

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

July 23, 2015

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

<b>Chester:</b>	<b>Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Martha Wallace (E)</b>
<b>Deep River:</b>	<b>Nancy Fischbach, Kate Cotton</b>
<b>East Haddam:</b>	<b>Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman</b>
<b>Essex:</b>	<b>Claire Matthews, Jerri MacMillian (E)</b>
<b>Fenwick:</b>	<b>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</b>
<b>Haddam:</b>	<b>Susan Bement, Derek Turner</b>
<b>Lyme:</b>	<b>J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E, chaired Outreach prior to GW mtg)</b>
<b>Old Lyme:</b>	<b>Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson (E)</b>
<b>Old Saybrook:</b>	<b>Madge Fish, Belinda Ahern</b>
<b>Regional Rep:</b>	<b>Raul Debrigard (arr. 8:45p)</b>
<b>DEEP:</b>	<b>David Blatt</b>
<b>Staff:</b>	J. H. Torrance Downes
<b>Guests:</b>	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 7:30pm. **Fischbach** introduced new Deep River alternate member **Kate Cotton** to the Commission. **Cotton** described her background.

### Approval of 6/25/15 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Matthews**, seconded by **Bement**, the 6/25/15 minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

### Treasurer's Report

**Wilson** reported that the Treasurer's Report was the last of the 2014-2015 fiscal year and reported that the Finance Committee would be meeting with Essex Financial on the following morning, Friday, July 24, 2015. A report of that meeting will be provided at Gateway's August 27, 2015 meeting.

**Wilson** reported on the receipt of a check in the amount of \$37.58 as a result of a class action suit filed against the Bank of America and Merrill Lynch, purchased by BofA. It was that purchase and Bank of America's ruled/regulations regarding investments of municipalities that led to Gateway retaining Essex Financial as their funds manager. The change to EF has been an advantage to Gateway in numerous ways including lower fees.

Bills were submitted for payment. \$2,102.37 (staffing services) and \$455 for legal services (Branse, initial review of GW standards). Motion to pay bills by **Cable**, seconded by **Bement**, passed unanimously.

### Correspondence and Staff Report

274 Joshuatown Road, Stephen Jacobs, Lyme. Ongoing enforcement issue with new residential structure in Lyme. Members will recall that trees were removed from the hillside below this property exposing the upper part of the hillside. In addition, a ground-mount solar array was moved from an authorized location to a more visible unauthorized location. Vegetation restoration near the foundation of the structure was ordered by the Lyme wetlands commission with the P&Z investigating the unauthorized relocation of the solar array.

On July 13, 2015, Downes, Lyme ZEO Bernie Gigliotti and RiverCOG ExDir Sam Gold visited a hillside site in Deep River to look across the river at the Lyme property in question. All agreed that the solar array produced no added visual impact, but the

exposed upper hillside, with the larger light-colored boulders placed as a retaining wall, *did* create quite a visible impact on the view. Based upon the site review conclusions, Downes wrote a letter on behalf of GW recommending to the P&Z that vegetation should be planted over and around the bouldered hillside in order to visually buffer that material. The solar array, it was reported, could likely be left as-is. That night, the P&Z ordered that the vegetation be planted to the extent and quantity that will satisfy ZEO Gigliotti, who will confer with Downes when completed.

The Preserve, Reception and Ribbon-Cutting. Thursday, August 13, 2015, 4p to 7pm. Shuttling by bus from the M&J Bus parking lot across from Pasta Vita on Ingham Hill Road. Attendees include Governor Malloy, Senator Blumenthal, DEEP Commissioner Rob Klee, Carl Fortuna and other state and local leaders.

Haddam, Sign Regulations. The Town of Haddam is reworking sign regulations, including those that will impact properties within the Conservation Zone. A request was made by **Debrigard** for GW to contact Town Planner Liz Glidden to offer advice and be generally aware of what the regulations may propose. Draft regulations were received and suggest – at this point – that major changes are not anticipated, at least with respect to regulations impacting the Conservation Zone. A public hearing will likely be scheduled for some time in the fall.

COG Market Analysis of Middlesex County and Surrounding Areas of CT, UCONN. Study produced for RiverCOG through an Agriculture Viability grant received by the Regional Agriculture Council. The objective of the report was to provide information to producers, policy makers, and other interested stakeholders around how to increase access and purchasing of local agricultural products. Electronic copy available.

Shoreline Manual, Milone & MacBroome. Contacted regarding acquiring numerous copies of the manual. M&M staff indicated that copies will be made available when the prints are delivered. They were told that GW might want quite a number of copies and are happy to pay costs as appropriate.

CT River Watershed Council. Thank you letter for GW support for “Source to Sea Clean-up”

CLCC Calendar of Workshops and Roundtables for remainder of year.

Newsletter, Plum Island Currents. Plum Island preservation efforts.

Staff Actions. None.

#### Applications/Petitions to be Reviewed by Commission

Old Saybrook. S&S Marine, 18 Riverside Street. Because of location of the property on the riverfront, Downes sought comments from Gateway members prior to preparing his report to the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission. The 1,900 square foot footprint structure with cupola is proposed for a slightly elevated portion of the site. The site is surrounded by steep, treed hillsides on the north and west. One mature tree is to be removed from the north slope due to its poor condition. The height of the structure, with cupola, is approximately 41 feet due to an exposed corner of the proposed foundation. Without the exposed corner, the structure measures approximately 34 feet from grade. The design of the structure, proposed by Point One Architects, is in character with lower river architecture in that it has a steeply sloping roof and a cupola and is sided with cedar shakes or a similar material. Architectural highlights are white. The structure, and the site in general, improve the look of the riverfront in that location. The Commission expressed no concerns.

#### Committee Reports

##### a. Land.

A discussion was held regarding proposed criteria for considering acquisition properties was held. **Wilson** presented a DEEP checklist provided by **Blatt** as well as a shorter list developed by land committee members. Further discussion involved ascertaining the purpose of such a list. The Commission reached a consensus that, for possible land acquisitions the entire Commission would be presented with the *conceptual* idea of a proposal. If found to be of interest, the proposal would then be sent to the Land Committee for detailed investigation followed by a recommendation to the whole commission. A motion by **Cable**, seconded by **Thomas**, was made to adopt the land criteria as presented and was passed unanimously.

##### b. Outreach/Community Relations.

**Thomas**, in the absence of **Bjornberg** (who chaired the Outreach Committee meeting prior to the Gateway regular meeting), reported on the committee discussion. A consensus was reached by the committee that the Commission should not attend two of the three agricultural fairs (Hamburg and Chester Fairs) as the value of

such appearances was questioned (the Hamburg Fair organizers changed the application format so as to required entities like Gateway to pay for entry while not providing a table under the “big top” tent. The committee, however, agreed that the Commission should still provide materials for the Haddam Neck Fair. Instead, the committee recommended that the Commission attend each of the farmers markets that occur in most of the eight member towns at least once a season. The committee decided that the representatives from each of the towns should investigate requirements for attending the markets in their own towns, and make the arrangements. Regarding the use of a tent for protection from rain, **Ahern** noted that she owned one that could be used. Downes reported that he would compile a list of contacts for each market.

Promotional Tri-fold Brochures. Downes revised the office-printed brochure including the redesign of the small drawing intended to show how to gain river views by “limbing up” rather than cutting down trees entirely. He recommended having about 1,000 printed by Vistaprint, which produces such materials at a very reasonable cost. After a short discussion about cost, it was agreed that the Commission would approve the final cost/number by email so that the brochures can be printed before the August meeting. Members offered suggestions for revisions including adding a phone number, replacing “Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments” with “Gateway Commission” on the back panel, add a “Facebook” logo, revise language regarding “fee-simple” of land to read “outright purchase”.

c. Governance Committee.

**Fischbach** reported that she and Downes will be meeting with Attorney Mark Branse to review the proposed standards in mid-August.

Old Business.

**Fischbach** reported on the development of an agreement document between RiverCOG and Gateway. The document will have two signature lines for the Chairman of RiverCOG and the Chairman of Gateway.

New Business.

**Fischbach** reported on a possible partnership proposal with the CT Audubon Society (not affiliated with the National Audubon Society). Following the description of the intended effort to develop an educational/research facility on the Roger Tory Peterson property in Old Lyme, the consensus was to invite Claudia Weicker, who would speak about the effort, to a Gateway meeting either in September or October.

(**Debrigard** arrived at 8:45p)

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Matthews**, seconded by **Cable**, and passed unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.