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

MINUTES OF REGIONAL HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 24, 2023 – 2:00 PM

Members & Alternates Present: Pat Bandzes (Chester), Abby Piersall (Clinton), Daniel Smith (Deep River), John Board (Durham), David Rosengren (Essex), Richard Pleines (Killingworth), David Lahm (Lyme), Marek Kozikowski (Middletown), Michael Fogliano (Old Lyme), Dan Bourret (Portland)

Others Present: John Guszkowski (various towns), Cindy Lignar (Chester), Karla Lindquist (HOPE Partnership),Courtney Fitzkee (Portland Youth & Family Services), Liza Thayer (Deep River Housing Authority), Carey Duques (Essex)

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

Call To Order
The meeting was called to order by Ms. Jouflas at 2:05 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom video conference.

Approval of Minutes of August 22, 2023 Meeting
Mr. Lahm moved to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2023 meeting; second by Ms. Bandzes. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Speaker Series - HOPE Partnership, Karla Lindquist
Karla Linquist, Executive Director of HOPE Partnership gave a presentation on what HOPE Partnership does and answered questions. That presentation can be found here.

Regional Housing Authorities – Portland & Deep River
Mr. Smith, Ms. Thayer & Ms. Hourigan reported on Deep River Housing Authority. They were founded in 1993 and have a five-member committee. They own Kirtland Commons, which is 44 units for elderly and disabled residents with very low income. This was a CHFA project and is part of the elderly portfolio for the state. They also provide recreational programs for residents. They are always looking for expansion opportunities. Currently there is a 3-5 year waiting list which is only opened one time a year, each June. There was discussion on criteria for Section 8 (housing vouchers).

Portland's Housing Authority Director was not able to attend the meeting.

HUD PRO Housing Grant Overview
Ms. Jouflas briefed everyone on what the grant application entails. It is now open for public comment and there will be a public meeting the same evening of this meeting. Members

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discussed and asked questions about the application, particularly how the sites would be chosen.

Website & Toolkit Updates

Mr. Armstrong showed the updated data portion of the site, which can be viewed at www.rivercog.org/data. The next possible toolkit item will be conversion of single family to multi-family dwellings. Members were asked to learn about successes in their towns and what challenges can be.

Updates From Members

Ms. Bandzes reported that the affordable project in Chester was continued to a third public hearing later this week, at which time it is expected that it will be closed. The developer is working with the town and has provided modifications to the project based on feedback.

Mr. Rosengren discussed an 8-30g project in Essex that met with resistance in public hearings. He estimated that about 90% of commenters were opposed to the project. He was surprised by this.

Mr. Smith pointed out that the public opinion can be parallel to what happened with Deep River trying to write regulations for the sale of cannabis. Some public members were very upset, but unless there's an actual zoning violation there is not anything to be done about it. He also brought up that there is a bank in the village center that was purchased by a school, so a text amendment had to be written to allow a school there, and during the text amendment process, the project can't be discussed.

Other

Update on Thrive Grant

Ms. Jouflas gave an updated on the program; the technical scope is being created now. This project is looking at doing TOD around the train stations and bus terminal in our region. A land capacity analysis is being proposed.

Adjournment

Mr. Lahm moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 PM; second by Mr. Smith. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti

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