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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,
Middletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

**LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

Monday, June 25, 2018 - 7:00 pm

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments conference room
145 Dennison Road, Essex

Members:

Chester: Vacancy
Clinton: Alan Kravitz
Jack Scherban
Cromwell: Alice Kelly
Chris Cambareri
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton*
Tony Bolduc*
Durham: Frank DeFelice*
Joe Pasquale
East Haddam: Crary Brownell
Lou Salicrup
East Hampton: Michael Kowalczyk*
Essex: Alan Kerr*
Sandra Childress*
Haddam: Stasia DeMichele
Raul deBrigard*
Killingworth: Stephanie Warren*
Alec Martin
Lyme: Mary Stone*
Middlefield: Robert Johnson
Erin Howard
Middletown: Beth Emery
Stephen Devoto
Old Lyme: Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Kenneth Soudan*
Karen Jo Marcolini
Portland: Elwin Guild*
Westbrook: Bill Neale
Marie Farrell

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Janice Ehle/Meyer

Eliza LoPresti
Gabrielle Gelozin
Nat Bush

1. Call to Order / Roll Call / Seating of Alternates

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Frank DeFelice at 7:00 pm. Roll call was taken by Eliza LoPresti. Stephanie Warren of Killingworth was seated for Alec Martin.

2. Amendments to Agenda / Approval of Agenda

Bruce Edgerton moved to approve the agenda; Raul deBrigard seconded. All voted in favor.

3. Public Comments

None

4. Referrals

a. Cromwell: Amendment of Regulations Concerning Height within the Highway Business District. Maximum height is proposed to be increased from 40 to 50 feet to allow for five (5) story buildings along Route 372 from Route 9 to the western Cromwell border.

Sam Gold reported that staff opinion is that there is no significant inter-municipal impact to Cromwell/Middletown. The Mattbasset River separates the towns and districts of Cromwell and Middletown, so there is a lack of abutters. Also, along the corridor of the river there is a healthy amount of tall trees that will obscure the view from Middletown.

Also discussed: it is not unusual to have a 50' height, all other current parameters for building will stay in place (particularly in regard to the river and wetlands), and this change is only for the allowable height in this business district along Route 372.

There was agreement that staff recommend to the Town of Cromwell to accept the proposed height increase.

b. Durham: Proposed Farm Events Regulation

Chairman DeFelice discussed the proposed regulations. The town of Durham currently has no agricultural events regulation, which has become an issue, particularly in reference to proposed wineries. This proposal will go to public hearing on August 1, 2018 in Durham. Activity is permitted in all zones by special permit. The proposed regulation tries to deal with issues of density, including adequate parking. The document also outlines steps that applicants need to take and submissions they need to make to obtain the permit. Chair DeFelice welcomed suggestions from RPC members, discussions of which are listed below.

Addressing expected frequency and number of events and noise levels in the regulations; approval parameters will come with each instance of special permit.

Suggested language about permittees and licensing for alcohol, if it will be served during an event; this may be covered by the State Trooper instead of the P&Z.

There was discussion on whether this document is intended to regulate one-time or temporary events, as there was confusion on the usage of the word "events" in the document. Temporary events that do not affect the land will go before the Board of Selectman as P&Z is striving to only regulate permits that affect the land. There was brainstorming on other wordage such as

agricultural activity, educational, retail, agri-tourism, recreation, etc. This led to a discussion on the percentage of CT products that are to be used, based on the wording in the definition of “Agricultural Events” in the proposed regulation.

Raul deBrigard stated that it is irresponsible for the Committee to accept the regulations as written without asking for a clause for a consultation with the RPC to be included. This is because a permit could be issued anywhere in town, including within 500’ of a neighboring town and/or could potentially be an inter-municipal impact. There should also be a mechanism to notify the neighboring town of the activity.

There was discussion on how these regulations came about, with Chairman DeFelice referencing proposed wineries. This led to a dialogue on whether wineries should just be permitted in town, or if this regulation could be used more widely.

It was suggested to not limit the application to parcels of five acres or more.

During discussion on using the word “events” versus some other designation, Mary Stone brought up that there is an inherent conflict as the proposal is intentionally non-specific, but to avoid abuse of the general designations, specific designations may be needed. It was suggested to set up some kind of mechanism for resolving these issues as they arise. This led to a discussion on what exactly constitutes agriculture and the timing of such: a farm growing one row of grapes that has weddings – is it agriculture? A start-up winery that can’t produce grapes immediately and imports all its grapes – is it agriculture?

It was noted that the special permit will require a hearing; this is not a change of ordinance. That in and of itself is a fail-safe as opposed to go into specifics discussed above. This is a good effort to provide control without being too restrictive.

Sam suggested voting on a letter written by Torrance Downes about this issue during the July meeting. Janice Ehle/Meyer stated that she will bring this up before the Regional Agricultural Council in July, and will most likely get a letter from them as well.

5. Regional POCD Discussion

There are no new chapters, though John McDonald has been updating the cultural heritage section and has provided a written summary of the work he has done. An intern has been editing the sections to read as one cohesive voice. Dan Bourret, RiverCOG GIS coordinator, has finished mapping for the plan. Items are getting done with the staff we have while Jon Curtis recovers and eases back into work. Sam stated that as the budget is looking ok, there may be an opportunity to hire someone for one of the vacant positions, and that person would be working on the POCD with Jon.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. March 26, 2018

Mary Stone moved to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2018 meeting; second by Bruce Edgerton. All voted in favor.

b. April 23, 2018

Mary Stone moved to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2018 meeting as amended to include Mary Stone and Raul deBrigard as present. Second by Stephanie Warren. All voted in favor; Michael Kowalczyk abstained from the vote.

7. Miscellaneous

Sam discussed the Rt. 81 (Clinton) & Rt. 66 (Portland & East Hampton) corridor studies that are moving forward. There is also a Bus Operations Study that involves MAT and 9 Town Transit throughout the region. He will email information and links to the studies and their facebook page to the RPC members.

The special transportation fund was successfully funded for the next five years by a shift in car sales tax. Some projects that were on hold have been restarted, like the train station in Clinton and the Rt. 9 project in Middletown.

The COG was to receive 4.1 million dollars this year, of which a rescission of \$500,000 was made. However, the COG's budget was conservative for this fiscal year so that number will still work.

Sam introduced Sustainable CT fellows Gabrielle Gelozin and Nat Bush, and they all explained the program and what they are working on for their summer fellowship in relation to helping the towns sign on to the program.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm was made by Bruce Edgerton and seconded by Stephanie Warren. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti