



# 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, September 19, 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 * Michael Bender *
Portland	Chantal Foster * Bob Ellsworth
Westbrook	Bill Neale * Marie Farrell

\*Members Present

#### Staff Present:

Sam Gold  
Torrance Downes  
Eliza LoPresti  
Ben Lovejoy  
Kevin Armstrong  
Megan Jouflas                      Rob Haramut

**RiverRPC**

## 1. Call to Order

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

## 2. Roll Call - Eliza LoPresti called the roll.

## 3. Seating of Alternates –Sandra Childress (Essex) and Stephanie Warren (Killingworth) were seated. The members for both Essex and Killingworth did attend the meeting, coming in after the alternates were seated.

## 4. Adoption of Agenda

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

## 5. Public Comment - None

## 6. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

*Mr. McCracken moved to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2022 meeting; second by Mr. Thompson. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

## 7. Referrals

A referral for farm store regulations in Durham came into the office after the agenda was sent out. The information will be distributed to the members and this will be on the agenda for the October meeting.

## 8. Updates

- a. **Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** Mr. Haramut explained that this document gets updated every four years, with a time horizon of at least 25 years. The current update will include planning for 2023 – 2050. He elucidated the sections the plan will contain. The hope is to have a draft around the end of the year. CT DOT hopes to have the air quality determination by February; after that the plan will go out for formal public comment for a March 22, 2023, MPO board endorsement.

Mr. Thompson asked about ridership; Mr. Haramut replied that we don't have updated information on transit ridership yet. There will be a new section in the plan talking about the transit merger. Mr. Thompson asked how we determine whether the transit program is meeting people's needs. That information would come through the transit districts and probably not be part of this plan. Mr. Gold noted that we are working closely with the transit district and their planner. This plan can help recommend areas in which more studies are required to come up with recommendations.

Mr. Thompson stated there is a concern about how much transit is needed along the shoreline and asked how people know that transit is available. Mr. Gold named the ways that the public is aware of the plan, though it is an ongoing challenge. There was then discussion about bus stops and times of the routes, which is not something that is addressed in the MPO plan, though transit challenges were identified in our past transit study. Mr. Gold discussed some things that the transit district is working on. Specific bus

routes were discussed. Mr. Geraghty, RiverCOG's and ETD's transit planner, will be invited to give a presentation at the next RPC meeting.

- b. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs):** Ms. Joufflas discussed how the CEDs interviews with small groups that are happening this week are structured. The CEDs will build on the RPOCD. More in-person engagement will be coming in October when two public workshops will be held.
- c. Regional Housing Plan:** Since the plan was passed in July, Ms. Joufflas has been working on the punch list from the recommendations. A regional toolkit is being assembled, starting with regulatory and policy changes recommended in the towns' 8-30j plans. The toolkit will also include best practices. There will be an info sharing hub, to be used as a one-stop shop for renters, owners, developers, non-profits, etc.

Mr. Thompson asked about how 8-30g is being handled; this is not being done regionally. The COG helped 12 of the region's towns with their specific 8-30j plans and is now fulfilling the recommendations from the regional plan, therefore helping the towns indirectly to be proactive for 8-30g.

Mr. Neale asked for elaboration on the regional housing committee. This will be a new voluntary advisory committee, to be discussed with the COG executive committee this week. It will be a forum for the towns to work together and discuss regional work that could be useful for housing. Appointees will be from member towns with possible additional experts.

There was then more discussion on 8-30g and problems with it at the state level. Discussion turned to alternative treatment services for water and sewer, ADUs, and Desegregate CT. There was talk about a potential dam repair in Middletown and DEEP's involvement in that. Mr. Gold stated that he would monitor the situation and give an update when known.

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

Mr. DeFelice encouraged all to come to the Durham Fair the following weekend.

Mr. Gold thanked Mr. Haramut for his work on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant that was submitted the US DOT last week for an action plan for safety requirements. The minimum project size that can be submitted for that grant is \$5 million, so RiverCOG would need to coordinate projects in the region and submit them together to meet that threshold.

Mr. Bolduc asked about commissioner training. Mr. Gold noted that the COGs were supposed to be getting involved with this at some level but he has yet to hear anything from OPM. He will check in with them to see what is happening with that. Mr. Lovejoy noted that ZEO training is available through CAZEO.

## 10. Adjournment

*Ms. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 pm; second by Mr. Thompson. Vote was unanimous in favor.*