

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2016

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

Chester:	Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Vacancy
Deep River:	Nancy Fischbach, Kate Cotton
<i>East Haddam:</i>	Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman
<i>Essex:</i>	<i>Claire Matthews, Jerri MacMillian</i> (departed at 8p)
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement, Vacancy
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson
Old Saybrook:	<i>Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern</i>
Regional Rep:	<i>Raul Debrigard</i>
DEEP:	David Blatt
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes
Guests:	None.

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 7:32pm.

Approval of 4/28/16 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **MacMillian**, the 4/28/16 minutes were unanimously approved with the following correction: Under "Land Committee", the appraised value of the subject property was reported to be \$39,700, not \$39,900.

Treasurer's Report

Wilson reported that the Equity market has improved. A bill for RiverCOG services was submitted with the following breakdown in expenses: JHTD \$330.65, PF \$42.29, OH \$528.34 totaling \$901.28. Motion to approve payment of bill by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Staff Report

A. Correspondence/Staff Report

Land + People, Spring/Summer, 2016, Trust for Public Land publication.

CT Preservation News. CT Trust for Historic Preservation, May/June, 2016. "Passion for Place" – CT Preservation Awards, 2016.

East Haddam P&Z. Amended regulations for helistops were approved by the East Haddam P&Z. The original regulations were reviewed by Gateway at its March meeting. In a March 29, 2016 letter to the P&Z, Gateway reported that that regulations could be considered as "approved" pursuant to Section 25-102g CGS if such uses were prohibited in the Gateway Conservation Zone. In that the prohibition was included in the revision, the March 29th letter acts as the required "approval".

Regulation Reviews. None.

Site Inspections. Downes reported on-site at 11 Foxboro Point Road in Essex, the "windmill" property. Reported was that the proposed residential structure will exceed 4,000 square feet but will not exceed the 30 foot height maximum for that district. Of note is that the windmill will be moved back from its existing location to be included in the footprint of the new dwelling. The top of the windmill was said to be a height of 30 feet.

Staff-Reviewed Variance Applications

Downes reported on three Essex variance applications at 11 Little Point Street, 22 Pratt Street and 18 Bushnell Street. The three projects were either all but unseen from the river or small enough so as to create little significant visual impact on the “natural and traditional riverway scene”.

Downes noted that a project previously reviewed by Gateway at Willow Point on North Cove in Essex will likely be coming before the Gateway Commission during the month of July.

Land Committee

Wilson discussed the ongoing land acquisition effort in Haddam Neck, now to be known as the “Hillside Project”, which is how the Middlesex Land Trust refers to the project.

The issue of an additional appraisal for the Hilt property was raised. Numerous members felt that an offer for an additional appraisal paid for in part by Gateway would be a wise thing to do as it shows Gateway commitment to determining a fair offer for purchase of that property. HN resident Jim McHutchison opined in a conversation with **Wilson** that an additional appraisal will likely not sway Mr. Hilt’s vision of what the property is worth. The question was raised, should paying up to half the cost of an additional appraisal to be conducted by an appraiser of Mr. Hilt’s choice be offered? Motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **Thompson**, to offer such an appraisal with GW paying for half up to an amount of \$1000, letter to be signed by Chairman passed unanimously.

Discussion occurred regarding the parcel next to the church aka Oganek. That piece would be looked at as the project moved forward.

Wilson reported that she received a call from David Brown of the Middlesex Land Trust who informed Gateway that the US Fish & Wildlife Service has made an offer of \$173,000 for the property known as the Brainerd Quarry Preserve, which would return approximately \$172,000 to the Gateway Commission. The timing of such a transaction is unknown at this point in time.

Further discussion occurred on the property known as the “Halvorsen parcel” on Injun Hollow Road. A long discussion regarding how to proceed with making an offer for the property (which is currently on the market) shall proceed. The question of whether or not the use of a real estate agent was discussed at length as was who that representative should be and what authority they should be given by Gateway. Members decided that Gateway should engage an agent and authorize the agent to make an offer. Members gave **Bement** the authority to contact agent Jackie Nowell who represented Gateway in the purchase of the Sogge parcel, now known as the Brainerd Quarry Preserve.

Discussion then centered on the question of how to pay in the event an offer is accepted. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Cable**, to transact such a purchase in the same way as transacted in the purchase of the Sogge parcel: Gateway Commission pays the purchase price, MxLT takes possession. Motion passed unanimously.

Sources of funds was discussed next. Brown of MxLT and McHutchison have expressed that they prefer donors not to be “tapped out all at once”. Better to ask a number of donors a small amount for each acquisition. If funds are needed quickly, the following process was offered: Gateway pays for the land, MxLT reimburses GW from donations sent through them (for tax deduction purposes).

Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Cable**, to acquire the property known as “Halverson” (the first parcel) with any amount reimbursed by the MxLT being “rolled over” into the next Haddam Neck acquisition in the Hillside Project. Motion passed unanimously.

The Land Committee will develop a policy as to what Gateway would like as a level of financial participation in future land acquisitions.

Governance Committee

Fischbach reported that Gateway representatives **Fischbach, Matthews, MacMillian** and Downes attended the May 16th meeting the Essex Zoning Commission to discuss the adoption of Gateway standards. At the meeting, GW representatives had the ability to individually address each of the concerns raised in the letter dated October 22, 2016 from the Essex Zoning Commission. The members of the Zoning Commission seemed receptive to the explanations and proposals and promised to commit to keeping the effort on the “front burner” so a resolution can be reached as quickly as possible.

Outreach Committee

Downes reported as of 5/26/16, there are 33 attendees who have committed to the boat trip to occur on June 16, 2016. The boat will depart from Eagle Landing State Park and travel south, returning to the RiverQuest dock. The refreshment responsibilities have been delegated and plans appear to be sorted out.

Old Business

Woody reported on the MxLT Annual Meeting that included a dedication of Brainerd Quarry. His speech highlighted the importance of preservation of the property both in terms of view preservation and preservation of an important property considered to be an early part in the shifting of the lower river valley from an agricultural to industrial economy. He did express concerns regarding the lack of credit to the Gateway Commission on signage that has been placed. With the property being the subject of future purchase by the USF&WS, the issue may be moot.

New Business

Thompson took the opportunity to promote a reception for an environmental/conservation group called “Save Oswegatchie Hills”. The request was forwarded to members as individuals or as a group to join the coalition. **Thompson** reported that the reception was to be held at the East Lyme Community Center (Society Road) on June 9, 2016. A handout including a map of the 236 acre parcel in question was provided.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Wilson**, the meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.