



**2021 Fall Annual Voting Members Meeting
MINUTES**

**Sunday, November 14th, 2021
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
NYNJTC
ZOOM virtual meeting**

In attendance:

Beth Ravit
Carol Chave
Carolyn Hoffman
Charlie Gadol
Daniel Chazin
Deanna Culbreath
Deborah Padula-Genna
Doug Sohn
Eddie Saiff
Edward Gandler
Jane Daniels
James Piombino
John Jurasek
Kevin Bukowski

Lydia Zakim
Matt Decker
Pat
Patsy Wooters
Peter Reiner
Rick Jobsky
Ron Rosen
Sue Barbuto
Sue Scher
Suse Bell
Walt Daniels
William Burns
William Gannett
Josh Howard, NYNJTC Executive Director
Kathleen Bezik, NYNJTC Executive Assistant

Welcome & Introductions: Josh Howard welcomed the Members to the Fall Annual Meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

Approval of [Spring 2021 Member Meeting minutes](#): Ms. Wooters made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sohn, to approve the April meeting minutes. All were in favor.

[Board of Directors/At-Large Voting Member Nominations](#): Mr. Howard presented the nominated candidates for the Board of Directors to serve three-year terms and introduced four new board candidates: Sreeni Nair, Kal Ghosh, Barbara Evans, and Carol Ann Benton. Ken Posner, Sue Barbuto, Charlie Gadol, Deanna Culbreath, and Mary Ann Villari will renew their terms on the board. Mr. Howard also presented the nominated candidates to serve one-year terms as At-Large Voting Members. Mr. Piombino motioned, and Ms. Chave seconded, the approval of nominations. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Howard explained that the Trail Conference has generated the first operating profit since 2015. In the past, the organization was running very large operating deficits and in 2018 it was determined that this is not sustainable. The goal is to reach a balanced budget in 2023 and since the start of the pandemic in 2020, Mr. Howard noted that we are on the right path towards achieving this goal with a \$6k improvement year after year. The audit will be posted on the website soon. Mr. Howard explained that results are being determined through the end of October this year and with the 4th quarter being our highest revenue period, further results will be shared in January. Currently, revenues are 16% higher than in 2020. Due to Covid and reopening of the office, expenses are 9% higher than in 2020.

Recorded by Kathleen Bezik.

Executive Director's Report:

Mr. Howard gave a high-level overview of 2021. With Mr. Dupont and Ms. Daniels, *Reflections: 100 Years of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference*, was published and shared at our centennial Gala this year – a huge accomplishment. The organization has also re-published the Walkable Westchester book and published two new maps sets. Mr. Howard provided project updates including our presence in trail maintenance and lean-to supervision in the Catskills. Among the many successes in 2021 Mr. Howard highlighted a few including the revitalization of kiosk signage along the A.T. at the popular Pochuck Boardwalk, the West Jersey Trail Crew work on replacing a missing puncheon “bridge” on the A.T. near Long House Drive, the formation of the *Clipping Brigade* roving trail crew for work at Morristown National Historical Park, improvements on the Cedar Brook Trail in Taconic State Park, TC Conservation Corps and Volunteer Trail Maintenance in Fahnestock State Park, and the completion of a new trail connecting the Long Path at Hook Mountain/Nyack Beach State Park, amongst many other accomplishments highlighted in our Winter 2022 TrailWalker.

Mr. Howard provided an update on advocacy efforts to fight a hydroelectric plant in the Catskills and with the collaboration of many organizations including the Trail Conference to safeguard our trail lands, the plans for the plant were rescinded.

The Ecological Stewardship team logged the greatest number of volunteer hours this year. With the outbreak of Spotted Lantern Fly near Harriman, the Trail Conference Conservation Corps and Conservation Dogs program provided immediate response to identify and remove the emerging threat.

The Trail Conference had the largest number of corps members this season and Mr. Howard highlighted each crew and the importance of integrating corps members in our volunteer program and work. Online reporting was launched for our trail maintenance program and after testing in April, the reporting system was launched to collect real time information and updates from our volunteers. With a focus on our volunteer program and improvements to volunteer management, the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey had 98% satisfaction for two consecutive years. The organization hopes to relaunch TrailU with continuing publications of online webinars and content to give volunteers the support they need. The organization has seen high success with recruitment, training, and placement of volunteers using technology to support these efforts.

In addition, Mr. Howard reported that our first all virtual Volunteer Recognition event in 2021 brought in nearly 150 participants. The 2022 virtual Volunteer Appreciation Event date will be announced soon.

Mr. Howard thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in a successful Centennial Gala with honoree D. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky. In 2022 the Trail Conference will host the AT VISTA at Suny, New Paltz. Mr. Rosen provided an overview of the event highlighting entertainment, workshops and excursions and planning progress.

Mr. Howard reported on a new Strategic Plan that has begun its initial phase in the re-draft from the prior plan done in 2015. This process will continue into 2022 with a final draft available near year end.

The Trail Conference has faced many challenges in the past two years. We are slowly reopening the Darlington Schoolhouse to staff and volunteers although the building will remain closed to the public. The organization is working on upgrading our technology to meets the needs of a virtual and hybrid work environment. Mr. Howard reported an increase in attendance and satisfaction from volunteers who are able to participate virtually with a future option of in person attendance. The Trail Conference is also actively encouraging New York State to purchase properties from us and with the lead of Mr. Garrison, \$1M of land will be returned to the state and back in our land stewardship fund. This will continue to be a high priority in 2022.

Mr. Howard thanked everyone for their attendance and announced the next Spring Members Meeting that is scheduled for Sunday, May 15th at 9:30 a.m.

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m. All were in favor.

Recorded by Kathleen Bezik.