

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2014

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

<i>Chester:</i>	Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Martha Wallace (E)
<i>Deep River:</i>	Nancy Fischbach, Amy Petrone
East Haddam:	Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman (Arr. 7:39p)
Essex:	Claire Matthew
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement (Arr. 7:36p), Derek Turner (E)
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Lisa Niccolai
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson (Arr. 7:37p)
Old Saybrook:	Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern (E)
Former MRPA:	Raul Debrigard
Former CRERPA:	Vacancy
<i>DEEP:</i>	David Blatt (Arr. 7:51p)
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes
Guests:	Jacqueline Talbot, CRWC River Steward

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 7:33p.

Motion

To add Executive Session as item 10A for the purpose of discussing the Sogge property, inviting Downes to join the Commission. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Wilson**, passed unanimously.

Approval of 5/22/14 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by **Fish** as amended, seconded by **Thomas**, passed unanimously. **Cable** abstained.

Discussion

Jacqueline Talbot of CRWC shared appreciation of the aesthetic integrity of the lower river and presented a Power Point review of the 2013 river clean-up project as well as other initiatives. Also discussed was lower river access including the CT River Paddler's Tail. Talbot mentioned four state camping sites available on the lower CT River. CRWC seeks additional camping opportunities. Other issues discussed included the Rogers Lake Dam fishway, habitat value, river vitality and water quality standards. The Commission was reminded about the 9/18/14 CRWC swallow paddle. Issues regarding the cleanliness of the river for swimming purposes were raised. Finally, Talbot requested that the Commission support the Source-to-Sea clean-up for 2014 at the same level as in 2013 (\$1000 for the clean-up, \$1000 for the concert).

On a related matter, the Commission voted to support the concept of the development of a model riparian buffer at Eagle Landing State Park in Haddam including a financial commitment, the amount of which will depend on the final budget. Downes presented aerial of property. Motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

Motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **Fischbach**, to give CRWC \$1,000 for the 2014 "Source-to-Sea" project effort.

Treasurer's Report

1. Proposed Investment Policy. **Wilson** reviewed the proposed changes which include:
 - a. More flexibility in investment maximum and minimums;
 - b. Decreased maximum in any one fund from 20% to 15%;
 - c. Fixed income – added “government & corporate” and Maximum of 15%;
 - d. Clarified “operating expenses”;
 - e. Added the term “green investing”.

Members discussed Section IV, Spending Policy regarding “budget” vs. “expenses” and clarified “operating expenses”. Phrasing regarding “extenuating circumstances” added (same as language under Section II). Motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **Fischbach** to adopt the investment policy as amended and as discussed. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Proposed Budget. **Wilson** reviewed changes between budgets for FY14 and proposed FY15. Motion to approve proposed budget by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Monthly Treasurer's Report. **Wilson** indicated that the report format will change for FY15. **Wilson** is scheduled to meet with Essex Financial Group on July 22, 2014 prior to the July meeting of the Gateway Commission.
4. Bills. **Wilson** presented numerous bills for payment including:
 - a. RiverQuest (CT Expeditions) for June 5, 2014 GW boat trip. \$900
 - b. Stephen Flanagan & Associates, appraisal services for Sogge. \$1,800
 - c. Boat Trip Expense Reimbursements. Fischbach, \$177.69 Thomas, \$271.74.
 - d. Staff Services. \$1,037.63 (JHTD, 11 hours; DP, 1 hour; \$622.58 overhead charges).

Motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Cable**, to pay expenses. Passed unanimously.

5. Chubb Insurance Refunds. **Wilson** reported that reimbursements was received from Chubb after the cancellation of insurance. Two checks totaling approximately \$825 were received and deposited with Essex Financial Services.
6. Land Trust Alliance Membership. **Wilson** reported on the question of LTA membership following the cancellation of insurance as the GW insurance came through the LTA. Based upon the operating budget of Gateway, the LTA annual membership fee is \$575. Of the benefits of membership, only insurance benefits have been used. **Wilson** suggested that Gateway can make a donation. A suggestion was made to delegate research of this issue to the Governance Committee. Questions include, how easy or difficult would it be to acquire insurance again if property were to be purchased and held by GW.

Correspondence and Staff Report

1. Higganum Cove. EPA to begin to clean up the former manufacturing site on Higganum Cove (Middletown Press article)
2. RiverQuest Invoice \$900 (boat trip)
3. Stephen Flanagan & Associates Invoice \$1800 (appraisal)
4. Saving Land LTA Magazine, “Why Advocacy Matters”. Summer, 2014.
5. 2013 LTA Annual Report. May 23, 2014.
6. LTA Membership information, Non-profits and Land Trusts
7. CRWC Source-To-Sea “Save the Date”. September 26 & 27, 2014. “Working Together for Cleaner Rivers”. Jacqueline Talbot will address any questions members may have.

8. CRWC Newsletter, Vol. 63, No. 2, Spring, 2014. Celebrating the expanded CT River Paddler's Trail, June 21, 2014.
9. East Haddam Land Trust Calendar "Thank You"

Commission Referrals

1. Deep River, 287 River Road. Renovation of riverfront residential structure including the construction of a single story addition on top of a one-story garage. Required variance of 100 foot structure setback. All work within footprint of existing structure. No trees to be removed (requested condition of approval). Special Permit Application review conducted citing same provisions. The addition and house renovation would not have a significant adverse visual impact in that the increase in visual bulk over what exists at present isn't significant.

During the meeting, it was reported that within the past year numerous trees had been removed from the site, something the builder didn't mention during preliminary discussions with Downes (in a later communication, the builder indicated that no trees have been removed from the site within the past year in which he's been involved). Downes to research the facts surrounding the tree removal.

2. Old Lyme Subdivision Regulations. Following the receipt of a report of revisions from Planning Commission attorney Ed Cassella, Downes provided a report of the changes to Gateway members (at the May meeting of the GW Commission, no report on the changes was available for review). Deeming the changes insignificant, the Gateway Commission voted to "approve" the revisions pursuant to Section 25-102g CGS. A motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

(Matthews departed at 8:57pm)

3. Borough of Fenwick. Various zoning regulation changes affecting flood regulations (nonconformities set up by raising structures in order to meet minimum elevation requirements of FEMA), placement of equipment such as air conditioner condenser units. Motion to approve amendments by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

Commission Referrals Handled by Staff

17-19 South Cove Road-2, Old Saybrook. Variances are required to merge two nonconforming lots (one with single-family structure, the other vacant), demolish structure and construct a new dwelling on the merged lot. Property is all by unseen from South Cove and unseen from the Connecticut River. Letter provided which indicates Gateway would have no opposition to the granting of the variances.

Standards Adoption

Downes and **Fischbach** reported that they are scheduled to meet with the Deep River P&Z in July. Downes indicated that he would attempt to schedule a discussion with one or both of the Haddam or East Haddam P&Zs as well.

Committee Reports

- a. Outreach.
 1. Standards discussions with local P&Zs are moving forward.
 2. Boat trip considered a success; the committee will discuss how to insure such success for future trips.
 3. Fair season is approaching. Commission is planning to have a presence at the Hamburg Fair, the Chester Fair and the Haddam Neck Fair. Discussion also indicated that a presence at the 8-Mile River Festival is desired as well. **Thomas** will circulate a sign-up sheet with dates for members to sign up for duty at the respective fairs.
 4. Canoe and Kayak Map printing was discussed in that the brochures are often what interests people at fairs. Only two of the four original brochures (Old Lyme and Deep River) are left in stock. Motion by **Thomas** and **Fischbach** to fund the reprinting of brochures in the amount of \$2,000. Passed unanimously. Handouts were discussed, including the cards produced by Judy Preston of Tidewater Institute. **Wilson** reported that she has

materials from UConn.

5. CT River Museum. **Thomas** reported that he and Downes met with the Executive Director of the CT River Museum. The discussion centered on the common mission of the organizations and efforts for cooperating/partnering with each other.
6. USF&WS. A suggestion was made to attempt improved communications with the USF&WS since the Stewart B. McKinney Wildlife Preserve facility is being closed. The SBM facility no longer covers the CT River.

b. Land.

Discussion included finalizing plans for the July 10th site walk on the Sogge property on Haddam Neck. Emails will be circulated to coordinate meeting times, etc. Balance of discussion on the property acquisition effort will occur in Executive Session.

New Business.

1. Resolution, Linda Blaker Krause.

RESOLUTION: The CT River Gateway Commission notes the death of Linda Krause with profound sadness. Linda was a great friend and supporter of the Commission and its work. In her years as the Commission's lead staff person, Linda helped to guide the Commission for many years. When she stepped down from day to day involvement with the Commission, she left it a stronger, more vigorous and better functioning organization. In recent years, Linda continued to keep a weather eye on the Commission, offering guidance and suggestions from which the Commission has continued to benefit. By ensuring that the evolution of the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency evolved into a larger agency centered on the river, she safeguarded the future of the Commission and of the Gateway Conservation Zone. We will miss Linda's wisdom, enthusiasm and good humor. Linda Krause has the Commission's grateful thanks for all her years of support.

Motion to adopt resolution made by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously. **Fischbach** advised Commission members that flowers had been sent to Linda's hospital room.

Fischbach, seconded by **Wilson**, moved to approve that a \$100 donation be provided to a charity of the family's choice. Passed unanimously.

Downes reported that the "celebration of life" was scheduled from Monday, July 14, 2014 at the Mystic Arts Center.

b. Governance. No report.

c. Membership. No report.

Old Business.

Gateway Contract with the RiverCOG. Downes reported that he had discussions with Interim Executive Director Jean Davies and asked that the contract issue be raised with the RiverCOG once again. Killingworth's Cathy Iino is the chair of the RiverCOG.

Bement departed at 9:25p prior to the commencement of the Executive Session.

Commission votes to enter Executive Session at 9:25pm. Intent is to discuss possible land acquisition, asking Staff Downes to attend.

Fish departed at 9:43pm.

Commission came out of Executive Session at 9:43pm.

Following Executive Session, the Land Committee recommends that the Commission as a whole move forward with negotiating for the acquisition of the 50 acre parcel known as the Sogge property. Motion by **Wilson**, seconded by **Thompson**, passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Thomas**, seconded by **Cable**, and passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.