

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2019

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

Chester:	Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Errol Horner
Deep River:	<i>Nancy Fischbach (E), Kate Cotton (E)</i>
East Haddam:	<i>Crary Brownell (E), Joel Ide</i>
<i>Essex:</i>	Claire Mathews, Mary Ann Pleva (E)
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Fran Adams, Borough Warden</i>
<i>Haddam:</i>	Susan Bement, Mike Farina
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill (E)
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson
Old Saybrook:	Bill Webb, Tom Gezo
<i>Regional Rep:</i>	<i>Raul Debrigard (E)</i>
DEEP:	David Blatt
Staff:	J H Torrance Downes.
Guests:	Architect Chris Arelt, PE Bob Doane

Call to Order

Chairman **Thompson** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:03pm.

Approval of 12/6/18 Meeting Minutes

Mathews offered a correction which stated that, on page two, the new treasurer will begin on 1/25/19. In addition on page three a typo is to be changed so as to say “no” equipment, and on the 1st page, under the phragmites discussion, the publication discussed was “Save the Sound” and the park mentioned was “Sunken Meadow State Park” in Long Island, New York. Motion to approve the minutes with said corrections by **Bement**, seconded by **Webb**, passed unanimously.

Preliminary Discussion of Residential Development at 189 River Road, Deep River

Representatives of the property owners, Chris Arelt and Bob Doane, had previously brought in preliminary designs for a boat house that exists on site and adjacent to the river, renovation plans that will require variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals. At this meeting, the representatives brought in preliminary designs for the residential structure to be built on the site. At some point in the future, an application will be submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the boat house renovation (the residential structure will require no variances), followed by the submission of a Special Exception application for the entire project. Based upon discussions, the representatives are aware that they will be asked to come before the Gateway Commission to present the final plans.

The design of the residential structure is spread out laterally rather than vertically so that the design maintains a low profile. Vehicles parking will be in a partially below-ground garage on the south of the structure. A pool and connected office-type space is located on the north side of the main structure. A patio is proposed for river-facing side of the main structure. The roof color will be darker in tone while the siding will be an off-white. The treed hillside is to remain intact with the details likely being discussed during the application process. A small outbuilding exists to the southeast of the site of the main house. It is expected that the outbuilding will be removed.

The property owner will maintain the two entrances onto River Road, angled entrance/exits that may be modified to improve sight lines for exiting vehicles.

Commission members appeared pleased with the design philosophy that will likely minimize visual impacts at the

site. Members, of course, will hold final opinions for the final submission.

Treasurers Report

Wilson reported that the finance committee met with Essex Financial on 12/11/18. The market at that time was described by **Wilson** as a “roller coaster” with a low point occurring on 12/24/18. The question was asked, why does EF not invest in individual stocks, to which **Wilson** replied that the Gateway investment strategy uses mutual funds that require less research than investment in individual stocks. EF does not have a large research department. Staff billing for December of 2018 as follows: JHTD (22 hours) \$\$983.62, PF (1.5 hours) \$56.21, Overhead \$1513.06, LoPresti, postage reimbursement of \$3.31. Total bill: \$2,556.20. Motion to pay bill by **Bement**, seconded by **Matthews**, approved unanimously.

Motion to accept Treasurer’s Report by **Wilson**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

As a part of the Treasurer’s Report, Janet Stone of the Deep River Land Trust accepted a donation check from the Gateway Commission in the amount of \$30,000. Stone reported that the acreage will be added to an application for a federal grant for migratory birds. Stone will insure that Gateway is recognized in any press releases issued and will forward same to Gateway.

Correspondence Report

Downes summarized the Items of Interest report as follows:

- Report on Essex Zoning Regulations. The hearing for the adoption of the Gateway Standards is scheduled to commence on Monday, January 28, 2019. Downes and other members will attend to answer any questions. ZEO Budrow indicated that any questions will likely centered on any changes made after the Zoning Commission members last saw the standards.
- Attorney Mark Branse. Branse still working on standards issues and a letter concerning portions of the Conservation Zone which are not visible from the river. Fischbach to report under Standards discussion.
- GW Handbook A request was made to reorganize the Gateway Handbook into clearer sections. This task is being worked on; a new handbook will be presented when complete.
- Hillside Map, Gateway Conservation Zone. A topographic map of the Conservation Zone showing the hillsides in the Conservation Zone and areas where properties are unseen because of intervening hills has been constructed. The map will aid in answering questions regarding what areas of the Conservation Zone are hidden from river view to a great degree. The map will be shown at the January 24, 2019 meeting.
- Connors Property, 189 River Road, Deep River. Property on CT River referred to as the “Admiral Chase” property. Members may recall that Architect Chris Arelt and PE Bob Doane previously presented plans for the renovation of the boathouse existing on the northern edge of the property. This presentation will show plans for the single family dwelling prior to the submission of a Special Permit application to the Deep River Planning & Zoning Commission.

As a part of the Correspondence Report, Matthews raised the issue of the proposed floating zone in Deep River and provided an article from “Save the Sound” article referred to in the December minutes.

Variance Referrals. None.

Old Saybrook, Annual “Housekeeping” Changes to Zoning Regulations. Downes explained that most of the proposed regulations do not impact properties in the Gateway Conservation Zone or were of little consequence and create little to no adverse impacts to Gateway interests. The proposal included the adoption of regulations that would bring the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission up to date with the recent Gateway standards adoption. In this case, the Zoning Commission made some modifications within their existing standards including revising references to the “High Tide Line” to now reference the “Coastal Jurisdiction Line”, consistent with the current DEEP jurisdictional definition. Most important, the Zoning Commission indicated that they will leave the stricter existing Gateway standards intact rather than reducing the strength of the Gateway authority in that town and providing application review options that were less stringent than those in the existing standards (e.g. site plan versus Special Exception/Permit applications). This approach was accepted by the members of the Gateway Commission. With the

adoption, Old Saybrook and Essex will be the first two of the eight Gateway towns to fulfill statutory requirements with respect to the adoption of Gateway standards. The Old Saybrook regulation proposal was “approved” consistent with Section 25-102g CGS by **Blatt**, seconded by **Bement**. The motion passed unanimously.

Committees Reports

Land Committee. **Wilson** reported that information from Jim McHutchison of the CT Yankee group indicates that he is “optimistic” about the eventual preservation of the CT Yankee property, although the pace of the work may slow somewhat. Stay tuned for more reports.

Governance Committee. **Fischbach**, not in attendance at the meeting, has indicated that she would like to have a Governance Committee meeting with the hopes of passing along the chairmanship of the committee prior to her resignation in May of 2019. **Fischbach** will be in attendance at the March meeting to discuss further. In another matter, **Thompson** indicated that she would like to form an “Executive Committee” for Gateway.

Public Outreach Committee. The issue of sponsorship of the 2019 CLCC Land Trust Workshops (Saturday, March 23, 2019) was raised. Members voted to sponsor at a level of \$500 consistent with past years. Motion by **Matthews**, seconded by **Ide**, passed unanimously.

Old Business:

None to report.

New Business:

None to report.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by **Bement** passed unanimously. 8:55pm