



**CT River Gateway Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes – Hybrid Meeting  
Thursday, March 23, 2023, 7:00 PM  
Old Saybrook Town Hall and via Zoom**

As approved at April 27, 2023 Meeting

**Present:** **Chester:** Tom Brelsford; Jenny Kitsen (Alternate); **Deep River:** Jerry Roberts; **Essex:** Claire Matthews (Treasurer), Misha Semënov-Leiva (Alternate); **East Haddam:** Debbie Langdon (Alternate); **Haddam:** Susan Bement; **Lyme:** Susan Fox (Alternate); **Old Lyme:** Suzanne Thompson (Chair), Greg Futoma (Alternate); **Old Saybrook:** William Webb (Secretary), Diane Stober (Alternate); **CT DEEP:** Kathleen Perzanowski; **RiverCOG North:** Raul de Brigard, Alan Ponanski (Alternate); **RiverCOG South:** Judy Preston.

**Absent:** **East Haddam:** Crary Brownell; **Fenwick:** Newt Brainerd; **Haddam:** Mike Farina (Alternate); **Lyme:** Melvin Woody (Vice Chair)

**Staff support present:** Sam Gold (RiverCOG), Susie Beckman (RiverCOG)

## **II. Agenda**

1. Call to Order: Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Introductions – RiverCOG new Regional Planner Susie Beckman

The Chair welcomed Susie Beckman, who will be supporting the CRGC. Chair Thompson also welcomed Susan Fox, Alternate Commissioner from Lyme.

3. Approval of 2/23/23 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by J. Roberts, seconded by J. Preston to **APPROVE** the February 23, 2023 CRGC Regular Meeting Minutes with 1 editorial correction.

**Voting in favor:** T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** none. The motion **passed** unanimously, 11-0-0.

4. Deep River, 107 River Road. Special Exception application for Residential Dwelling

Mr. Gold presented an update that the property is no longer on the Commission's agenda for review and comment because the square footage of house has been recalculated by Deep River Zoning staff, making the house less than 4000 SF and the Deep River ZEO issued an administrative permit for construction. The Commission was concerned by the decision to recalculate the building floor area and issue a permit at the applicant's request, and avoiding CRGC review. Staff believes the floor area should not have been recalculated. Mr. Gold recommended a discussion between the Commission and the Deep River Planning and Zoning Chair to give feedback about CRGC concerns. Mr. Roberts will address this issue when he discusses the updated Gateway Zone Standards with the town. Chair Thompson noted that the Commission will authorize Mr. Gold to issue a letter to Deep River staff and discuss application of the Gateway Standards with them.

5. Deep River, 112 River Road (in-construction). Special Exception application for a Residential Dwelling.

Presenting the application was Architect Tom Lontine of Hanby Lontine Architects who presented the site plan and renderings of the proposed finished house. The Commission commended the efforts the applicants went through to create a design that blends in with the natural landscape. The Commission expressed concern about the windows and noted that had the review been done earlier, antireflective glass could have been ordered. Commission members also noted that they were only made aware of the construction on this property while Commissioners were on a site walk to visit a neighboring property on River Road. The Commission agreed that it was another example of the need for improved communication between the CRGC and member towns.

A **motion** made by J. Roberts, seconded by W. Webb, to write a letter in support of approval of special exception, subject to assurances that existing trees will be left standing, exterior lighting will be minimized as explained, and the color palette for exterior finished remains as described, and these notes are added to the site plan.

**Voting in favor:** T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** none. The motion **passed** unanimously, 11-0-0.

Correspondence/Staff Report. As presented with explanations as requested. It was noted that Old Lyme Zoning Commission may not review the CRGC lighting standards until possibly May, due to other items and public hearings ahead of it on the docket.

#### 6. Chairman's Report.

The new CRGC website is up and running. Chair Thompson thank Mr. Futoma for all his work.

Several commission members signed up for the CT Land Conservation Commission Conference on Saturday, March 25, and asked that the Commissioners help at the organization's sponsor display. She requested that Commissioners proof read and advise her of any edits to the Dark Skies Over the Connecticut River flyer that will be used with the Effect of Light Pollution workshop by Mr. Semënov-Leiva and Alan Sheiness, Lyme Land Trust. These materials will be posted on CLCC's Conference Resources website. Mr. Futoma informed the Commissioners that the CRGC will be given a Conservation Hero award at the CLCC opening session. Chair Thompson said the Commission will pay for Commissioners' registrations, any Commissioners who paid directly will also be reimbursed.

#### Committee Reports:

##### a). Finance: Reports and Bills.

Ms. Stober requested the Commission vote to pay the following bills: RiverCOG expenses totaling \$7,364.98 which includes \$1,206.14 for Mr. Torrance Downes, \$131.01 for Ms. Paula Fernald, \$1,254.93 for Mr. Sam Gold, \$619.05 for Ms. Megan Jouflas, \$4,001.36 for audited FY2022 Overhead charges, \$136.50 to Attorney Steven Mednick, and \$15.99 for the CRGC Zoom account. Other bills: \$320 to Hitchcock Printing and Distribution for the Commission's new land conservation brochure.

A motion was made by S. Bement, seconded by J. Preston, to pay the February 2023 bills.

**Voting in favor:** T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** none. The motion **passed** unanimously, 11-0-0.

b). Rules of Procedures: Update status of Gateway standards. Update on 3/15/23 meeting  
The Rules of Procedures Committee met March 15<sup>th</sup> and are continuing to try to address towns' flexibility in defined areas within the Zone. Attorney Willis and Mr. Webb will meet to create some language that will provide specificity for each town, starting with Old Saybrook. Another meeting will be held in April and all Commissioners are welcome to participate. Mr. de Brigard and Mr. Roberts will work with the town of Deep River to answer their questions about additional flexibility.

c). Community Relations and Public Outreach: Marketing and Engagement Plan Update  
Mr. Futoma requested that Commissioners continue to seek photos from the public for the new CRGC website. Mr. Futoma also thanked RiverCOG staff member Kevin Armstrong, for his help on the Commission's table top display panels for CLCC.

d). Land: Executive Session. Potential acquisition of land in the Gateway Conservation Zone  
No Executive Session held. Mr. Futoma requested Ms. Preston arrange an Old Saybrook Land Trust and CRGC group picture acknowledging our donation to for the conservation land to be used in Commission publicity.

A residential property with treed lot on the west side of the river in Haddam, in the Gateway Zone, is for sale. Commissioners discussed possible acquisition of the portion of the property or conservation easement that is closest to the river to preserve it. Chair Thompson asked the Land Committee to please discuss and come back to the Commission with an update and recommendations.

7. Old Business: As necessary.
8. New Business: As necessary.
9. Adjournment

A motion was made by S. Bement, seconded by J. Preston, to adjourn the meeting.

**Voting in favor:** T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, S. Fox, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** none. The motion **passed** unanimously, 11-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Huot, Clerk

**PLEASE NOTE this new email address to reach the Connecticut River Gateway Commission:**

**contact@ctrivergateway.org**

**The next regular meeting of the Gateway Commission is scheduled for Thursday, April 27, 2023. This will be a hybrid meeting, 7:00 PM, at River COG, 145 Dennison Rd, Essex, CT and via Zoom. Please see the agenda posted at <https://ctrivergateway.org> for the link.**