



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, May 22, 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
Margot Burns
Susie Beckman
Megan Jouflas

Others Present:

John Maloney	Nick Gora
Bruce Josephy	Rebecca Mead
Erica Udoff	Susan Wright
Madaline Meyer	John Dillon
Devin Maloney	Trisha & Jody

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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 Debbie Langdon (East Haddam) 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

John Maloney of Chester spoke about a state mandate for affordable housing. He has a presentation that will be emailed to the RPC at another time. Chester is trying to develop affordable housing but the people he is representing don't feel they are ready for it. They are for affordable housing, if it is done in a reasonable manner. They are in this situation because of old zoning laws and no objectives, strategies, or implementation of an affordable housing plan and lack of applying for a moratorium. There was a plan created in 2009 and updated in 2019 but nothing has happened with it, including not forming a committee. Mr. Maloney then referenced the amounts that are considered low and extremely low income, which are included in the presentation he will forward. He also referenced the MIT living wage calculator website and gave figures about living wages and stated that based on all these numbers, we can do better than this. He stated that developers are building affordable housing to make money, not to help people, and that they can bypass zoning. He stated that Chester needs help and asked if the RPC was willing to help. They want help planning for the future and help with not allowing a developer to come in and ruin the nature of Chester. He referenced the (still conceptual) high density village across from St. Josephs. He mentioned concern of ground water contamination based on a state study from 2015. They are looking to the RPC to come help Chester.

Nick Gora of Chester stated that developers come armed with experts. He is wondering how to ensure that the zoning commission reviews the data and asked if they can request that the zoning commission have a peer review of the studies put forth by the experts. The fear is that the commission will not create an adequate record or be duly informed by more objective data. Chairman DeFelice mentioned that statute governing planning and zoning commissions does allow for most of what Mr. Gora mentioned.

Erica Udoff was unable to get her microphone working but posted the following in the chat: My question is that fire, safety and emergency are I believe the only criteria.

6. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

Ms. Stone moved to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2023 meeting; second by Mr. McCracken. Vote was unanimous in favor with Ms. Langdon abstaining.

7. Referrals – None. However, Mr. Neale mentioned that Mr. Downes wrote a staff letter to Westbrook about zoning regulation changes regarding home businesses and that the comments were taken into consideration.

8. Updates

- a. **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** Ms. Joufflas updated everyone that the CEDS has been reviewed and approved by the state. Now we are putting a packet together

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to send to the EDA for review. We are including the request to become an Economic Development District (EDD) at the same time.

- b. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** The plan is approved by the COG and we just got the air quality control approval from the federal government. The whole state of CT is not in conformity with the ozone standards. There was then discussion on charging stations and that the entity that owns the charging station is responsible for that charging station.
- c. **Regional Housing Committee:** The first meeting took place, which was really a housekeeping meeting to decide dates of the subsequent meetings and what would be on upcoming agendas.
- d. **Legislation:** Mr. Gold discussed housing bills such as fair share and live, work, ride. He then answered questions and held discussion on the legislative process and public input. Housing was discussed further. Mr. Gold also discussed possible extra money for the COG in the Regional Services Grant as part of the budget package.

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

Mr. Kravitz stated that Clinton is working on their town plan; their old one focused on transportation on demand (TOD) and since they have a train station with high fares and few riders, they would like to focus on something else this time. He asked the other members for suggestions; localized economic development was discussed.

Ms. Lignar asked about East Haddam's experiences with an application for affordable housing.

Mr. Neale asked about the Thrive grant that RiverCOG, in partnership with four of our towns, is receiving. This grant will focus on TOD in those towns. TOD and economic development in the region were discussed.

Mr. Demetriades stated that the Cromwell P&Z is rewriting regulations and doing their POCD update at the same time.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Neale moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm; second by Mr. Kravitz. Vote was unanimous in favor.