



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, January 23, 2023 – 7:00 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members:

Chester	Cindy Lignar
Clinton	Alan Kravitz *
	Martin Jaffe
Cromwell	Nick Demetriades *
	Anthony LaCava *
Deep River	Tony Bolduc *
Durham	Frank DeFelice *
East Haddam	Crary Brownell
	Debbie Langdon *
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
Eliza LoPresti
Kevin Armstrong
Megan Jouflas

RiverRPC

Others Present:

Pat Bandzes
 Kevin Hively
 Bob Murdock
 Johanna Bond

1. Call to Order

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

2. Roll Call - Eliza LoPresti called the roll.**3. Seating of Alternates** –Stephanie Warren (Killingworth) and Michael Bender (Old Saybrook) were seated. Debbie Langdon of East Haddam entered the meeting after the seating of alternates.**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 November 28, 2022 meeting; second by Mr. deBrigard. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Election of Officers

Mr. Gold presided over the election of officers. The slate of officers was presented as such: Frank DeFelice for Chairman, Raul deBrigard for Vice Chairman, and Mary Stone as Secretary.

Mr. Neale moved to accept the slate of officers as presented; second by Ms. Foster. Vote was unanimous in favor.

8. Referrals - None**9. Draft CEDS Preview Presentation by Ninigret Partners**

Kevin Hively of Ninigret Partners presented the draft Comprehensive Economic Development Plan which will open for public comment at the COG meeting of January 25, 2023. A video of the presentation can be found here: <https://www.rivercog.org/plans/ceds/public-comment/>

There was significant discussion, questions, and answers on the presentation and the survey methods used. One of the pages on identifying strategic areas for growth shows a graphic that was suggested for revision as members did not understand wholly what it was trying to impart. This graphic shows that there are relatively few acres of land that include no constraints for development. There was a lot of discussion on development vs. infill development and comments that agree with the plan's recommendations that redevelopment (or infill development) is what is best for the region. There was a suggestion to change the pink color on the map on page 27. The mixed opinion on tourism in the region was discussed.

10. Presentation on Pameacha Pond – Mary-Ellen Sutton

Ms. Sutton was ill and could not attend the meeting.

RiverRPC

11. Updates

a. **Discussion on Statutorily Required Training for Land Use Boards and Commissions:**

UCONN CLEAR is offering training for commission volunteers. This information was sent out to all the RPC members prior to the meeting. There was discussion on what, if anything, happens if a commissioner does not get the training or hasn't gotten it yet; would that be grounds for a decision appeal?

There was discussion that online training for commissioners to take when they are able is preferable. There was also discussion from members who had taken the day-long training by the CT Bar Association. This nine-hour training on a Saturday only occurs every two years and is a lot to take in at once, shorter trainings might be preferable.

Chairman DeFelice suggested the COGs help the commissioners with regional training. Mr. Gold noted that the CLEAR training is a first step and that he and the other COG directors have been talking about taking turns for training topics. At the bare minimum the trainings should be recorded for later distribution.

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

a. **Member Communication with Municipal Planning/Zoning Commissions:** This topic was not discussed.

b. **Other:** Mr. Gold will create a list of bills with hearing information to send out shortly. There are a number of housing bills this year. Chairman DeFelice noted that there is a bill coming up about stone walls, which this commission has discussed in the past.

Mr. Neale noted that Westbrook approved a cannabis store on Post Road.

13. Adjournment

Mr. deBrigard moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.