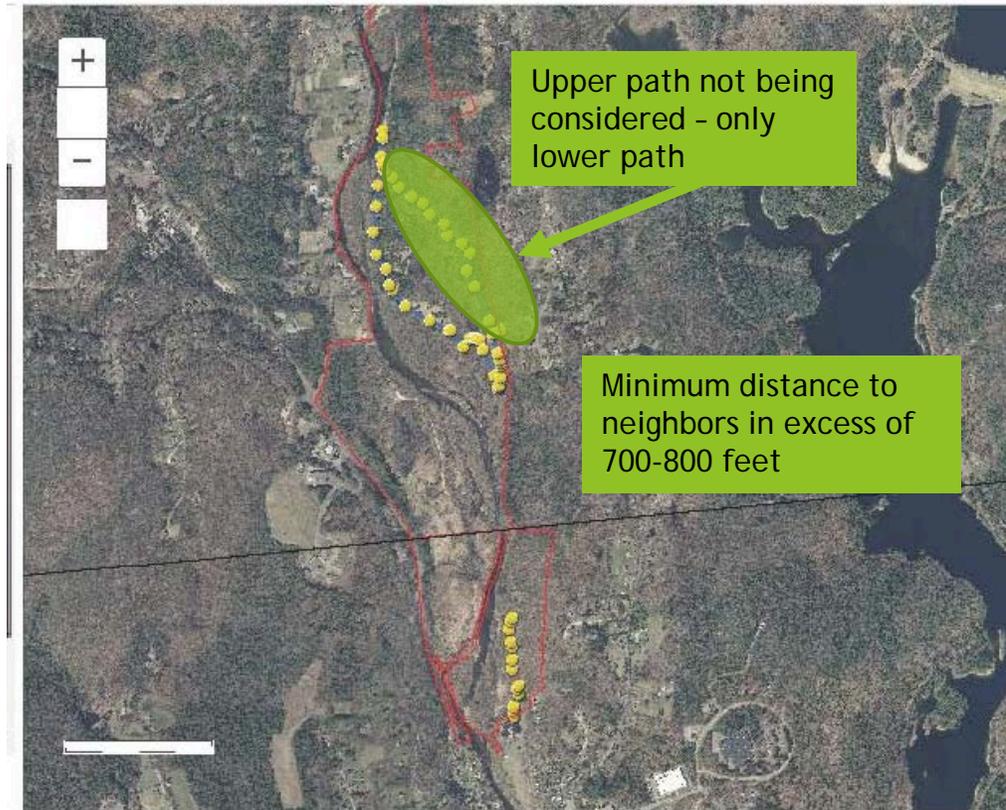
November 16, 2015

Purpose for Meeting

- ▶ Public discussion of previous activities and current status
- ▶ Presentation and discussion of facts vs. rumors
- ▶ Next steps that are required

Proposed 1.5 mile path would connect Pleasant Valley Center to New Hartford Center

Where is the trail



What's Real

- ▶ Proposal is to allow greater accessibility for multiple uses and multiple physical capabilities with minimum modifications
 - ▶ Beginning of trail is an access road
 - ▶ New Hartford end of trail is an excellent hiking path
 - ▶ Many people already use it for hiking, dog walking, skiing, snowshoeing
 - ▶ Opportunity for education for all ages and increased volunteerism (e.g., control of invasive plant species)
- ▶ Not a “rails-to-trail” bike trail - the plan is to “keep it wild” - No pavement - road bikers do not ride on dirt trails

What's Real

- ▶ Per Merriam Webster dictionary - a byway is a “road that is not used very much”
 - ▶ This is not a byway and is definitely not an “MDC byway”
- ▶ The MDC, FRWA, FRCC are not part of an alliance
 - ▶ The *MDC has not given permission* for anything that is done on its property and has stated that if there is a firm proposal, they will then consider it
 - ▶ FRWA and FRCC are participating by providing information, but neither group has endorsed the project.

What's Real

- ▶ New Hartford does have plans for a redevelopment of their village center
- ▶ *Dan Jerram will remove the notation of “bike path to Riverton” from the New Hartford plan*
 - ▶ West River Road is a Town Road; East River Road is a State Road and People's State Forest is managed by DEEP
 - ▶ A full bike path could not be done without CT DOT, CT DEEP and Barkhamsted's concurrence
- ▶ Housing development and other projects are part of the New Hartford long term plan - all plans are conceptual and no developer yet

Neighborhood Concerns

- ▶ Unlikely that automobile traffic and bike traffic would increase significantly
- ▶ Goose Green and Miner Lane neighbors are a significant distance from the lower path and sheltered by steep hills (in excess of 750')
- ▶ Bike and hiking trails do not attract criminal behavior
- ▶ Could help re-invigorate PV General Store or allow folks to take a Sunday excursion through the woods to New Hartford's shops

Activities to -date

- ▶ Several meetings between New Hartford/Barkhamsted - Selectmen, EDC, Conservation Commission, Land Use Officials, FRCC, FRWA, National Park Service
- ▶ No decisions made, except not paving the path
- ▶ Discussions with Dr. Michael Klemens (leading herpetologist in the northeast) have indicated that with proper design techniques, this could be a win-win
- ▶ Laura Saucier (DEEP) has said that she would be very cautious, but would defer to Michael Klemens relative to techniques that could minimize damage
- ▶ The Chairman of the CT Council on Environmental Quality said that the process steps being utilized were appropriate

Next Steps Required - No Town Funds Expended to-date

- ▶ *Wildlife census in April 2016 (recommended by Dr. Klemens)*
- ▶ *Map out a proposed path*
- ▶ *Address environmental concerns with appropriate design techniques based on this scientific study*
- ▶ *Propose concept to the MDC, DEEP, FRWA, FRCC*
- ▶ *Work with the hunters and fishermen to address their concerns*
- ▶ *Address neighbors' concerns re safety and security*
- ▶ *Evaluate the economics to determine feasibility*
- ▶ *THEN (and only then), if all details are positive:*
 - ▶ *Obtain preliminary approval from Town's commissions and residents*
 - ▶ *Assuming it's a go, then apply for grants or other sources of funding - minimum of 2-3 year process*