

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 22, 2016

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

Chester:	<i>Margaret (Peggy) Wilson (E), Errol Horner (new member)</i>
Deep River:	Nancy Fischbach, Kate Cotton
<i>East Haddam:</i>	Harvey Thomas, Cary Brownell (E)
<i>Essex:</i>	<i>Claire Matthews (E), Jerri MacMillian (E)</i>
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Fran Adams, Borough Warden</i>
Haddam:	<i>Susan Bement (E), Chip Frey (E)</i>
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E)
Old Lyme:	Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson(E)
Old Saybrook:	<i>Madge Fish (E), Belinda Ahern (E)</i>
Regional Rep:	Raul Debrigard
DEEP:	David Blatt
Staff:	J. H. Torrance Downes

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 8:17pm (following annual land Trust meeting).

Introduction

Woody introduced **Errol Horner** as the new alternate representative for the Town of Chester.

Approval of 8/25/16 Regular Meeting Minutes

Correction that **Fischbach** was attributed with making a motion but was not at the meeting. Upon a motion by **DeBrigard**, seconded by **Fischbach**, the 8/25/16 minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report

In **Wilson's** absence, Downes presented the Treasurer's Report spreadsheet and the two bills for payment. RiverCOG staffing bill: \$2220.34, Mileage (JHTD) \$108 for trips to Haddam Neck for the Haddam Neck Fair. Motion to approve payment of bills by **Thomas**, seconded by **Cable**, passed unanimously.

Items of Interest Report

Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement/Campbell Hudson. No update available.

Senator Chris Murphy, Tuesday, August 30, 2016. Senator Murphy walked cross-state from Voluntown to Greenwich to have town hall-style discussions in numerous locations. On Tuesday, he appeared at the Chester Meetinghouse and spend a little over an hour talking, dressed in gym shorts, sneakers and a Boston Red Sox hat. Topics ranged from the economy, schools, the environment, infrastructure, violence and the lack a civility prevailing today, especially in the current election cycle. RiverCOG attendees included Sam Gold, Margot Burns, Jon Curtis and Downes. Jim McHutchison attended from Haddam Neck. **Matthews** was in attendance. First Selectmen Bonnie Reemsnyder (Old Lyme) and Lauren Gister (Chester) attended as did the Superintendent of Schools for Region 8 (Chester, Deep River, Essex) and the Old Saybrook School District.

NEC Future Meeting, Old Lyme, August 31, 2016. Public meeting attended by over 500 citizens. Roundtable representatives included Old Lyme 1st Selectman Bonnie Reemsnyder (who ran the meeting), Senator Blumenthal, Congressman Joe Courtney, DOT Commissioner Jim Redicker, State Senator Paul Formica, State Rep. Devin Carney, State Rep. Art Linares, RiverCOG ExDir Sam Gold, CEOs Carl Fortuna and all of the CEOs from East Lyme through Stonington (Rob Simmons).

Each roundtable participant expressed their opinion on the section of Alternative 1 called the "Kenyon Bypass", which would result in the construction of a tunnel under the river and a separate right-of-way through eastern CT. Questions sent in by citizens were read for response by the two Federal Rail representatives who sat at the table.

The overall message from FRA was that this stage is "visioning" with detailed work left for the next phase of planning. The choice

of alternative is supposed to be released later in the fall.

A statement was submitted on behalf of Gateway that indicated the statutory responsibility for scenic and environmental quality. The statement requested that Gateway specifically be included in all subsequent discussions and communications on the topic. Reemsnyder chose to read the Gateway statement out loud (not all submissions were read out loud, although they were all provided to the FRA).

Site Inspections: None.

Downes reported that Dr. Peter Auster will present a discussion on the New England SeaMounts on November 13, 2016 in association with the New London Maritime Society <http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org/>

Woody noted that Scientist Rocky Geier of the Woods Hole Institute, partner with CT Audobon in the NOAA National Estuarine Research facility effort in the lower CT River, considers the lower CT River Estuary as important as the Amazon and other major rivers.

Eight Mile River Fest will take place at Devils Hopyard State Park on Saturday,

Regulation Referral None.

Committee Reports

Land Committee **Cable** reported that the Middlesex Land Trust closed on the first property of the "Hillside Project". David Brown of MxLT and Jim McHutchison of the Haddam Spirit will continue to speak to residents in the Haddam Neck area. The offer for a second appraisal for which GW will pay half up to an amount of \$1,000 is still being discussed with one owner. **Cable** reported that MxLT is preparing to put out a fundraising letter to constituents. Finally, the parcel that would be protected through easement as opposed to through fee is "moving forward".

Governance Committee **Fischbach** reported that she and Downes will be attending the October meeting of the Essex Zoning Commission in order to continue efforts to have the updated Gateway standards adopted into the town zoning regulations.

Outreach Committee As a follow-up to the August meeting discussion on the direction of Gateway outreach, the Public Outreach Committee chair **Bjornberg** convened the committee at 6:30p prior to the start of the land trust meeting on 9/22/16. Discussion included ideas for moving forward to insure Gateway's message is reaching its constituents. Ideas included more efforts in social media (GW has a Facebook page; Downes indicated that he would promote GW to a greater degree on that page), meetings with schools, reporters, regular letters to the editor in various papers, a blog connected to the Gateway website, and a "facelift" of the website. The committee will develop a specific plan and present to the entire Commission for consideration, including any budgetary needs that may arise.

Old Business

Downes presented copies of the Conflict of Interest form (and had sent them out via email) for completion by members. Also distributed were copies of the committee membership spreadsheet. At the meeting, **Cotton** committed to joining the Outreach committee and **Hornor** committed to joining the Governance committee.

New Business

DeBrigard provided an update on the Connecticut Yankee property acquisition efforts. It was reported that negotiations are pretty much at a standstill, but the group is ready to increase their visibility. Upon request, GW came to a consensus that the organization was willing to be identified as an official "supporter" of the conservation effort.

Adjournment

Upon motion by **Cable** the meeting adjourned at 9:05p.