



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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Regional Planning Committee

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 27, 2025, – 7:00 pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members:

Chester	Carlie Dailey
Clinton	Lawrence Edwards *
	Eddie Alberino *
Cromwell	Nick Demetriades
	Anthony LaCava *
Deep River	Daniel Smith *
Durham	Frank DeFelice *
East Haddam	Crary Brownell
	Debbie Langdon
East Hampton	Michael Kowalczyk
Essex	Carey Duques *
	Thomas Pinkowish *
Haddam	Raul deBrigard
Killingworth	Alec Martin *
	Stephanie Warren
Lyme	Mary Stone *
	David Lahm
Middlefield	Paul Pizzo *
Middletown	Beth Emery *
	Nathaniel Spencer
Old Lyme	Harold Thompson *
	Howard Margules
Old Saybrook	Douglas McCracken *
	Michael Bender *
Portland	Chantal Foster
	Bob Ellsworth
Westbrook	Bill Neale *
	Marie Farrell

Special Guest Bill Goff *

*Members Present

Staff Present:

Sam Gold

Elizabeth Rolison

RiverRPC

Margot Burns
Susie Beckman
Megan Jouflas
Kevin Armstrong
Marcos Gonzalez
Robert Haramut

1. Call to Order

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

2. Roll Call – Elizabeth Rolison called the roll call.

3. Seating of Alternates – Anthony LaCava (Cromwell) and Michael Bender (Old Saybrook) were seated.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Alberino moved to adopt the agenda; second by Mr. Martin. Vote was unanimous in favor.

5. Public Comment – None

Mr. DeFelice read into the record a letter he received by RiverCOG from Tony Bolduc, a longtime member of RPC, informing of his decision to resign his position on RiverCOG's Regional Planning Committee, effective immediately. His other commitments have become too great to be able to fulfill the requirements the positions on the Commission and he felt it best to make room for someone with the time and energy to devote to the Committee. In the letter, Mr. Bolduc offered that if he could be of assistance during the time that it takes to fill the position, to please not hesitate to ask.

6. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

Mr. Neale moved to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2024, meeting; second by Mr. Edwards. Vote was unanimous in favor.

7. Referrals

Mr. DeFelice noted that referrals are now being posted online at on RiverCOG.org.

To view current referrals: <https://www.rivercog.org/regionalservices/referrals/>

8. Presentation on the Central Connecticut Loop Trail Study

Mr. Haramut gave a short introduction to the Central Connecticut Loop Trail project explaining that the concept of linking the Farmington Canal Trail to the Airline Trail has been around for years and they have been seeking funding for a long time. Legislation was recently passed for DOT money to conduct the study. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc (VHB) was hired to conduct this study in the Fall of 2023.

The area in focus is the in Middletown, Portland and is part of a larger Central Connecticut loop study.

Phil Goff from VHB explained that for over the last 14 - 15 months VHB has been working with RiverCOG, stakeholders, and community members who have shown up at public meetings to work on the Central Connecticut Loop Trail study. He then shared a presentation which can be viewed [HERE](#)

9. Updates on RiverCOG Programs

a. Regional Housing Committee Update

Ms. Joufflas informed the group that the Regional Housing Committee has been working over the last year to create the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) methodology to do future housing planning work for the update to the Regional Housing Plan. The updates for all these plans, the Regional Housing Plan and the 830 J plans, are all coming up soon.

While they had that baseline assessment of what the demographics were, what the housing supply was, what the job market looks like and the market analysis with housing absorption rate data, they didn't connect the pieces together to indicate how jobs and demographics in the housing supply impact how much housing can actually be built, or what needs to be built in the region over the next 10 years.

The RHC wanted to make certain it was well informed when it went to the State. Ms. Joufflas indicated that the RHC has been doing research through scholarly articles on what goes into a housing needs assessment. A workshop was conducted, as well as a working group with meeting with Don Poleman who was a consultant on the Regional Housing Plan. The group authorized a presentation of the results to the RiverCOG board, and it was endorsed unanimously at the last meeting.

All these results will go into a report with technical memoranda and is expected to be done by the end of the week likely along with a presentation. They are now in the process of putting this information into a report with a technical memorandum of all the work that was put into it this project.

Ms. Joufflas explained that they are currently working on a more thorough report and presentation/roadshow to explain what was done here and would be happy to give a presentation at a future RPC meeting as well.

Discussion included lobbying the Governor's office, DOT, Legislators along with Shoreline East to restore funding to Shoreline East. Students were also brought up in regards to the need side of the metric and how that might skew the real housing needs since they're often financially supported by their parents, whether the parents live in state or out of state.

One of the reasons that COG was asked to put their stamp of approval on this regional methodology is because it is expected that possibly the state will be releasing its methodology for fair share housing that was created with the participation municipalities, participation of land use commissioners and something that was in line with the scale of what the regional housing plan shows that can be produced and absorbed.

10. 2025 Legislation Tracking

As per Mr. Gold, RiverCOG has created a bill tracker spreadsheet with over 250 bills to date. Some are duplicates and some are concepts that need to be updated. As new bills come in, they are recorded and linked to testimony and dates of hearings. Some of these bills address housing and building affordable units.

There are 3 hearings on January 31st, 2025, for 3 bills of note under the Environment Committee. 1. Increasing the listed plants that are invasive and banning them from being sold in Connecticut, 2. The Tire Steward program. 3. The Act concerning an option to purchase restricted agricultural lands at agricultural value.

If anyone sees bills that are of a particular interest and need a refresher on how to sign up on, speak on or how to submit testimony, they can reach out to Mr. Gold or Mr. DeFelice. He stated that they can show how to do both of those things on the on the on the CGA website.

[Bill Tracker Spreadsheet](#) [Bill Tracker.xlsx](#)

11. Miscellaneous: State, Regional and/or Local Planning Issues

Mr. Alberino raised a question regarding culverts on Nod Road in Clinton and asked about how he should address this to be fixed. Mr. DeFelice stated that the Town Manager is the one that would identify that, and to make sure that the town engineering staff has got that as a project to be completed. Mr. Gold also stated that RiverCOG can talk to Town Manager regarding this and circle back to a 2022 document that Mr. Alberino said might address this. Mr. Alberino is going to follow up on this document and Mr. DeFelice asked that if he could find this information and document to copy Mr. Haramut if he needed support with his town leadership.

Mr. Gold noted that an RFP was put out looking for a consultant to do an update for Natural Hazard Mitigation plans and that Clinton is one of the towns for which they are doing a plan. The Natural Hazard Mitigation plan is a tool for towns to address known hazards from flooding, winter storms and other natural hazards.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Alberino moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:47pm; second by Mr. Neale. Vote was unanimous in favor.