



## CT River Gateway Commission

**Regular Meeting Minutes – Hybrid**  
**Meeting Thursday, April 25,**  
**2024, 7:00 PM RiverCOG**  
**Conference Room and via Zoom**

**Present:** **Chester:** Misha Semënov-Leiva (Arrived at 7:07) **Deep River:** Jerry Roberts; **Essex:** Peter Fleischer, Jim Hiller (Alternate); **Haddam:** Mike Farina (Secretary), Erin Ortega (Alternate); **Lyme:** Susan Fox; **Old Lyme:** Suzanne Thompson (Chair); **Old Saybrook:** William Webb (Vice Chair), Diane Stober (Treasurer); **RiverCOG North:** Raul de Brigard, Alan Ponanski (Alternate); **RiverCOG South:** Dr. Clayton Penniman; **CT DEEP:** Kathleen Perzanowski; **Ex Officio:** Melvin Woody

**Absent:** **Chester:** Tom Brelsford (Alternate) **East Haddam:** Crary Brownell, Debbie Langdon; **Fenwick:** Newt Brainard; **Old Lyme:** Greg Futoma (Alternate);

**Staff support present:** Susie Beckman (RiverCOG), Sarah Makowicki (Clerk)

### I. Agenda

1. Call to Order: Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

Approval of April 25, 2024 Regular Meeting Agenda with the addition of discussion of letter to Old Saybrook Zoning Board of Appeals for 201 North Cove Rd. compiled by the Rules and Procedures Committee. Susan Fox will discuss property on Whale Bone Cove in Hadlyme which is on the market with an advertised helipad.

A **motion** was made by W. Webb, seconded by P. Fleischer, to approve the Regular Meeting Agenda with amendments.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

#### 3. Approval of the March 28, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by C. Penniman, seconded by R. de Brigard; to approve the March 28, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended, Peter Fleischer had voted to abstain from approving March meeting minutes as he was not in attendance.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

#### 4. Public Comment

No public was present.

#### 5. Guest Speakers - CT River Conservancy Brett & Rhea

Representatives from CT River Conservancy (CRC) presented to the Gateway Commission on their current work in regards to water quality, restoration, and legislative advocacy. They also spoke about their source to sea cleanup initiative, currently recruiting site leaders and hosts to participate in the September 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> activities. CRC offered to assist CRGC in disseminating information to the public. The Commission asked that CRC provide suggestions to improve riparian buffer recommendations to applicants, along with shovel ready projects for the Commission to potentially sponsor.

#### 5. Review of Referrals & Preliminary Discussions

##### a. East Haddam –

The East Haddam Planning & Zoning Commission is proposing a regulations text change for the following sections:

1. Revisions to Regulations to reflect changes to the Gateway Standards in Section 5 Definitions and Section 9.10 Conservation Zone.
2. Revisions to the Regulations pertain to Child Day Care to reflect changes in the Connecticut General Statutes.
3. Revisions to the Commercial Cutting of Timber Regulations – Section 20 to reflect changes in the Connecticut General Statutes.
4. Revision to the time limits of a Special Exception approval to reflect changes to the Connecticut General Statutes.
5. Revisions to the regulations pertaining to certified mailings versus certificate of mailing requirements when notice is given to abutters.
6. Revisions to the Agricultural Regulations – Section 30 to allow farm stores, farm markets, breweries, wineries, and accessory uses on the farm.

Ms. Beckman reviewed the regulation changes with the Commission stating that overall, the regulations do not violate the CRGC standards. The Commission discussed the regulations pertaining to the CRGC Standards specifically the Village District and the 35ft building height exemptions. The Commission concluded that they were not going to act at this time. They requested to meet with East Haddam officials to discuss the regulations in regards to the Village District and CRGC standards. The Commission is also asking for a continuance, in order for the rules committee to review the regulations changes.

##### b. Old Saybrook 500 Main St.–

Joe Wren, PE. Presented for the applicant. Mr. Wren stated that the proposed work is not within the 100' riparian setback. The current plans are a second iteration that has been approved by CT State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and will keep the building on the National Register of Historic Places. The structure sits close to Main St, with the property extending to North Cove, within the Gateway Conservation Zone. The structure and the proposed work sit at an angle to the cove, making visibility difficult from North Cove.

The Gateway Commission found that the application is in compliance with CGRC standards. The Commission wished to add language to the letter to the Zoning Commission, stating that trees on the property are to be preserved, lighting should be dark sky compliant, and non-reflective glass if it does not conflict with historical structure standards of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for National Register of Historic Places.

A **motion** was made by W. Webb, seconded by R. de Brigard, to write a letter stating the CT River Gateway Commission has no objection to the proposed work at 500 Main St, Old Saybrook, CT. The letter should include the following recommendations: preserve trees on the property, addition of standard language regarding dark sky compliance, and use of non-reflective glass if it does not conflict with the Secretary of the Interiors standards for historic buildings.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

5. Correspondence/Staff Report

None

6. Chairman’s Report

Chair Thompson discussed the Old Lyme Conservation Commission’s discussion of the New Dark Sky compliance for the International Building Code in regards to light pollution standards and commercial use. Ms. Thompson stated that she hopes the Commission could have a social gathering in June, she is going to inquire about having it at Camp Hazen or another location in the Gateway Zone.

7. Old Business – None.

8. New Business -

Chairman Thompson stated that new Commission members are joining committees as follows: Jim Hiller and Peter Fleischer were added to the Rules and Procedures Committee. Clayton Penniman was added to the Communications Committee. Ms. Thompson added that the Land Committee is looking for a Chair and hopes more members will join.

Susan Fox discussed property at Whale Bone Cove in Hadlyme that is for sale and being advertised with a helipad. Ms. Fox inquired if the Gateway Commission had any authority over the use of helipads. After discussion, the Commission stated that it does not regulate the use of helipads and towns have the authority to regulate the use of helipads.

9. Committee Reports

a. Treasurer – Approve Bills

Ms. Stober presented the most recent bills.

A **motion** was made by A. Ponanski, seconded by C. Penniman, to pay the bills. The bills are as follows: RiverCOG: \$5699 for March services. Clerk: \$399.50 to Sarah Makowicki for February and March clerking.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

Ms. Thompson asked committees to provide their budget needs for the FY25 budget at the May meeting. The budget will be prepared for presentation and approval at the June meeting.

b. Communications – Update

As one of the Commission’s outreach activities, a presentation on Riparian Buffers will be made by Dr. Clayton Penniman at the Phoebe Griffen Noyes Library of Old Lyme, hosted by Old Lyme Conservation Commission, planned presentation date is Wednesday, May 22, 2024.

c. Rules of Procedures – Update

Mr. Ponanski presented a follow-up letter to Old Saybrook ZBA regarding 201 North Cove Road that clarifies CRGC’s decision regarding proposed structure within the 100 ft setback from the River. The letter was amended to include the addition of variances for improvements that were not opposed by CRGC.

A **motion** was made by A. Ponanski, seconded by R. de Brigard; to send the clarification letter to OS ZBA.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

d. Land Committee - Executive Session.

No updates.

10. Adjournment

A **motion** was made by A. Ponanski, seconded by P. Fleischer to adjourn the meeting.

**Voting in favor:** M. Semënov-Leiva, J. Roberts, P. Fleischer, M. Farina, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, C. Penniman, K. Perzanowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None. The motion **passed** unanimously, 10-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Makowicki, Clerk

**The next regular meeting of the Gateway Commission is scheduled for Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM.**

Minutes are posted in compliance with Connecticut’s Freedom of Information Act. Please note that edits may be made to these minutes prior to their acceptance by the Commission at its next meeting. Any changes will be included within the next meeting’s minutes.