



# 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 27, 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  
Margot Burns  
Rob Haramut  
Susie Beckman

## RiverRPC

## 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 – None.

## 4. Adoption of Agenda

*Mr. Neal 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. Neale moved to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2023 meeting; second by Mr. Martin. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

## 7. Referrals – Lyme Agriculture Regulations

In general, members applauded Lyme for creating these regulations. There appear to be no intermunicipal impacts and the neighboring municipalities of East Haddam and Old Lyme have no objections.

There was a question on clearing of forest/agricultural land for expansion in a coastal management area. If this was to be done a coastal site plan review would be needed. This is addressed in state statute. Additionally, the vast majority of Lyme land along the river is non-farmland and also steep and typically wetlands.

There was suggestion for expanded access for accessory dwellings, which could be helpful in the case a farm would need to diversify income.

There was discussion on the dark skies ordinance, and how that is not mentioned in the regulations. It was suggested that they add language about the color temperature of lighting not exceeding 2700 degrees Kelvin and that dark sky approved lighting fixtures be used when possible.

The term “traditional New England farm structure” was discussed in reference to the building of processing facilities on site. It was felt that this is subjective and undefined. Suggestions included visual aids or adding a written definition of what this means.

There was discussion about a hand-written note that fitness is permitted as a use, but it could not be found in the regulation. There was also discussion that the regulation does not permit small scale processing such as for syrup or honey. This is believed to be in the farming definition.

There was a discussion about fire protection, specifically the recommendation of water tanks, which pose challenges. This language is part of the existing regs in Lyme in general and not part of the referral.

It was brought up that only three farm-to-table dinners would be allowed per year, otherwise they'd need to obtain a special permit. This seems limiting. The restriction of no more than three non-residential farmers employed on the farm also seemed limiting.

## 8. Updates

- a. **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** Ms. Jouflas is going through all received comments and creating a matrix for them and making changes where necessary. We are in process of creating an additional appendix on business resiliency. We will look at essential businesses that are needed in case of emergency or disaster like medical clinics, pharmacies, gas stations, grocery stores, etc. However, we won't hold off on submitting the CEDS to the state and US EDA as it could take years to be approved.
- b. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** The public comment period ended March 18. Mr. Haramut is going through all comments and incorporating graphic and layout changes. There was discussion on possible lighting on the southern part of Route 9. That project is still on the list in the Middletown section but there are not funds for it. If the city would like that removed they just need to let Mr. Haramut know.
- c. **Legislation:** Mr. Gold discussed several bills that exist and RiverCOG's testimony on them. A link to RiverCOG's list of testimony will be sent to members.

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

Mr. Gold mentioned that RiverCOG will be applying for a grant through DEEP for funding to explore a regional waste authority.

## 10. Adjournment

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