



# 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 26, 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  
Susie Beckman  
Megan Jouflas

#### Others Present:

Renata Bertotti, UCONN CLEAR

# RiverRPC

**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** – Sandra Childress (Essex), Debbie Langdon (East Haddam), and Kellin Atherton (Middletown) were seated. Catherine Johnson of Middletown arrived after Kellin Atherton was seated.

**4. Adoption of Agenda**

*Mr. Neal moved to adopt the agenda; second by Mr. Bolduc. 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 May 22, 2023 meeting; second by Ms. Langdon. Vote was unanimous in favor with Mr. Kowalczyk and Mr. Bolduc abstaining.*

**7. Referrals** – None

**8. UCONN CLEAR Land Use Commissioner Training – Renata Bertotti**

Ms. Bertotti spoke about the potential for the COGs to host trainings for all land use commissioners in the region and possibly extend it to the whole state if they are done via Zoom. Commission members need to self-certify that they received the 3-hour basic training and 1-hour of housing training by Dec. 31, 2023. There was discussion of SCRCOG hosting a basic training with RiverCOG. She would like to do the training in September and was looking for some dates. The RPC meeting will be held Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>.

The basic training (3 hours) is set up along OPM's guidelines, run by CLEAR, and includes topics like how to run meetings, plan reading, etc. The 1-hour advanced housing training is run by attorneys and includes topics such as zoning law and segregation, fair housing act, future of housing in CT, zoning reform, etc.

For next year Ms. Bertotti plans to include a topic about education for towns in general. She would like to talk to each town, through the COG, to do an educational needs assessment and find out the best way to deliver future training. She gave topic ideas such as housing, how to better understand the POCD and how it relates to zoning regulations, annual budgets, intersectional connections, site selection, etc. She would like to hold monthly sessions in 2024.

There was discussion on whether the towns would like training in person or via Zoom and whether they would be recorded sessions. The videos on the CLEAR website will be updated for current legislation. It seems that towns can still opt out and conduct their own training.

Mr. Gold suggested a training in conjunction with the Gateway Commission. Ms. Bertotti is looking for answers about whether the COG would like the training to be in person or via Zoom, and when. It was noted that the training is required for each town's ZBA members, not just the P&Z members. Mr. Gold stated that staff will create a form for ZBA and P&Z members to fill out and get back to Ms. Bertotti with answers.

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

Chairman DeFelice stated that at the last meeting we tried to entertain an educational subject (in reference to the potential proposed housing in Chester) but that the discussion got away from the mission of the group. Mr. Neale suggested a presentation for everyone about what the RPC does, which can be brought back to the towns. This could include a flow chart process for what happens with referrals.

Ms. Warren brought up food scrap recycling and asked if other towns were doing any sort of program. There was discussion about this topic. Middletown is running through a successful program for restaurant scraps which Middlefield and Durham may piggy back onto. Mr. Pizzo talked about running a possible regional compositing site. Middletown residents have a separate program. Mr. Gold noted that Ms. Ehle-Meyer in our office is very involved in this and would be happy to talk about it. Deep River has a food scrap program at the transfer station that Chester may be getting involved in. The regional school system will start a program in the fall.

Mr. Gold discussed the housing bill that was hidden in the greenways bill that passed in the legislative session. There is a new requirement that municipalities report the number of permits for new housing and demolitions. RiverCOG may be able to provide this for the towns if needed through the data dashboard that Mr. Armstrong is creating. He showed the group the beta version which will be revealed to the housing committee at their meeting later in the week. It was suggested that interest rates be included with the housing price information.

Mr. Neale asked about how the Supreme Court's decision on wetlands will affect the state and whether CT's laws supersede federal law if the state's are more strict than the EPA. Mr. Gold will send out the ruling.

Mr. Martin noted that a hybrid manner for the trainings discussed earlier would probably be best for everyone.

## 10. Adjournment

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