

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 27, 2014

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

<i>Chester:</i>	Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Martha Wallace (E)
<i>Deep River:</i>	<i>Nancy Fischbach (E), Amy Petrone (E)</i>
East Haddam:	Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman
Essex:	Claire Matthew
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</i>
Haddam:	<i>Susan Bement (E), Derek Turner</i>
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody (Arr. 7:35p), Lisa Niccolai
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson (E)
Old Saybrook:	Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern (E)
Former MRPA:	<i>Raul Debrigard (E)</i>
Former CRERPA:	Vacancy
<i>DEEP:</i>	David Blatt
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes.
Guests:	Attorney Ed Casella, Architect Emily Grochowski

Call to Order

Chairman **Woody** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:32p.

Approval of 1/23/14 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by **Wilson**, seconded by **Cable**, passed unanimously as amended.

Referrals

Old Saybrook, 330 Watrous Point Road. The agenda was amended to allow Attorney Ed Casella and Architect Emily Grochowski to present a variance application for a property located at 330 Watrous Point Road in Old Saybrook. The proposal to add a second story to the southernmost portion of the existing house and to modify the design of a previously approved pool (that was not constructed) requires the approval of a variance of the 100 foot setback requirement from the river and the 100 foot riparian buffer, also measured from the river. Of note is that although the proposed second story adds somewhat to an already significant visual bulk at the site, (1) the additional bulk is not significant as compared to the existing bulk, and (2) only about 40 to 50% of the second story is located within the setback/riparian buffer area due to the angle of the structure upon which the second story will be placed. The pool proposal is one that further minimizes any visual impact over what was approved in 2013 by providing a somewhat lower profile which requires a somewhat lower riverside retaining wall. The wall will be less than the three feet approved in 2013. Motion to approve by **Matthews**, seconded by **Cable**, with the condition that the major trees, described to be retained by the representations as, are required to remain on site as a condition of an approval. The trees in question are the numerous mature trees that separate the proposed pool area from the existing dock located on the river. Motion passed unanimously, with **Fish** abstaining from voting.

Treasurer's Report

1. Funds Transfer. **Wilson** reported that here is currently \$6 left in the Merrill Lynch account while the rest of the investments have been transferred to temporary accounts at Essex Financial Services. It was also reported that the Financial Committee interviewed four prospective investment advisors and is scheduled to

meet on April 21st to discuss which firm will be chosen to represent Gateway financial interests.

2. Investments Portfolio. Investments currently overseen by Essex Financial Services have risen slightly. Half of the investments are in two lower risk short-term bonds while the other half remains in the accounts originally selected by Merrill Lynch.
3. Staffing Bill. **Wilson** reported that RiverCOG services were billed at \$1841.00. Motion to pay bill, **Thomas**, seconded by **Blatt**, passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Staff Report

1. CT River Watershed Council, Winter Newsletter, 2014. Quarterly newsletter. Newsletter includes information on the April 27, 2014 3pm concert with Robin and Linda Williams at "The Kate". Complimentary ticket information was requested 3/27/14. Staff will report via email when the information is emailed.
2. CT River Watershed Council, March 5, 2014. Letter of thanks for the Gateway support of the above-referenced concert series.
3. CLCC Letter, March 24, 2014. Letter of thanks for Gateway sponsorship of the recent open space conference held at Wesleyan University on Saturday, March 15, 2014. See photos.
4. Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement. DEEP Land Acquisitions' Graham Stevens recently replied to Atty Campbell Hudson's communication expressing frustration regarding lack of progress on DEEP's consideration of the proposed Mellon easement at the airport. Stevens' response:

Campbell,

This project has been assigned to Allyson Clarke and it is the next project in her queue.

Thank you for your patience as we do what we can to prioritize this project.

Best regards,

Graham

5. Press Releases, Garthwaite and Klar. At the suggestion of Woody, Downes contacted Humphrey Tyler of Lyme seeking input regarding doing Press Releases for the two recent land transfers. Tyler can assist in a few weeks. Any thoughts?

The subject of Press Releases was discussed as a part of the Correspondence and Staff Report. **Thomas** suggested that press releases for recent efforts should celebrate Gateway's efforts first and foremost and the benefactor's causes to a lesser degree. **Blatt** commented that when such press releases are developed, the benefactors should be contacted beforehand as a courtesy. **Niccolai** commented that "joint" press releases are often effective. After the discussion, the Commission agreed that member **Thompson** should be asked to head the press release effort. The recent efforts include 1) support of the "Source to Sea Clean-up, 2) support of the "Source to Sea Clean-up concert, 3) donation of both the Klar and Garthwaite parcels, and 4) the support of the TPL effort to preserve "The Preserve".

6. Environment Committee. Margot Burns and Downes have had numerous conversations about the ecological/environmental language in Gateway's enabling statutes. The Gateway statutes allow for more pursuit of environmental objectives. Would Gateway be interested in the appointment of an environment committee to go along with the land acquisition, rules, outreach and the finance committees?

After discussion of the question of an environment committee, the Commission asked that Burns provide a list of ten issues that are thought to be ones that such a committee could pursue as a part of the Gateway mission.

Commission Referrals

None.

Staff Actions

None.

Garthwaite, Klar

The executed deed for the parcel known as "Garthwaite" was presented to member and land trust attorney Steve Cline. As of last week, the deed has been recorded in the Town Hall. The property is therefore no longer in the possession of the Gateway Commission. As a note, a check in the amount of \$450 (half of the cost of the survey performed by Surveyor Don Carlson) has not been received as of 3/27/14. What remains is to receive the \$450 check for the land trust's half of the payment due surveyor Don Carlson.

DEEP Analyst reported that the deed for the East Haddam parcel known as “Klar” was forwarded to the Governor for approval before sending it on the Office of the Attorney General for final action.

Sogge, Injun Hollow Road, Haddam

Photographs, maps and aerial photographs of the 49 acre Sogge site were project onto the meeting room screen. It was reported that members of the Land Acquisition Subcommittee met on Monday, March 17, 2014 to discuss the possible acquisition of the 49 acre parcel of land located on Injun Hollow Road in Haddam. Although **Woody** contacted former Gateway member and chairman Evan Griswold to discuss Gateway’s position with the property owner’s representative, **Bement**, agent Jackie Nowell indicated that it was her understanding that *she* was to represent Gateway’s interest. Discussion followed including issues regarding whether or not an amount should be determined above which Gateway should no proceed with any purchase. No determination was made on this issue. Also discussed was what organization or group might act as the final recipient of the property, as Gateway is not interested in holding this parcel themselves. The lead group discussed was the Haddam Land Trust. Downes was directed to contact HLT President Bill Cowens to discuss this possibility. Finally, the issue of appraisal was raised. **Niccolai** and **Woody** confirmed that Stephen Flanagan and Associates of Lyme has done work for the Lyme Land Trust and would be good appraiser with which to start the process. **Niccolai** indicated that she would forward contact information to Downes.

Gateway Standards

Fischbach provided an update on status to Commission members.

Committee Reports

- a. Outreach. **Thomas** presented a summary of a meeting of outreach committee held on March 10, 2014 (attached at end of minutes). Discussed were outreach “clients”, how well are current efforts to reach those “clients”, what changes are necessary to better serve those “clients” and, are there any new efforts that should be established? Boat trip dates were discussed with the June 5th reserved date being that chosen for the trip. Downes was asked to send invitation letters to P&Z, ZBA, Board of Selectmen and chosen others. Also included should be invitations to the DEEP Commissioner, DEEP Analyst Alyson Clarke, area representatives and senators, a member of the Haddam Land Trust and the new Executive Director of the CT River Museum. **Thomas** will contact US Representative Courtney’s office to invite him.

Downes presented a listing of meeting dates for the Planning & Zoning Commissions in the eight member towns (see attached table) and a tentative schedule of visits by GW representatives. Downes, Wilson and Wallace will discuss attendance of the Chester P&Z Commission at their April 10, 2014 meeting. Confirmation of P&Z visits will occur month-to-month.

- b. Governance. No report.
- c. Membership. No report.

New Business. None.

Old Business. None.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Fish**, seconded by **Niccolai**, and passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

2014/15 Board and Commission Meeting Dates

Chester	2nd Thursday	April 10, 2014	CONFIRMED (Wilson, Wallace and Downes)
Deep River	3rd Thursday	May 15, 2014	TENTATIVE (Fischbach, Petrone, Downes)
East Haddam	4th Tuesday	June 24, 2014	TENTATIVE (Thomas, Lyman, Downes)
Essex	3rd Monday	September 15, 2014	TENTATIVE (Matthews, Woody, Downes)
Haddam	1 st 3 rd Thursday	October 16, 2014	TENTATIVE (DeBrigard, Bement, Turner, Downes)
Lyme	2 nd Monday	November 3, 2014	TENTATIVE (Woody, Niccolai, Downes)
Old Lyme	2 nd Monday	December 8, 2015	TENTATIVE (Cable, Thompson, Downes)
Old Saybrook	1 st 3 rd Monday	January 5, 2015	TENTATIVE (Fish, Ahern, Downes)

Gateway Community Relations/Outreach Committee
March 10, 2014

Present Outreach Activities

- Mission Booklet
- Gateway Maps & Displays
- Rack Cards
- Gateway Website
- Boat Trip
- CLCC Open Space Conference, Wesleyan University, April 15th

Outreach Clients

Primary

- Land Use Commissions (P&Z, ZBA, Conservation Commissions, Town Planners/ZEO's, BOS & Town Clerks)
- Local Land Trusts
- Gateway Zone Property Owners

Secondary

- Architects/Engineers/ Real Estate Agents/Land Use Attys
- Local Econ Development Comms & Chambers of Commerce
- DEP

Tertiary

- Public at Large
- School Systems/Youth Groups
- Senior Citizen Groups
- Other Environmental Organizations
- River Users

Message

- What does the Gateway Do for You?
- A self funded effort
- Gateway Functions/Accomplishments
 - Regulatory Aspect
 - Land Protection/Preservation/Acquisition
- Facts About/Importance of the River
 - Scenic/Environmental/Economic Impact

Proposed 2014 Outreach Efforts

- 1. Reconnect with Local Boards, Commissions & Land Use Offices (P&Z, ZBA, etc.) by means of a presentation and Q&A at one of their regular meetings.**
 - See attached tentative schedule
 - Target audience: Land use commissions & Officials
 - Presentation by staff and attendance by member town's Gateway regular and alternate representatives.
 - Content: Introductory script already exists (Add to/Elaborate on existing materials)

- Viewed as an ongoing project. So when all 8 town's boards and commissions have been reached, it is time to recycle back again.

2. Boat Trip

- Continue in Spring 2014
- Possible dates: June 5th or June 19th (both reserved)
- Up or down river??
- We would use the same basic script, altering to focus more on land preservation.
- Target Audience: Member town land use boards & commissions, elected officials, members of the state Senate and House of Representatives, and DEEP officials.
- Gateway Members cost = \$ 20 per person (as in the past)
- For 2015, consider a replacement event on the Gillette Castle patio pending costs, etc.

3. Member town agricultural fairs

- Chester, Haddam Neck, Hamburg & Eight Mile River River Fest
- Recommended that we do in 2014 and then reevaluate the bang for the buck and effort.
- Maps and handouts that better serve the Gateway mission are recommended.

4. Improved community relations content facilitating further outreach efforts

- We may be able to secure use of a DVD narrated by Kate Hepburn extolling the value of the river ("The Long River").
- If so, we may be able to use it to our advantage at:
 - a. Member town fairs
 - b. Member town land trusts
 - c.?????

5. Press Releases

- Periodic press releases focusing on Gateway accomplishments and activities. For example:
 - a. The Gateway pledged \$ 5,000 toward preservation of the Preserve.
 - b. The Gateway made an educational presentation to the ----- P&Z Commission
 - c. The Gateway held an educational boat trip up/down the river for local and state officials.