



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, June 25, 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	Carey Duques Sandra Childress *
Haddam	Raul deBrigard *
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
Eliza LoPresti
Ben Lovejoy
Kevin Armstrong
Rob Haramut
Megan Jouflas

RiverRPC

Janice Ehle/Meyer
Margot Burns

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 –Cindy Lignar (Chester), Martin Jaffe (Clinton), Anthony LaCava (Cromwell), Sandra Childress (Essex), Stephanie Warren (Killingworth), and Bob Ellsworth (Portland) were seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. deBrigard 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

Mr. deBrigard moved to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2022 meeting; second by Ms. Stone. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Referrals – None

8. Regional Housing Plan Presentation – Opening of Public Comment Period

Ms. Jouflas gave a presentation on the Regional Housing Plan (RHP). The presentation can be viewed at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo1_96u9iWA

Mr. Neale moved to open the public comment period for the regional housing plan. Second by Mr. deBrigard. Vote passed unanimously.

9. Updates

- a. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update Schedule:** Mr. Haramut stated the MPO is starting the four-year process for updating the plan. It will need to be approved by the COG in March of 2023. The public comment period is scheduled to be in February 2023.

Mr. Gold reported that he and Mr. Haramut attended a conference on the LEAN process at CT DOT. They discussed with the COGs ways to make plan recommendations happen in a more timely way and be more well-defined.

- b. **Regional Agricultural Council Update:** Ms. Ehle/Meyer reported that farmers in the region are actively looking for more land to farm. The RAC is promoting no-till farming practices by instituting a shared equipment program. The program was discussed.

- c. **CEDS Update:** Ms. Jouflas reported that the steering committee for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been selected. A survey is being created that will go out in the summer some time. A website is also forthcoming. This summer the consultants

will be working on obtaining background information and doing research and data collection.

- d. **COG County Equivalency:** The federal government will now be recognizing COGs as county equivalents in Connecticut. Census data will be collected along the COG boundaries rather than the old county lines. Adoptions of certain plans can happen once through the COG rather than in each of the seventeen towns, flood insurance rates can be obtained as a region rather than town by town, therefore saving towns money, and the designation generally gives towns more options. There were no changes to CT law and COGs are not considered county governments.
- e. **Hot Topics in Land Use Seminar:** Mr. Lovejoy and Mr. Gold attended the seminar and discussed some 8-30g cases that have come up and in both instances the town lost. Applications are very different when 8-30g is invoked.

Mr. Lovejoy mentioned the newly created Commission for Connecticut's Development and Future that is to align regional plans and create pathways for them to be used. Additionally, over 36,000 lottery tickets went out for only 54 permits for cannabis establishments in the state.

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

Chairman DeFelice noted that Durham passed a cannabis-permissive ordinance and that there was not much public comment on the subject. Mr. Bolduc noted that Deep River has had an open discussion for six months and there hasn't been much said by the public.

Ms. Johnson asked for email addresses of the bike/ped committee, for the website to be updated with the names of the newer committee members, and for RiverCOG commissioners' emails to be on our website. She discussed information that came out of Tufts University about farming practices which was written in other languages. She discussed that the no-till farming mentality is being embraced elsewhere and more about the equipment. She suggested putting the information about the shared no-till equipment in a newspaper.

Mr. Demetriades stated that Cromwell passed their housing plan. They want to tie together their upcoming POCD with it as well. He discussed multi-family and affordable housing in Cromwell.

Mr. Gold stated that Dan Morley of the Office of Policy Management retired.

11. Adjournment

Mr. deBrigard moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.