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Millinocket to pursue second grant for trail

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MILLINOCKET, Maine — The town will work with the Northern Timber Cruisers Snowmobile Club to secure a state grant that would fund Phase II of the Katahdin region's first multiuse recreational trail network.

The Town Council voted 6-0 during its meeting Thursday to pursue grant funding for the multiuse trail, which would be the first to handle organized ATV riding. There was brief discussion during which Councilor Jimmy Busque said that, like other councilors, he looked forward to the trail's completion.

"I definitely support this," Busque said.

State officials in charge of creating and coordinating state all-terrain vehicle networks approved in June a grant request funding 70 percent of the \$19,750 construction of Phase I of a 35-mile multipurpose trail, which will run from the Northern Timber Cruisers Snowmobile Club just outside town to the Seboeis Lake region.

Construction began last month on Phase I, a 13-mile section of trail from the snowmobile club over a recreation trail bridge at the Penobscot River to South Twin Lake. Phase II would continue from South Twin to the Seboeis Lake region, where it will connect to trail networks that run throughout southern Maine.

This connection is seen as a huge potential economic boon to the region, as the all-terrain vehicle network, it is thought, would mimic the region's extremely successful and lucrative snowmobile trail networks, except that it would run for three seasons instead of just one.

The state grant program does not allow a municipality to apply for more than one grant at a time, so the town will assist the club in its application.

In other council news, councilors bid an informal but heartfelt goodbye to Councilor James Mingo, who declined to run for re-election after being elected to the council in 2007.

Mingo, who had served the council in decades past, was warmly feted by his fellow Councilors Jimmy Busque, David Cyr, Michael Madore, John Raymond and Chairman Scott Gonya for his sagacity and plainspoken style of speaking.

A freshman councilor, Madore said that Mingo had taught him a great deal about the skills councilors require, including public speaking and an ability to listen. Mingo smiled often but said little during the tribute, which came at the end of the council's meeting on Thursday.