



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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Regional Planning Committee

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, July 27, 2020 – 7:00 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members:

Chester	Mike Sanders *
	Cindy Lignar *
Clinton	Alan Kravitz *
	Martin Jaffe
Cromwell	Chris Cambreri
	Anthony LaCava
Deep River	Bruce Edgerton
	Tony Bolduc
Durham	Frank DeFelice *
	Joe Pasquale
East Haddam	Crary Brownell
	Lou Salicrup
East Hampton	Michael Kowalczyk *
Essex	Sandra Childress *
Haddam	Raul deBrigard *
	Stasia DeMichele
Killingworth	Alec Martin *
	Stephanie Warren *
Lyme	Mary Stone *
	Humphrey Tyler *
Middlefield	Vacancy
Middletown	Beth Emery *
	Kellin Atherton *
Old Lyme	Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook	Thomas Cox
	Karen Jo Marcolini
Portland	Vacancy
Westbrook	Bill Neale *
	Marie Farrell

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold

Torrance Downes

Eliza LoPresti

Megan Jouflas

RiverRPC

Margot Burns

Guests: None

1. Call to Order

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

2. Roll Call

3. Seating of Alternates

Sandra Childress (Essex) was seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Kravitz moved to adopt the agenda, Ms. Emery seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.

5. Public Comments – None

6. Approval of Minutes of Past Meetings

Mr. Neale moved to approve the June 22, 2020 meeting minutes; second by Ms. Stone. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Referrals – None

8. RPOCD Municipal Presentations

Chairman DeFelice stated that he was impressed with the presentations thus far and pleased that this matter was handled in-house rather than through the consultants. Mr. Gold reported that so far Old Saybrook, Durham & Middlefield and Middletown had held their meetings. All the meetings were different and many different perspectives were discussed. Ms. Jouflas stated that all the towns were different from each other but were consistent within themselves.

Mr. deBrigard asked whether there was a different type of mood or discussion due to Covid or the Black Lives Matter current events. So far there has not been though the real need for affordable housing in the region was discussed throughout the meetings.

Mr. Neale suggested keeping track of the attendants and website hits to add to the plan.

9. Transit Integration Study – LCRVTransitstudy.org

Mr. Gold gave a presentation on the findings of the transit study (hard copy included after these minutes). Possible route changes are still being discussed with stakeholders. There have been public outreach meetings via Zoom which are being re-broadcast on cable access channels across the region, there is a voice mail hotline set up for people to leave their comments in addition to the website, emails and survey that are available on the project site. Comments are due by August 8th. Mr. Gold will distribute the link to the survey.

Mr. deBrigard asked about the routes and whether there had been consideration to serve towns that are not currently served, such as East Haddam. Mr. Gold replied that they do not have fixed-route service in E. Haddam though they do have some dial-a-ride service.

RiverRPC

Ms. Emery asked about all buses needing to be electric by 2030. It's a portion of the fleet that will need to be electric by then, but that percentage is changing over time. She also asked about assurances on mitigating impact to people that live around the facility in Middletown as building happens and pertaining to pollution control and environmental justice. Mr. Gold noted that all buses are stored inside so they are not starting diesel buses cold, and that routes are minimized for the environmental review, which would be done on any expansion on the site. These facility investments will be needed anyway to support electric buses, and once the fleet is electric there will be no pollution from them. Mr. Sanders also stated that buses are pretty clean now and gave information to back that up.

Mr. Martin stated that now with everything being reorganized due to merger, it is the prime time to include routes to every town in the region. He asked if 9-Town Transit buses will still be available for flagging down along their fixed routes and if the dial-a-ride services will be available; the answer is yes to both. Mr. Gold also emphasized that there has not yet been a decision made to actually pursue any of the preferred alternatives.

Mr. deBrigard stated that he sees less service when looking at this plan. Mr. Gold confirmed that some routes are streamlined and/or cut out.

10. Covid 19 Update

The Covid response and recovery committee is creating a human services sub-committee, which has as one of their goals to document unmet needs in our towns. They are trying to create a mechanism to address needs as they arise and to understand what is not being addressed. On the state level they are trying to arrange for rapid testing and temporary housing for quarantined folks.

Chairman DeFelice emphasized that there needs to be something about Covid impact in the RPOCD. Mr. Gold noted that items with direct connections to the plan are including high speed internet as an essential utility and how to handle whatever happens to the executive orders governing remote meetings.

11. Miscellaneous: State, Regional or Local Planning Issues

There was discussion on the affordable housing bill that is currently before the legislature. Mr. Gold noted that a short session is not the time to be sending these types of bills through as it completely overhauls how zoning is done in the state. Same with the police reform bill. Although these are timely issues it seems there are state issues with Covid that need to be addressed and these others could be saved for the longer session.

Mr. Gold pointed out the executive orders that are governing us during this Covid period go away in the beginning of September unless they are renewed.

Ms. Stone brought up that Lyme is starting to discuss short term rental regulations, like for Air BnB & other similar rentals. The P&Z is obtaining legal opinions and possibly ordering cease & desist orders. The commission was not aware that they could send a referral to the RPC and asked that we connect with their planner. Mr. Downes noted that Mr. Byrne had been in touch with him already and he suggested connecting with Chester and other towns in the region that have previously looked into these regulations. Mr. Tyler noted that these types of properties create

islands of commercial business in areas that are zoned residential. Once that starts occurring it can be hard to stop further commercial use. Discussion on this topic followed.

12. Adjournment

AT 8:34 P.M. Ms. Stone moved to adjourn the meeting; second by Mr. deBrigard. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti