



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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Regional Planning Committee

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, February 25, 2019 - 7:00 pm

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments conference room

145 Dennison Road, Essex

Members:

Chester: Vacancy
Clinton: Alan Kravitz *
Eric Bergman
Cromwell: Alice Kelly
Chris Cambareri *
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton
Tony Bolduc *
Durham: Frank DeFelice*
Joe Pasquale
East Haddam: Crary Brownell
Lou Salicrup
East Hampton: Michael Kowalczyk *
Essex: Alan Kerr
Sandra Childress *
Haddam: Raul deBrigard *
Stasia DeMichele
Killingworth: Stephanie Warren
Alec Martin *
Lyme: Mary Stone
Middlefield: Vacancy
Middletown: Beth Emery *
Stephen Devoto
Old Lyme: Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Kenneth Soudan
Karen Jo Marcolini *
Portland: Elwin Guild *
Westbrook: Bill Neale *
Marie Farrell

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Eliza LoPresti
Jon Curtis
JH Torrance Downes

RiverRPC

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman DeFelice at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Eliza LoPresti

3. Seating of Alternates

Sandra Childress of Essex, Chris Cambareri of Cromwell, Karen Jo Marcolini of Old Saybrook, Alec Martin of Killingworth, and Tony Bolduc of Deep River were seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Neale moved to adopt the agenda. Second by Mr. Kravitz; voted unanimously in favor.

5. Public Comments

None

6. Approval of Minutes of Past Meetings

Mr. Neale moved to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2019 meeting; second by Ms. Emery. Vote was unanimous in favor with the following abstentions: Ms. Marcolini, Mr. Kravitz, Mr. Cambareri, & Mr. Kowalczyk.

7. Draft Lower CT River Valley Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2019 – 2044

The draft will go to public comment from March 1 – April 1, 2019. Public hearings will be held March 13 at 6:00 p.m. at Middletown Area Transit and March 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the RPC meeting. The COG will provisionally adopt the plan at their March 27th meeting. Mr. Gold asked that RPC members submit comments by the end of the week so that a new draft can be posted on March 1. The most up to date draft will be provided to RPC members one week prior to their March meeting. The RPC will be functioning as a transportation committee and recommend adoption by the COG for their March meeting.

Mr. Martin asked for a breakdown of the \$305 billion being spent in the FAST Act, specifically what is being spent in CT and possibly our region. Discussion was held about the town's priorities that are incorporated in the document and the requirement to be fiscally constrained.

Ms. Emery asked about tolling and whether it would be premature to discuss how that might look in our region. Mr. Gold stated that tolling, and a possible position on such, will be discussed at the next COG meeting. However, there are no concrete details available as of yet.

Mr. Guild asked that we include Rt.66/17 in Portland when discussing traffic congestion and note the ongoing Rt. 66 corridor study. Ms. Emery suggested a section on Uber/Lyft ridesharing. The on-demand transit pilot program that 9 Town Transit will be running this summer was discussed. This will also be added into the plan.

A recommendation for a nighttime safety study on Rt. 9 arose from a question about potential lighting along the lower segment of the highway and whether accidents occur because of the darkness.

Mr. Neale moved to recommend a study of nighttime safety on Route 9. Second by Mr. Kravitz. Voted unanimously in favor.

8. Regional Plan

a) Demographics Chapter: Mr. Curtis answered questions regarding the draft. There was specific discussion on possible future demand, and what trends can be forecast moving forward. Mr. Curtis noted that he will more explicitly discuss the pent-up housing demand that may exist because of millennials still living at home and those that will be starting families (but have not yet). Attracting and retaining young citizens/workers/volunteers was discussed.

It was suggested that the footnotes be put into an annex. Figure 7 was incorrectly labeled as Figure 6. The first line of the conclusion paragraph was discussed, pertaining to the word “strengths”. When discussing the median age ranges in towns, it was suggested that the University and institutionalized populations be considered. There is question on whether students are counted in their hometowns or where they live for school for the census. Ms. Emery asked for more clarification on the ALICE discussion on page 9.

b) Built Environment Chapter: This chapter will be sent out soon

c) Other Sections: More sections are forthcoming

9. Referrals

None

10. Bike-Ped. Committee Report

Mr. Gold reported that a committee has formed and met a few weeks ago. He was joined by Ms. Emery and Noah Kahan, past RiverCOG summer intern who had been working on a regional bike-ped plan during his time here. The committee discussed the need to identify gap areas in the plan and how to move the plan forward. More committee members are needed so please let Mr. Gold or Ms. Emery know of interested parties.

11. Miscellaneous: State, Regional and /or Local Planning Issues

Discussion was held on the difficulty of hiring and retaining Planners, ZEOs, and other land use professionals. Information will be distributed on an upcoming land use training at Wesleyan. UCONN’s free in-house land use training was also discussed.

Mr. Curtis stated that each municipality is now required (as of 2017) to have an affordable housing plan that is updated every five years. He wanted to make sure that the towns were aware of this requirement and discussed if any had done anything toward the requirement.

Mr. Martin raised the issue of the potential solar farm in Killingworth and asked about what other people are hearing in their towns regarding alternative energy. Energy legislation and siting council specifics were discussed.

Mr. Gold gave testimony on a bill that has been introduced into legislation to create a 111-mile loop multi-use trail in the center of the state. He discussed the bill to recognize the COGs as county equivalencies which would allow COGs to apply for Federal funds. The census bureau is optimistic that this can be rolled out for the 2020 census.

Mr. Gold gave a brief description of some of the relevant state budget items: tolls will most likely be rolled out in some form, the mechanism of future COG funding is in question, and education funding cuts in towns and regional school systems were be discussed. He reminded everyone that this is the first budget

proposal, which is only the beginning of the conversation. The CGA bill tracking website will be sent out to everyone.

Sen. Norm Needleman has introduced a bill for a state maintained GIS map system. Currently each town purchases GIS software and submits their individual mapping information to the state. There was discussion on the digital data and the benefits of having one state-wide data set.

12. Adjourn

At 9:05 P.M., Mr. Kravitz moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Bolduc seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti