



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

145 Dennison Road Essex, CT 06426 | +1 860 581 8554 | www.rivercog.org

Regional Planning Committee

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, June 22, 2020 – 6:00 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members:

Chester	Mike Sanders *
Clinton	Alan Kravitz *
	Martin Jaffe *
Cromwell	Chris Cambrieri *
	Anthony LaCava *
Deep River	Bruce Edgerton
	Tony Bolduc
Durham	Frank DeFelice *
	Joe Pasquale
East Haddam	Crary Brownell
	Lou Salicrup
East Hampton	Michael Kowalczyk *
Essex	Sandra Childress *
Haddam	Raul deBrigard *
	Stasia DeMichele
Killingworth	Alec Martin * (7:20)
	Stephanie Warren
Lyme	Mary Stone *
Middlefield	Vacancy
Middletown	Beth Emery *
	Kellin Atherton *
Old Lyme	Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook	Thomas Cox
	Karen Jo Marcolini
Portland	Vacancy
Westbrook	Bill Neale *
	Marie Farrell

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Torrance Downes
Eliza LoPresti
Megan Jouflas
Margot Burns

Guests: None

RiverRPC

1. Call to Order

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was conducted via video and conference call.

2. Roll Call

3. Seating of Alternates

Sandra Childress (Essex) was seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. deBrigard moved to adopt the agenda, Mr. Neale seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.

5. Public Comments – None

6. Approval of Minutes of Past Meetings

Mr. Neale moved to approve the May 18, 2020 meeting minutes; second by Mr. Kravitz. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Referrals – None

8. RPOCD – Introductory Webinar Presentation

Mr. Gold & Ms. Jouflas gave the presentation as they will be doing in a week to members of the public. Comments included:

Mr. Kravitz felt it was repetitive, he suggested opening up some conclusions from the last regional plans and ask the towns to what extent the issues were addressed in the intervening period.

Ms. Childress stated the presentation was fantastic and that the repetition is necessary to help people remember.

Mr. Cambrieri stated that it is good that the town POCDs aren't smothered and it will not be intimidating or offensive to towns in the way it's presented. He suggested limiting questions/answers to ten minutes and state that we will accept emailed questions after the presentation.

Mr. LaCava stated that the presentation is precise and that it's good to drive home the points 3 times. He echoed Mr. Cambrieri's point about towns not feeling overpowered.

Ms. Emery asked about hyperlinks to RPC rep's email addresses as there are a couple of places in the presentation where people are directed to contact their rep but not shown a way to do that. She also suggested inviting people to contact the Chair of the P&Z or land use board and to add page numbers to the presentation. There was a discussion on how the members should be contacted, this will be figured out. Ms. Emery suggested listing examples in which regionalization has worked such as sustainability, etc.; this was discussed. Mr. Gold mentioned that since this is a land use plan he doesn't want to delve too far into services offered.

Ms. Stone stated that the presentation uses good language, is accessible to all levels of knowledge and makes good use of repetition. She asked that it be delivered as if it were not being read.

Mr. Neale asked that dates are double checked and noted that the map page is a little pixelated. He also suggested a third party monitoring the chat screen to summarize comments and questions.

Mr. Cambrieri suggested that as questions come in, the RPC member for that town is cc'ed and vice versa so everyone is on the same page.

Mr. DeFelice suggested making new email addresses for each town that forward to Ms. Jouflas and the RPC rep.

Mr. deBrigard suggested making a generic email address such as questions@riverocg.org that forwards to Ms. Jouflas and the RPC rep.

Ms. Stone stated that the goal is to make the audience understand the purpose of the RPOCD and how it relates to what their town is doing and that the town's priorities will be listened to and heard. She mentioned that they are all appointed by towns as a public official and part of the responsibility of that is being accessible.

Mr. Kowalczyk stated that he is fine with his email being shared but doesn't want it on a live website as that's a way to get spam.

Mr. deBrigard stated that it needs to be included that the main reason we need a regional plan is that we are all dependent on each other. Towns are stronger if they are not independent of their neighbors. He suggested pointing out some issues that are either being worked on or want to work on, such as housing, and that it be pointed out that the presentation will be up on the website and perhaps other resources could be included there as well.

Mr. DeFelice suggested that Ms. Jouflas introduce herself and that the word "voluntary" is not used for RPC members as they are appointed by the town. He stated that on the slide about why the RPC is important, the text differs in order from what Ms. Jouflas stated. The slide about key components needs to have both the conservation and development aspects. There was discussion about the terms "overlap" and "mutual support" on the slide about balancing conservation and development. Mr. DeFelice feels those terms are vague and is looking on greater resolution on what is being said.

Mr. DeFelice then moved on to talking about the plan deliverable of the future land use map and asked the RPC their opinions on the example map that was provided (from Camden County) and using the regional shapes instead of parcel level data.

Mr. Cambrieri stated that the data does not need to be parcel-specific.

Mr. Kravitz stated that it is better to generally stick to conceptual location though there are times when you need to be specific.

Mr. Gold stated that the map will not be parcel-specific. He asked that specific recommendations about the mapping be sent to him.

Mr. deBrigard read this as there are places to be specific, like the Gateway boundaries, but there should also be general areas too.

Mr. Kravitz stated that there are situations where the zoning for certain activities is built around certain standards, for example for transportation, and that it should be clearly stated and shown for its implications. Because when it isn't there can be problems.

Mr. Neale stated that the state POCD worked off census tracts and asked is it worth being aware of what they are using if we are going to propose something else in contradiction. Mr. Gold explained that the census blocks used aren't uniform and the draft state POCD is not yet approved. He received guidance to go off of the current state plan which is from 2015. Our regional plan does not need to be in conformity to the state plan.

Mr. Sanders stated that it would be great to upload the municipalities' plans into the regional map. He is unsure how much it would conflict with each town as the example of Camden County is on county government rather than each town.

Mr. Kowalczyk stated that the Camden map is a strong example to emulate and since the categories are broad there will be minimal conflict with what the towns propose and the state plan.

Mr. deBrigard stated that the RPOCD could look at where good places for industry are located. The map could point out that there are some places that might be better for some things and not others.

9. Town RPOCD Meeting Discussion Questions

The questions will be provided in advance to the towns. Mr. Sanders feels that question 5 needs to be answered for the public rather than us asking the public. He suggested asking something similar to how could the recommendations that come out of the RPOCD support your town's goals. Mr. Neale stated that to leave it in the worst that can happen is that we get no answer and the best is that we hear something we haven't thought of yet.

10. RPOCD Project Website

The website is now live.

11. Transit Integration Study Plan

Preferred alternatives have been identified, with the conclusion that a merged district consisting of MAT and ETD is the best. Public commenting is still being worked out, and the plan should be wrapping up over the summer.

12. Covid-19 Update

Mr. Gold briefed the group on what is happening at the state and local level. Mr. Kravitz noted there is no mention of Covid and uncertainty in terms of development in the plan. Mr. Gold stated that the plan will address the fact that it is being written during a pandemic which could change development moving forward.

Mr. deBrigard suggested identifying issues of social/environmental justice and not react in a passive way. He hopes that this kind of thinking about how to end up with a better world extends to the plan.

13. Miscellaneous: State, Regional or Local Planning Issues

Mr. Gold stated there is no word on RSG funding yet or on the RPIP grant funding.

14. Adjournment

AT 9:06 P. M. Mr. Neale moved to adjourn the meeting; second by Mr. Kowalczyk. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza Lopresti