



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, March 28, 2022 – 7:00 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members:

Chester	Elaine Fitzgibbons *
	Cindy Lignar *
Clinton	Alan Kravitz *
	Martin Jaffe
Cromwell	Nick Demetriades *
	Anthony LaCava *
Deep River	Tony Bolduc *
Durham	Frank DeFelice *
East Haddam	Crary Brownell
East Hampton	Michael Kowalczyk *
Essex	Sandra Childress *
Haddam	Raul deBrigard
	Maurice Adams
Killingworth	Alec Martin *
	Stephanie Warren *
Lyme	Mary Stone *
	David Lahm
Middlefield	Paul Pizzo
Middletown	Catherine Johnson *
	Kellin Atherton *
Old Lyme	Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook	Douglas McCracken *
	Karen Jo Marcolini
Portland	Chantal Foster
	Bob Ellsworth *
Westbrook	Bill Neale *
	Marie Farrell

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Margot Burns
Rob Haramut
Eliza LoPresti
Torrance Downes
Ben Lovejoy

RiverRPC

Megan Jouflas
Kevin Armstrong

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call - Eliza LoPresti called the roll.

3. Seating of Alternates –Sandra Childress (Essex) and Bob Ellsworth (Portland) were seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Kravitz moved to adopt the agenda; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.

5. Public Comment – None

6. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

Ms. Stone moved to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2022 meeting; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Referrals – None

8. Model Ordinance for Protection of Stone Walls

A model ordinance was distributed prior to the meeting which incorporated comments from the last meeting.

Ms. Warren reported that Killingworth protects stone walls in open space of a subdivision. Ms. Stone stated that Lyme’s First Selectman feels that a property owner should be allowed to do what they want with stones on their property. Mr. Bolduc noted that if a stone wall is on a property line, a neighbor would have to agree about removing it. If the stone wall is on a street, the property owner owns the entire stone wall. It was suggested that language about abutters concurring should be added. Mr. Neale stated that since that is already part of state law, he wants to avoid duplication in the wording of the ordinance. Ms. Stone asked if distinction should be made for properties lying within the historic district; Mr. Neale noted that that also may be duplicating efforts if that is already addressed elsewhere.

For next steps this will be issued to municipalities for use if they would like to adopt, or adapt it to work in their town. The ordinance will be re-sent to the RPC and the town planners who can forward to historic districts.

9. Bike/Ped Plan Comments

Mr. Haramut reported that an updated draft is now on the website. This draft incorporates all comments received so far except those received the evening before from Ms. Johnson and those of the Westbrook P&Z.

10. Updates

- a. **Regional Housing Plan:** The town-specific presentations have concluded. The regional portion of the plan is being worked on now, with pulling information from the town meetings into the regional analysis. A draft should be available in the next month or so.
- b. **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):** The CEDS will be a federally recognized economic development plan. Ninigret Partners will be the consultant for the project, which will kick off shortly. The project is funded through a grant from the EDA that arose from the CARES Act. The three key regional economic development professionals that were working on the project have all recently left their positions.
- c. **Air Line Trail to Farmington Canal Trail Corridor Study:** A corridor study for feasible connections between the two trails will be funded by CT DOT. Mr. Haramut is now reaching out to the town out of our region that can help facilitate the connection such as Meriden and Cheshire. A 10% match is needed, this may come from participating towns. The project will hopefully begin at the end of spring. It was noted that Cromwell should be included in the plans.
- d. **Legislative:** Mr. Lovejoy and Mr. Gold gave an update on proposed legislation, the committee has a written update in their inboxes.

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

Chairman DeFelice stated that Durham is developing cannabis regulations. Cromwell has two applications coming before them and has been given the opportunity to draft regulations. Cromwell is also planning to review their zoning regulations and POCD. Mr. Downes mentioned that Cromwell sent him a text referral on cannabis; this can be discussed at the April meeting.

Mr. Kravitz asked if anyone had done anything or seen any information on cottage courts/neighborhoods. Mr. Downes stated that we haven't seen it in the region or across the state yet. Ms. Joufflas noted that as part of the RHP, a toolkit based on recommendations will be developed, and strategies and language surrounding this would be included.

Mr. Gold reported that the COG is hiring two Planners, one to be a Regional Planner that specializes in emergency management, another to be a Transit Planner that is shared with Estuary Transit District. Mr. Gold discussed his meeting with DRS Commissioner Boughton, who is the State's point person on the bipartisan infrastructure bill that has been passed. The bill will bring more federal money into the state for projects and COGs will be involved in some way. Mr. Gold mentioned that he has a 400 page document, not a distilled list of available projects, when Ms. Johnson asked for one.

Ms. Stone mentioned that Lyme has been working on their agricultural regulations and that they are almost complete. They are also reviewing a regulation on short-term rentals.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Kravitz moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 pm; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.