

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2018

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

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

Call to Order

In the absence of Chairman **Thompson**, Vice Chairman **Woody** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:30pm.

Approval of 10/25/18 Annual Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes with said correction by **Cable**, seconded by **Mathews**, passed unanimously.
Abstain: **Bement**

Approval of 10/25/18 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes with said correction by **Wilson**, seconded by **Blatt**, passed unanimously. Abstain: **Bement**

Update on Phragmites Eradication Project

After summarizing the project, Rich Snarski discussed the progress of the project after two years of the three planned years of work, showing photos and maps in a Power Point presentation constructed by Downes. Photos of the Marsh Master, owned by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and a smaller four wheel vehicle known as an "Argo" were shown with operators including Dave Sagan (USF&WS) and Snarski (spraying emergent Phragmites). Photos were also included that shows the regrowth of native vegetation where the phragmites have been cut. Photos of rare and endangered plants, including one that is considered as "globally rare" were shown as well. **Mathews** referred to the "Save the Sound" project occurring in Stonington where phragmites was removed by the roots with no chemical being applied, followed by planting of native vegetation. She offered the document to Snarski to look over, expressing concern for the use of chemicals. The two chemicals used in the eradication project were again discussed – Glyphosate and Imazapyr – both EPA-approved herbicides.

Treasurers Report

Wilson reported on the interviews held with regard to an investment advisor. One advisor was eliminated, one dropped out and one didn't apply. Further work is being done to choose the next financial advisor. **Wilson** also reported that the reimbursement for the purchase of the Sogge property in Haddam Neck was received from the MxLT and deposited in Gateway accounts.

Staff billing for October and November of 2018 as follows: JHTD (32 hours) \$1,430.73, PF (3/4 hour) \$28.10, Overhead \$2122.75. Total bill: \$3,626.17. Motion to pay by **Bement**, seconded by **Mathews**, approved unanimously.

Wilson presented the staffing bill in the amount of \$1,626.57 for payment. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Matthews** to pay. Passed unanimously.

As of January 1, 2019, **Matthews** will take over as the Treasurer of the Gateway Commission. **Matthews** congratulated **Wilson** and all members who participated on the Sogge purchase, sale and reimbursement. **Wilson** reported that David Brown of the MxLT should also be given credit for the work he did on behalf of his organization and the GW Commission. **Wilson** briefly reviewed the status of the "Hillside Project". A short discussion on the Brainerd Quarry history followed.

Correspondence Report

Downes summarized the Items of Interest report items stating that:

1. GW Standards/Essex. The public hearing for the adoption of the GW Standards before the Essex Zoning Commission is scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2019.
2. Request for Release of Matching \$5,000 by GW to the LCRLT. Margot Burns was present to inform Gateway that all but one of the participating LTE lower valley land trusts has donated funds with the lone non-participating being the Lynde Point Land Trust. Burns continues to try to contact the organization, which has been a challenge. Based upon the report, members of the Gateway Commission agreed that the Commission will release the second \$5,000 donation, which was conditioned upon financial participation of the local land trusts.
3. Staff Lunch with GW Town Staff. Downes reported that he is still working to find a convenient date for all of the staff of the GW towns to get together to discuss the new standards and other GW-related issues.
4. Attorney Mark Branse and the GW Standards, Deep River Request for Consideration on Properties Unseen from the CT River on Route 154. Downes reported that Branse continues to review the standards in light of the discussion he held with **Fischbach** and Downes in recent weeks. The discussion helped clarify the intent of the new standards language in a way that satisfied Branse's concerns. Branse is the land use attorney for four of the eight GW towns and had recommended that those towns not adopt the new standards until certain issues were worked out. Regarding the Deep River issue, Branse continues to work on language that may enable Gateway to offer solutions to application of GW standards on properties in the Conservation Zone unseen from the river.
5. National Estuarine Research Reserve. Downes mentioned the NERR public meeting held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018 and pointed out the GW support letter that he wrote and submitted at the request of Debrigard and others. Downes also prepared a similar letter of support on behalf of the Regional Planning Committee.
6. Zoning Primer for GW Members. Downes provided a handout of the outline for the zoning "class" that will be provided to members. All agreed that the instruction can take place over two separate meetings conducted during two evening meetings. Downes to send out a poll to determine which evenings and times are the best for the two sessions.
7. CRC "Cleanup Chronicle". Copies of the chronicle providing stories, photos and trash tally numbers for the Source to Sea cleanup were provided for reviews.
8. GW Roster Phone Update. Downes requested that all members submit their cell phone numbers for the roster, this at the request of Chairman **Thompson**.

Variance Referrals. None.

Regulation Referral

Deep River, Proposal of a Floating Zone for Nursery Businesses, Contractors Businesses and Storage Yards in the R-80 Residential District, and for Allowances to Store Equipment in the CIP Commercial District. Downes explained the concept behind a floating zone. The process would include three "phases" – proposal of a set of regulations to govern one of the stated uses, the "landing" of the approved regulations on a specific piece of property, and the submission of a Special Exception application to have the use approved on that property. Of the three uses, only the Contractors Business and Storage Yard use is one that can apply to go through this process within the Gateway

Conservation Zone. The nursery business use is excluded from the Conservation Zone while to equipment storage allowance is proposed for a district outside of the Conservation Zone. Minimum lot size for the contractor's business and storage yard use is 50 acres, large for the R-80 District, which is located along the River Road section of town and further west in the more rural sections of Deep River. Understanding that the first two "legislative" phases of the application process would come to GW for "approval" (or "disapproval") pursuant to Section 25-102g CGS, members felt comfortable considering what is essentially an "enabling" regulation which will allow for developers to apply to establish these uses. The regulation itself will not allow any of the stipulated uses, but allow a developer to submit an application to do so. Downes explained that floating zones are commonly used to enable a flexible process for developers to propose their idea of what the regulations should look like. Upon questioning why developers should be allowed to submit proposed regulations to conduct these uses, **Brownell** confirmed that floating zones are successfully used in East Haddam. Motion to "approve" the proposed regulation by **Wilson**, seconded by **Cable**, approved unanimously. Members asked that the letter include recognition of the "legislative" phases of the application process and the understanding that GW would have the ability to approve or disapprove a proposed set of regulations and the location of the specific property where the regulations would "land". Although there are some locations within the Conservation Zone where such uses could exist, other locations might pose a visual threat to the "natural and traditional riverway scene".

Committees Reports

Land Committee. No report of significance.

Governance Committee. Summarized above.

Public Outreach Committee. No report of significance.

Old Business:

None to report.

New Business:

None to report.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by **Bement** passed unanimously. 9:15pm