

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

October 27, 2016

Present/Absent: [Excused absence (E); Unexcused absence (U)]

Chester:	<i>Margaret (Peggy) Wilson (E), Errol Horner (E)</i>
Deep River:	Nancy Fischbach, Kate Cotton (E)
<i>East Haddam:</i>	Harvey Thomas, Cary Brownell (E)
<i>Essex:</i>	Claire Matthews, Jerri MacMillian (E)
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Fran Adams, Borough Warden</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement, Chip Frey (E)
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E)
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson (departed 8:30p)
Old Saybrook:	Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern (E)
Regional Rep:	<i>Raul Debrigard (E)</i>
DEEP:	David Blatt
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes

Call to Order

Chairman **Woody** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:35 pm.

Approval of 9/25/16 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Blatt**, seconded by **Cable**, the 9/25/16 regular meeting minutes were approved unanimously with **Fish** and **Bement** abstaining.

Treasurer's Report

In **Wilson's** absence, **Fischbach** reported on the 9/22/16 meeting with Essex Financial attended by **Fischbach**, **Thomas** and **Matthews**. Holdings were reported to be even for the year including land acquisition expenses and operating costs.

RiverCOG staffing bill: \$2,318.24. Motion to approve payment of bills and acceptance of Treasurers Report by **Bement**, seconded by **Thomas**, passed unanimously.

Items of Interest Report

Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement/Campbell Hudson.

In a conversation which occurred at the Essex Zoning Commission meeting on October 17th, Hudson reported that queries had been made by Town representatives to include language in the scenic easement that would open up uses to include ball fields and similar more active recreation. Hudson reported that Mellon found that acceptable and continues to work on the easement language.

Scott Nardozi, Cavanaugh & Company. Nardozi is representing a client who is putting their 38 acre parcel on the market in Chester. The piece abuts the Camp Hazen YMCA and is outside of the Conservation Zone. He asked if the LCRLT might be interested in acquisition. It was explained that, with the piece outside of the Conservation Zone, acquisition by the LCRLT would be a low priority. He was referred to Dick Harrall of the Chester Land Trust who apparently took up the conversation.

CT Land Conservation Council. Letter requesting that those interested contact Governor Malloy to convene the State Bond Commission to authorize the release of funding for OSWA (the main source of funding that been essential to the work of land trusts, towns and water companies in acquiring and permanently protecting open space for conservation. OSWA is funded through the Community Investment Act (CIA). Also included is a form letter intended for political candidates expressing the issues that CLCC will be asking for support by legislators (constitutional amendment strengthening the protection of state conservation lands, protection of the Community Investments Act, and legislation authorizing municipalities a local option to impact a small (up to 1%) conveyance fee on buyers of real estate, to support land conservation and stewardship of local public lands).

Chester, Special Exception for Roof and Ground –mounted Solar Panels. Special Exception application anticipated for such improvements at an apartment complex on Route 154 to be reviewed. Trees cover and distance likely renders view of such equipment insignificant.

Reorganization of OLISP/Water Resources. Blatt reported that the Office of Long Island Sound Programs is being eliminated with staff of OLISP combining with permitting staff in Inland Water Resources. Enforcement staff will remain separate. Blatt will take on the role as supervisor of “Planning”, which may result in his vacating his role as the Commissioner’s representative to the Gateway Commission. That role may be taken by long-time Environmental Planner Marcy Balint who, up until this change, was one of the primary coastal liaisons with many of the lower river and Sound towns.

Site Inspections:

Essex, 18 Little Point Street. Variance application.

Essex, 38 Foxboro Road. Tree cutting request.

Regulation Referral

Deep River. Petition for numerous regulation changes including those dealing with signage, “medi-pods” and numerous regulations concerning agriculture (that will mostly impact properties outside of the Gateway Conservation Zone). Following discussion and review of the Town of Deep River Zoning Map, a motion to approve the petition was made by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Matthews** pursuant to Section 25-102g CGS based upon staff review and based upon the assumption that the square footage of “medi-pods” will be included in any calculation regarding whether or not an application must undergo a Special Exception review in the event the “medi-pod” square footage causes total floor area on the lot to exceed 4,000 square feet. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Land Committee In **Wilson’s** absence, **Cable** reported that there are no changes in status of Haddam land acquisition opportunities.

Outreach Committee

- Downes reported that he has been actively posting river scene photographs on the Gateway Facebook page to increase Gateway visibility on the site. **Thompson** made the suggestion that Gateway could “Like” the realtor’s webpages (see below) which would likely result in more page views and “Likes” from those agencies.
- Downes reported that he had observed the real estate agencies involved in property sales on River Road in Deep River and sent letters and materials to each expressing a desire to assist in helping the agents, clients and their professionals in understanding the GW mission of protection. The Commission complimented Downes on this outreach effort.
- **Woody** and **Fischbach** brought up an opportunity to make a presentation at the annual CLCC workshop held in March at Wesleyan University. The Commission voted to have **Woody** and Downes prepare a proposal to submit to CLCC ASAP.
- **Thomas** reported on the Gateway presence at the 8 Mile Riverfest in East Haddam. He commented that the canoe and kayak trail maps (of which only Deep River remain) continue to be a popular item. The question was asked, can Gateway fund a reprint of the guide maps replacing the existing supporting organizations with the Gateway logo. Downes to present pricing information at the December 1, 2016 meeting. Such maps would combine the trail information with information on Gateway’s land acquisition program and promote Gateway efforts.

Governance Committee

- **Downes** reported on his discussion with the Essex Zoning Commission from the October 17, 2016 meeting. Several questions still need to be answered with such answers being provided at the upcoming EZC meeting scheduled for Monday, November 21, 2016. Chairman Shipman asked ZC members if any *new* concerns would surface for Gateway consideration at the November meeting. Members didn’t indicate any new concerns.
- **Fischbach** reported on the LCRLT 501(c)(3) meeting that was conducted by Sam Gold (RiverCOG ExDir), Steve Mednick (RiverCOG attorney), **Woody**, Downes, Margot Burns (LTE) and, by phone, **Fischbach**. Discussions are moving forward. It was suggested that Mednick use the structure of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County (and perhaps other Community Foundations in the state) as a useful model.

Old Business

Bement reported that the Haddam Land Trust has been raising funds for the purpose of acquiring the 130 acre property known as "Beaver Ledges" located just outside of the Conservation Zone and immediately north of the Route 9/Route 154 connector at Exit 7, Route 9. The report indicated that, although they are raising funds, they haven't come close to the required purchase price as of yet.

New Business. None.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Bement** and **Cable**, the meeting adjourned at 8:37p.