

Town of Stuyvesant Trails Committee

Minutes to December 8, 2009 meeting

Stuyvesant Town Hall

In attendance: Mike Naegeli, Kathy Schneider, Michelle Richardson, Rich Anderson, Cal Burch, Mike Locker, Don Widjeskog, Sean Cummings, Ron Knott.

October meeting minutes: Minutes were approved, with minor corrections.

November meeting: No meeting minutes. In lieu of meeting, committee members took a walking tour of National Grid right-of-way and other trails near Stuyvesant Falls.

Greenway trail grant update: The Town of Kinderhook, lead agency for the grant, expects to receive the grant contract within a week or two. Only the Town of Kinderhook supervisor needs to sign it — not supervisors of all three towns. Once the contract is signed, the Stuyvesant Trails Committee can begin keeping track of its time/effort to use as the local match for the grant.

Discussion of November walking tour: Members briefly discussed the walking tour they took in lieu of the November monthly meeting. They accessed the National Grid right-of-way from Houghtaling Lane, just north of Stuyvesant Falls, and were encouraged by the current condition of the ROW. Members also walked a short trail on the east side of Kinderhook Creek above upper Stuyvesant Falls, which could potentially be the beginning section of a trail connecting to Lindenwald.

Update on river access/trail development: Sean Cummings briefed the committee on a Dec. 4, 2009 meeting he had with Peter Innes, director of Natural Resources for DEC Region 4, and DEC Forest Ranger Chris DiCintio, who lives in Nutten Hook. Betsy Blair, director of the Nutten Hook Estuarine Research Reserve, participated via phone. Purpose of the meeting was to discuss river access generally and the potential for developing a riverfront trail from Stuyvesant Landing to Nutten Hook. Some highlights:

Barriers to developing trail: DEC staff listed five major barriers to developing the trail: (1) Two tidal inlets need to be bridged; (2) Rising water levels from global warming; can't have trail near shoreline; (3) Development costs in tight fiscal times; (4) Eagle habitat: if they start nesting nearby, trail would have to be closed; (5) CSX rail line needs to be crossed.

DEC sketch plan: Chris DiCintio presented a very rough sketch plan and aerial photos of existing trails between Stuyvesant Landing and Nutten Hook. Instead of providing pedestrian access, he suggested that DEC could develop a "boat access only" trail, with trailhead at the wooden gazebo south of Stuyvesant Landing. Sean emphasized at the DEC meeting that Stuyvesant residents want pedestrian access.

Proposed DEC boat launch: The proposed boat launch at Stuyvesant Landing appears to be dead. Innes said that objections from federal agencies involved in the environmental review of the site have strong objections that will preclude

construction. This has important ramifications for pedestrian access and trail development along shoreline from Stuyvesant Landing to Nutten Hook because there will be no bridge over the railroad tracks at Stuy Landing.

Nutten Hook amenities: DEC staff expressed a willingness to develop a Nutten Hook trail map for placement near the DEC kiosk on Ferry Road. They also seemed willing to place a sign at the corner of Rte. 9J and Ice House Road to direct people to the Ice House.

Next steps:

- ✓ Sean will email Innes, DiCintio, and Blair a summary of meeting conclusions and re-state that Stuyvesant residents want more than just boat access to shoreline.
- ✓ Kathy Schneider will call Betsy Blair separately and discuss river access.
- ✓ Don Widjeskog and Sean will check out drainage issue on existing trail at Ken Hummel Memorial Park.
- ✓ Mike Naegeli will check tax maps to determine ownership of lands on the east side of Kinderhook Creek above upper Stuyvesant Falls.