

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 22, 2014

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

<i>Chester:</i>	Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Martha Wallace (7:36p)
<i>Deep River:</i>	Nancy Fischbach, Amy Petrone (E)
East Haddam:	Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman
Essex:	<i>Claire Matthew (E)</i>
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement, Derek Turner (E)
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Lisa Niccolai
Old Lyme:	<i>Peter Cable (E), Suzanne Thompson (7:35p)</i>
Old Saybrook:	Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern (E)
Former MRPA:	Raul Debrigard
Former CRERPA:	Vacancy
<i>DEEP:</i>	<i>David Blatt (E)</i>
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes
Guests:	Gail Reynolds, Bill Cowen (Haddam Land Trust)

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 4/24/14 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by **Bement** as amended, seconded by **Fischbach**, passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Wilson reported that staffing bill, totaling \$1253.58, included 13.5 hours/\$466.43 (JHTD), 1.5 hours/\$35 (DP). Overhead amounted to \$752.15. Motion to pay by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**. Passed unanimously.

Several checks were presented for payment as follows:

1. East Haddam Land Trust Calendar donation of \$100
2. Essex Board of Trade Annual Membership Fee of \$25
3. Legal Bill, Branse Willis of \$65
4. \$500 to Don Carlson, Surveyor. With the \$475 check submitted to GW by the Chester Land Trust, the \$500 check from Gateway pays the balance of \$25 to Carlson, this because of underpayment of the bill. The \$950 surveying bill is paid with Gateway and the CLT both paying \$475 each.

Motion to pay Carlson additional \$25 balance, acknowledging the \$475 "pass-through" from Chester Land Trust by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Thompson**. Passed unanimously.

Discussion

Gail Reynolds and Bill Cowens of the Haddam Land Trust were invited to discuss a partnership for the possible acquisition of approximately 50 acres of hillside land on Injun Hollow Road in Haddam. **Woody** described events to date to Reynolds and Cowen who were not familiar with the property. The price was described as being approximately \$250,000 plus assessment. Gateway is currently having an appraisal conducted. **Woody** reported that

he had spoken with Amy Patterson of CLCC who suggested that GW provide funds to the HLT so they can place an option on the property. The goal would be to hold the property until the HLT could submit an application to the State for open space fund purchase. **Niccolai** reported that the next application period for such grants will likely be in the early fall.

Niccolai narrated photos that were taken on a walk of the property with **Woody**. The photos showed streams, rocks probably left over from quarrying, vertical cliffs and remnants of logging operations. **Bement** (who reminds all that she represents the seller) commented that the property owner (the cabinet maker who owns a piece amongst the 50 acres) has permission to log and take stones. **Niccolai** reported that few “invasive” plant species were seen on the walk. Reynolds asked about deed restrictions. **Bement** noted that there is a ROW across the parcel. In photos, **Debrigard** pointed out vacant adjacent land that is owned by CL&P but is not a part of the Northeast Utilities property at the decommissioned power plant further south on Injun Hollow Road.

Fischbach asked Reynolds if she felt that the HLT might be interested in a partnership under the conditions discussed (option, paid by Gateway, a combination of HLT and Gateway funds, and possible State grant funds). Reynolds responded saying the proposal was interesting enough to take back to the HLT board for discussion, the date of which is the first Tuesday in June. The HLT will work with **Woody** on a proposal. The discussed plan will be for the HLT to ask the property owner (Sogge) for an option (to be paid for by Gateway) on the property while a request for state grant funds and an HLT fundraising effort is undertaken. For the option amount to be covered, a number was offered at a level of 5% of the existing purchase price or approximately \$12,500. At this point, concern was raised with respect to Gateway making a “commitment” at this time, prior to any discussion occurring with the HLT.

Following substantial discussion, a MOTION was made by **Wilson**, seconded by **Debrigard**, to have the HLT buy an option from Sogge – if he is willing – to be paid for by the Gateway Commission for an amount up to \$20,000 (which would be non-refundable but would apply to the purchase price in the event a purchase was made). The offer would be contingent upon HLT (if interested) coming back to GW with a full proposal outlining possible total costs, including surveys, appraisal, schedule for state grants application & awards. HLT proposal, if made, is to be reviewed and “negotiated” with the Gateway land subcommittee before the full proposal comes to the Commission as a whole. **Thomas** suggested that a “deadline” date for response should be set, which was ultimately established to be August 28, 2014. The motion was passed unanimously, with **Bement** abstaining.

Correspondence and Staff Report

1. Insurance Cancellation. **Wilson** presented the three insurance cancellations to be signed by two officers of the Commission. The signed forms would then be sent on to Alliant Insurance to complete the cancellation process.
2. Sams Restoration Plan – Review letter from Coastal Management Section. Downes reported that the CAM review on the restoration plan included a request that supported GW’s request to have *at least* one tree planted for each mature tree that was lost from the site as a result of the execution of the plan.
3. Land Trust Alliance Annual Renewal Application. Amount of renewal is \$575. This membership has been kept in the past because of access to insurance for the CT River Land Trust on properties held. Since the Trust/Commission has finally donated all of its property to other organizations, the insurance was canceled.
4. CRWC Source to Sea Cleanup Program and Thankyou.
5. UConnClearscapes Newsletter.
6. CRWC Annual Celebration & Summer Solstice Paddle, June 21, 2014. www.ctriver.org
7. CLCC Training, Conservation Easements, Friday June 20, 2014, 930a – 1p www.ctconservation.org

Commission Referrals

Old Saybrook Numerous Zoning Regulations. Regulation changes are characterized as “housekeeping”. Corrections and clarifications with no negative impacts on Gateway’s mission of protection. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement** to send letter of approval to Old Saybrook Zoning Commission. Passed unanimously (**Fish** abstaining).

Old Lyme, Subdivision Regulations. Downes unable to get a full description of proposed changes. As a result, the Commission is unable to say for certain if the proposed changes might adversely impact Gateway's protective mission in Old Lyme. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Fish** to ask for a full description of changes, indicating that in the absence of such information, the Commission is unable to ascertain whether or not the proposed regulations have any adverse impact on the properties within the Conservation Zone.

8. Additional Correspondence.

Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement. The acquisition of the scenic easement by the State of Connecticut is moving forward. Analyst Allyson Clarke has asked the Gateway Commission to reissue another letter of support addressing the question of the planting of 45 to 50 trees as a visual buffer to the hangers. A motion was made by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Thomas** to send a letter of support for State acquisition of the easement, including a statement asking that the planting of the 45 to 50 trees be included as a condition of acquisition. Motion passed unanimously.

Standards Adoption

The schedule of meetings with the eight P&Zs following the first visit to the Chester P&Z was discussed. Downes to contact Deep River ZEO Cathie Jefferson regarding the scheduling of a visit to the Deep River Planning & Zoning Commission on June 24, 2014. A visit to the East Haddam P&Z should be scheduled as well.

Committee Reports

a. Outreach.

Boat Trip. Downes passed out the latest list of confirmed attendees which numbers approximately 54. Members were reminded to arrive at the dock at about 5:15p in plenty of time for the 5:30p departure. It was reported that the Yuknats have included a Gateway Commission display in the building adjacent to the dock. Members can stop in to see the display as well. An arrival of around 5p would provide enough time prior to the departure.

A discussion regarding the direction of travel was conducted. This year is an "upriver" year in that two years ago the trip headed downriver. The consensus was that there were more Gateway-related circumstances to see traveling downriver. The decision was made to ask Captain Yuknat to head south for this year's trip based upon the purpose of the trip and the fact that numerous new people are aboard, including Commissioner Klee. **Fischbach** and **Thomas** are in charge of the refreshments.

Thomas requested that the Commission authorize up to \$275 to produce a second GW "tablecloth" since the existing table-drape is semi-permanently being used at the Riverquest building display. Motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **Fischbach** to have the second table covering made. Passed unanimously.

Thomas reported that he and Downes were going to schedule a visit with CT River Museum Ex. Director Chris Dobbs for the purpose of introductions.

b. Land.

Following the previous discussion with Gail Reynolds and Bill Cowens of Haddam Land Trust, members clarified that the letter to be sent to the Trust regarding the Gateway offer for partnership include the understanding that the option, if used, should transfer to Gateway should the HLT decide to not proceed for any reason.

b. Governance. No report.

c. Membership. No report.

New Business. A discussion ensued regarding the issue of who may contact legal counsel, this after the receipt of bills for questions asked of Mark Branse, the Commission's newly retained legal counsel. Motion was made by **Thomas**, seconded by **Bement**, that access to counsel must be authorized by the full commission, the chair or the in

the absence of the chair, the vice-chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business. None.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Debrigard**, and passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.