



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

145 Dennison Road Essex, CT 06426 | +1 860 581 8554 | www.rivercog.org

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments and Lower Connecticut River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

MINUTES OF REGIONAL HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 22, 2023 – 2:00 PM

Members & Alternates Present: Pat Bandzes (Chester), Bonnie Bennet (Chester), Abby Piersall (Clinton), Daniel Smith (Deep River), Jeremy DeCarli (East Hampton), Richard Pleines (Killingworth), Marek Kozikowski (Middletown), Michael Fogliano (Old Lyme)

Others Present: John Guskowski (various towns)

RiverCOG Staff Present: Megan Jouflas, Eliza LoPresti, Susie Beckman, Kevin Armstrong, Sam Gold

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Jouflas at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom video conference.

Approval of Minutes of July 25, 2023 Meeting

Ms. Bandzes moved to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2023 meeting; second by Mr. Fogliano. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Website Update

Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Jouflas showed the group what the website currently looks like. Ms. Bennet will be added as the alternate for Chester.

Speaker Series Update

Karla Linquist, Executive Director of HOPE Partnership will probably be the first speaker, most likely in September. Another possibility for speakers is to mine people from other states that have completed regulatory needs assessments or people from other organizations related to housing. If any members have ideas for speakers they should let staff know. These will hopefully feed into the round table discussions which will be set up eventually once we have more topic ideas.

Mr. Fogliano suggested someone from Green Planet, which is a company in Guilford that works on conservation subdivisions. Sara LaFleur, the Executive Director of the New London Habitat for Humanity was also suggested. He will send introductory emails.

Toolkit: Inclusionary Zoning

Ms. Jouflas created a spreadsheet that will be used in the toolkit with information on inclusionary zoning. Her presentation on that can be found [here](#). Members were asked to look to see if their town has inclusionary or incentive zoning regulations and to please send them over if so.

RiverCOG

Regional Housing Authorities – Portland & Middletown

Mr. Kozikowski discussed Middletown’s Housing Authority (HA). The HA was adopted by the city through statute, though it is not a city entity. The HA owns 8 projects throughout the city with 487 units total. They manage the properties entirely and all projects are connected to transit. They are currently working on opportunities to expand downtown. They have a passionate Director in Bill Vasiliou. They are funded locally and through the state and fundraising efforts. Because Middletown has 22% affordable housing, they can be selective with opportunities for new construction.

Mr. Guskowski explained that Essex has an HA that established a separate non-profit entity to get grants and funding. He mentioned that Janice Atkinson may be a possible speaker for the group, she was involved with the Essex Court project, which is a trifecta project including the town, the HA, and a non-profit.

Mr. Gold mentioned that a HA is more like a property manager with a portfolio that works with funding, while a town housing committee or commission typically has no staff. There is a potential bill that has not yet passed that would allow towns to join existing Has. This committee’s bylaws allow for exploration of options for regional housing authorities.

Updates From Members

Ms. Bandzes updated that the application for the affordable housing project in Chester was filed, and there will be a public information session in September. The opposition is rallying. She asked if there are any towns where 8-30g was used by a developer and that have been successful in overturning it.

Old Saybrook has successfully conditioned an 8-30g project. In Essex it’s been used three times in four years and once the opposition succeeded in getting a roof line lowered, but the project still went through. Berlin had a project that was stopped, but it was due to health and safety reasons.

Other

Topics For Next Meeting

We will most likely have speakers from HOPE Partnership and/or the Essex HA.

Adjournment

Ms. Bandzes moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 PM; second by Mr. Sullivan. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti