

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 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 (E), Kate Cotton</b>
<b>East Haddam:</b>	<b>Harvey Thomas, Emmett Lyman (E)</b>
<b>Essex:</b>	<b>Claire Matthews, Jerri MacMillian</b>
<b>Fenwick:</b>	<b>Ethel Davies, Borough Warden (E)</b>
<b>Haddam:</b>	<b>Susan Bement</b>
<b>Lyme:</b>	<b>J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E)</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 (E)</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 7:32pm.

### Approval of 10/23/15 Annual Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Ahern**, the 10/22/15 minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

### Treasurer's Report

**Wilson** reported that the RiverCOG bill for staff services amounts to \$1,214.78. Motion by **Blatt**, seconded by **Bement** to approve payment of the bill. Motion passed unanimously.

### Correspondence/Staff Report

Downes discussed a proposal of Reynolds Subaru to construct a new building on the site of their existing facility on Route 156 in Hamburg. Downes said he had had discussions with Lyme ZEO Bernie Gigliotti. It wasn't clear whether variances would be necessary. Downes encouraged Gigliotti to require that larger facades facing Hamburg Cove to the west were visually broken up and/or visually buffered with landscape vegetation.

### Staff Actions

Old Lyme, 65 Shore Road. Demolition of existing, reconstruction of new single family dwelling in a location separated from the Connecticut River by a significant distance and on a property surrounded on three sides by treed properties owned in conservation by The Nature Conservancy. The "visual bulk" of the new structure is less than what exists at present. As a result, a letter of "no opposition" was sent by staff to the Old Lyme Zoning Board of Appeals. The required variances were approved by the ZBA.

### Commission Reviews

Old Saybrook, Merging of Gross Floor Area Gateway Definition into Gross Floor Area Definition, Townwide. Downes explained the rationale of the change, which proposes a single definition for gross floor area which is consistent with Gateway standards. Gateway members agreed that the proposal was consistent with the Gateway mission of protection. Motion by **Blatt**, seconded by **Wilson**, to approve the proposed regulation consistent with Section 25-102g CGS. The petition was approved with one "nay" vote.

## Land Committee

**Wilson** reported that on November 13, 2015, several members of the Commission walked the properties in

Haddam Neck (totaling approximately 16 acres), which includes the property referred to as the "Hilt property". Members felt that the parcels were worth pursuing, if the acquisition amount was reasonable. It was agreed that the parcels were mostly visible from the river and were of ecological value. **Thomas** expressed concern that, unlike the Sogge property acquired earlier in 2015, the 16 acre property was not a parcel interconnected with other open space. A short discussion regarding Gateway visual protection and ecological protection ensued. It was reported that the Gateway list of criteria was used in the initial discussion of whether or not the parcel should be of acquisition interest.

**Wilson** reported that Jim McHutchison of the Haddam Spirit is moving forward on looking for an appraiser for the aforementioned property and that members of the organization are starting to come up with funds for the appraiser. David Brown of the Middlesex County Land Trust was in attendance and reported that he is "far along" with discussions of agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service regarding the Service's acquisition of properties in Haddam Neck such as the Sogge parcel. **Wilson** indicated Brown said that USF&WS could be within approximately 18 months or so of considering acquisition of the Sogge property.

**Cable** queried which organization moves first in the case of the 16 acre parcel. Members agreed that the Haddam Neck Spirit group would move forward with their search for the appraiser and then the Gateway Commission sorts out the information obtained to determine the next step. Middlesex Land Trust and Haddam Spirit will proceed with Gateway waiting for them to approach Gateway with a plan.

Regarding the Sogge property now owned by Middlesex County Land Trust, **Wilson** reported that MxLT is in the process of trading land with Don Boulee (abutter to Sogge) in order to provide for a walkway at the base of the steeply sloping quarry property to allow access *on* the Sogge property rather than have access cross the Boulee property. Doug Bonoff, surveyor, is involved in surveying the land trade. Bonoff surveyed the Sogge property as a part of the Gateway/MxLT acquisition process.

## Old Business.

None.

## New Business.

None.

## Adjournment

Upon motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Cable**, the meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.