

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2015

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

<b>Chester:</b>	<b>Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Martha Wallace</b>
<b>Deep River:</b>	<b>Nancy Fischbach, Sam Shaw</b>
<i>East Haddam:</i>	<b>Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman (E)</b>
<i>Essex:</i>	<b>Claire Matthews (E), Jerri MacMillian</b>
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<b>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</b>
<b>Haddam:</b>	<b>Susan Bement (E), Derek Turner</b>
<b>Lyme:</b>	<b>J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E)</b>
<b>Old Lyme:</b>	<b>Peter Cable (E), Suzanne Thompson</b>
<b>Old Saybrook:</b>	<b>Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern (E)</b>
<b>Regional Rep:</b>	<b>Raul Debrigard (E)</b>
<b>DEEP:</b>	<b>David Blatt</b>
<b>Staff:</b>	J. H. Torrance Downes
<b>Guests:</b>	CRWC River Steward Alicea Charamut, Scott Davidson, Ms. Davidson

### 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 7:30pm.

### Approval of 3/26/15 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Fish**, the 3/26/15 minutes were unanimously approved as amended. **Blatt** and **Thomas** abstain from voting.

Alicea Charamut, the new CRWC River Steward, introduced herself to the Commission. Charamut commented on the importance of Gateway “riparian buffer” standard with respect to water quality and offered her assistance in any river-related issues. Charamut remained for the entire meeting.

### Variance Referral, Davidson Brothers, LLC dba Midway Marina, Haddam

Present for the Appellants were Scott Davidson and his wife, Ms. Davidson. Downes presented aerial photos of the site for the orientation of the Commission and presented an aerial photo that to which outlines of the proposed excavation were added. Davidson presented the project to the Commission and explained the terrain in and around the marina property. Downes offered that he believes that, due to intervening topography and the location of the proposed excavation to the southwest of the existing marina structure and existing boat storage, the area of excavation area will be essentially unseen from the river.

Upon a motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Blatt**, the Commission found that inasmuch as the existing terrain riverward of the proposed excavation area will hide it from the river, Gateway has no objection, assuming excavated material is removed from the site and the exposed slope is properly stabilized with vegetation. Motion passed unanimously.

### Treasurer’s Report

**Wilson** reported that she and **Fischbach** met with representatives of Essex Financial on April 21, 2015. It was reported that investments were up approximately 3%. Allocation in equities and type of equities were such that EF reps suggested no change was recommended. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of July.

**Wilson** reported on the bills to pay which include staffing and the proposed donation of \$100 to the East Haddam Land Trust for the production of the 2016 EHLT calendar. Staffing and overhead for the month of March, 2015 totaled \$1,588.34. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Thomas** to approve the payment of the staffing bill was passed unanimously. After a short discussion, the Commission decided to donate \$100 to the East Haddam Land Trust for the production of the 2016 EHLT calendar. Gateway has donated \$100 to the EHLT for this purpose for several years running. Motion to approve donation made by **Thompson**, seconded by **MacMillian**, passed unanimously. **Thomas** abstained from voting.

### Correspondence and Staff Report

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1. Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement Update. In a 4/21/15 email, Graham Stevens of DEEP indicated that a final decision should be made within a "week or two". An email was returned reminding Graham of GW's interest in a positive outcome. Stevens is well aware of that GW desire.
2. HB5686, Prohibition of Land Swaps for Conserved Land where Land to Be Received isn't of Greater Ecological Value (proposed language attached). Phil Miller updated status on April 21<sup>st</sup>, indicating that he was expecting the bill to come up for a vote and was confident it would be successfully adopted. **Blatt informed the Commission that he didn't quite understand Miller's response in that 5686, as he understood it, "died" in committee. Perhaps a deal has been made to "resurrect" it as an addition to another bill.**
3. CY Navigation Boom, Meeting in Hartford. The DEEP announced that an agreement has been reached with CY to remove the navigation boom. The removal will take place when the CY folks decide what kind of upland security operation they need. No time frame has apparently been announced.
4. East Haddam Land Trust Annual Calendar. The EHLT has again asked for a donation to produce the calendar. The GW Commission provided \$100 in each of the last several years. **Commission voted to donate \$100 to the EHLT.**
5. CLCC. Amy Blaymore Paterson sent a letter of thanks for GW sponsorship at the March 21<sup>st</sup> CLCC Conference held at Wesleyan University.
6. Academy Lane Fire Access Platform, Old Lyme. The Town is proposing to install a concrete structure in the Lieutenant River just north of the 156 bridge to allow fire truck access to the river. Pumpers would use the structure to fill their trucks to fight fires. The structure, located waterward of the Coastal Jurisdiction Line has been granted a permit from DEEP/OLISP and will be undergoing a Special Exception review with the Old Lyme Zoning Commission. No variances have been required, as a result, Gateway has no review authority in this case. This came to GW attention through a phone call from an irate neighbor who was in attendance at the "standards review" meeting in Old Lyme several months back. He's trying to enlist GW support in fighting this "monstrosity". **Commission moved to have Downes send a letter expressing that they have no authority in the process and therefore take no position. Motion by Fischbach, seconded by Fish passed unanimously.**
7. CT Audubon, CT River Estuary Lecture Series Invitation: Series of environmental lectures starting May 14<sup>th</sup>, to be held at Essex Meadows in Essex.
8. Wallingford Public Library Environmental Panel Discussion. On 4/22/15, Downes attended a presentation of the documentary "Watermark" and participated in an after-screening panel discussion, this as a representative of GW. The event was organized by Scott and Sonya Wulf, environmental advocates from Wallingford. They had heard of Gateway through Mark and Mindy Yuknat of Riverquest. Other panelists included Andrea Charamut, new River Steward for CRWC and two members of the Quinnapiac River Watershed Association.

### Committee Reports

#### a. Land.

Downes reported that the press release for the acquisition of the Brainerd Quarry Preserve had been sent out in April. Members asked that the Press Release be sent electronically to members. Discussion continued regarding previously mentioned acquisitions that exist in the Haddam Neck area. The Land Committee will meet to come up to speed with information that had been presented by **Debrigard** in collaboration with Jim McHutchison of Haddam Neck.

Discussion regarding the possible hiring of a professional for the preparation of press releases was discussed. **Thompson**, who supports such an initiative, expressed concerns over the challenges that were faced in getting a press release issued for the acquisition of the Brainerd Quarry Preserve. **Fischbach** expressed the need to review several candidates before moving forward with a decision, to which members agreed.

b. Outreach/Community Relations.

Standards Review

**Fischbach** reported on the April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Essex Zoning Commission. The meeting was attended by **Fischbach, Matthews, MacMillian** and Downes. The presentation explaining the proposed standards and the modifications that have been offered by Gateway member towns was the eighth and last of such presentations. Downes reported that he, **Woody** and **Bjornberg** had met with the Lyme P&Z the week before to discuss the proposed standards. All of the proposed modifications were discussed, including clarification of the vegetation definition to establish what vegetation is exempt from the riparian buffer “no-cut” area, the reinsertion of existing language allowing each town certain discretion regarding whether or not projects must be subject to Gateway standards (the existing language was inadvertently removed from the proposed standards), and clarifications regarding “developed area” and how such areas would be recognized in each town (site by site basis as opposed to an overall effort to map such areas on a town-wide basis).

Boat Trip

Downes reported that an invitation letter for P&Z members and ZBA members was prepared and sent to the staff in each of the eight GW member towns with a request to have them forwarded to each member. This method of invitation was used in 2014 to great advantage over sending one letter to the chairmen of each group to be read at a meeting.

Members of Gateway decided that they prefer that the trip begin at the Saybrook Point Hotel with the hope that the one-way trip would include traveling north of the Goodspeed Bridge to the area of the Brainerd Quarry Preserve before returning to the RiverQuest dock.

**Thomas** and **Fischbach** reported that they will be organizing the refreshments for the trip. Discussion regarding how to “ferry” attendees between the departure point and the end point occurred with members deciding that car-pooling will likely work fine. The details of how that will be done must still be finalized. Downes offered to coordinate communication on this effort.

c. Governance Committee.

**Fischbach** indicated that a meeting of the committee will be scheduled to include suggested revisions in the proposed Gateway standards. After brief discussion, members decided that it is not necessary to send the proposed standards to counsel for review.

Old Business.

**None.**

New Business.

**Woody** discussed the CT Forest & Park Association/CT Land Conservation Council Advancement Initiative Project. As a Lower CT River Land Trust representative, he has been working with other members of the Lower CT River and Coastal Land Trust Exchange to develop a regional strategic plan for the lower river valley. He reported that each land trust is to donate \$500 to the Project and recommends that Gateway endorse the project and provide the donation. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Thomas**, to donate \$500 to the Project as recommended was passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Wilson**, seconded by **Thomas**, and passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.