



**CT River Gateway Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 23 2023, 7:00 PM via Zoom**

DRAFT

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, Mike Farina (Alternate); **Lyme:** Melvin Woody (Vice Chair); **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; **Deep River:** Kathy David (Alternate)

Staff support present: Megan Jouflas (RiverCOG)

II. Agenda

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

Ms. Megan Jouflas, Sr. Planner, temporarily sitting in for Mr. Sam Gold, introduced herself.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes.

Chair Thompson requested approval for the January 26, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes and the February 13, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

A **motion** was made by J. Preston, seconded by A. Ponanski to **APPROVE** the January 26, 2023 CRGC Regular Meeting Minutes and the February 13, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

Voting in favor: T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** M. Woody. The motion **passed**, 10-0-1.

3. Old Saybrook. Regulation petition to establish Coastal Access Development District (CADD) (Between the Bridges Marina, Restaurant, Housing).

The Commission has been notified by Old Saybrook Zoning Commission that its March 6 public hearing had been canceled. The applicant withdrew the petition for the CADD and will be submitting a new petition.

Commissions requested that support staff provide a thorough comparison of the withdrawn CADD proposal to Old Saybrook's existing zoning regulations, as well as to summarize what past determinations have been made by Old Saybrook Zoning Commission regarding how building height and baselines in flood zones, including in the Saybrook Point area.

Chair Thompson asked Ms. Jouflas to confirm if past Commission Zoom meeting recordings are archived and accessible for review. The Commissioners also asked for a comparison of how Old Saybrook Zoning regulations calculate building heights and baselines in comparison to the Gateway Zone Standards.

4. Lyme, Proposed Agriculture Regulations. Townwide zoning regulations.

Chair Thompson noted the staff report indicated the Town of Lyme public hearing will be in May 2023 at the earliest, so the Commission can develop advisory comments at its April meeting.

5. Correspondence/Staff Report. As presented with explanations as requested.

6. Chairman's Report.

Chair Thompson said registration is now open for the the CT Land Conservation Council's Conference on March 25, 2023. All Commission members are encouraged to attend. CRGC will submit payment to CLCC after the event instead of reimbursing individual Commission members so they should register by March 8, 2023 at the lower early registration rate and check the "Sponsor" box.

Commission members discussed the new meeting minutes format and recommended that the minutes will be shortened, focusing on key concepts, motions, seconds and votes as required by Roberts Rules and FOIA.

Chair Thompson is researching locations to hold the March 23, 2023, CRGC Regular Meeting in person instead of via Zoom. If a member town's Town Hall with hybrid in-person & remote capabilities is not available, the meeting will be held in RiverCOG's meeting room.

7. Committee Reports:

a) Finance: Reports and Bills.

Ms. Matthews requested the Commission vote to pay the following bills: River COG expenses totaling \$5,674.01 which includes \$1,033.83 to Torrance Downes, \$262.02 to Paula Fernald, \$1,147.36 to Sam Gold, \$63.30 to Kevin Armstrong, \$3,123.34 for overhead, and \$44.16 for mileage and misc. administrative charges. Other bills: Tour de Lyme sponsorship totaling \$500, and payment to the CRGC Clerk Amy Huot for January 2023 meeting minutes, totaling \$161.

A **motion** was made by C. Matthews, seconded by S. Bement, to **pay the January bills for CRGC.**

Voting in favor: T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, M. Woody, 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 on 2/6/23 committee meeting.

Mr. Webb reported that multiple Commission members participated and discussed how to accommodate article 58A to the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations to relax the CRGC Gateway Standards in specific areas and similar requests by Deep River and East Haddam. Specific language will be developed with the help of legal counsel to provide flexibility to specific areas in individual towns rather than creating general procedures. Mr. Webb will ask the Chair of the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission to talk with the CRGC about how to accomplish this. The Committee will schedule its next meeting in coming weeks and all Commission members are invited.

The Commission members suggested to have the towns' Zoning Commissions outline the specific areas the towns are concerned about applying the Gateway Zone Standards. The Commission would like to ensure the member towns understand that the Commission is a partner with them. Mr. Roberts reported on his February 16 attendance at Deep River Zoning Commission meeting.

After some discussion about how to better ensure Gateway Standards are understood and enforced, it was suggested that town Land Coordinators and Zoning Enforcement Officers receive training on the Gateway Standards and be provided concise summaries of Standards for reference. Comparisons across towns to find the deficiencies in enforcement of the Gateway Standards were also suggested.

c). Community Relations and Public Outreach: Update on 2/16/23 Committee meeting.

Mr. Futoma showed the CRGC sponsor ¼-page ad he had created for CT Land Conservation Conference (CLCC) on March 25. The Commission’s new website will be up and running by the conference. CRGC will enter into a yearlong contract with Constant Contact for e-newsletter updates to improve communication with the public once the new website is launched. A new overview brochure of the Commission, Zone and Standards that has been developed over the past year should be printed in time for CLCC, Commission members can use it and a light pollution one-pager flyer developed by Mr. Semenov that will be used in CRGC’s Night Light Pollution workshop at CLCC.

The Committee also is developing plans for celebration events in member towns throughout the 50th anniversary, including recognition at CLCC on March 25, an official state proclamation, an August event at Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center in Old Lyme and hikes in preserves in member towns. A media list is being developed to promote all of these and general awareness of the Commission, Standards and Zone. All Commission members are to send Mr. Futoma the names and contact information for any local media or town publications, print or electronic.

The Committee has set regular meetings for the 3rd Thursday each month, 4:30 pm. All Commissioners are welcomed to participate and help with outreach events this year.

d). Land: Potential acquisition of land in the Gateway Conservation Zone. No executive session was held.

Committee Chair Woody reported that the Committee had held a site tour on Monday, February 6 to review land purchased by the Haddam Land Trust at a Town of Haddam tax sale. The land trust’s request for \$5000 to cover unexpected fees in the purchase and a map of the 16-acre parcel had been forwarded to the Land Committee for initial review. The Committee invited all Commissioners to the tour. Mr. Gold also attended.

On February 10 the Land Committee met, reviewed the submitted materials and site visit and determined that the land met the four land conservation criteria in the Gateway Commission’s land acquisition policy. It recommends that the Commission provide the funding.

M. Woody made a **motion**, seconded by J. Roberts, to provide the Haddam Land Trust \$5000 to for its purchase of the parcel of land in Haddam per the Haddam Land Trust request and map received by the Commission AND based on the Land Committee’s recommendation.

Voting in favor: T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, M. Farina (S. Bement recused herself as a Haddam Land Trust member), M. Woody, S. Thompson, W. Webb, K. Perzanowski, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** D. Langdon. The motion **passed**, 10-0-1.

e). Grants Review Committee: No update.

8. Old Business: None.

9. New Business:

The Economic Development Commission for Old Saybrook requested a letter of support from the CRGC. The EDC will apply for the CT Recreational Trails Program Grant through DEEP. The deadline is March 1,

2023. The requested grant is to create a riverfront public walkway including educational materials on the site of old Dock and Dine restaurant. It will include informational signs about the river, its ecology and history, the CRGC and its work protecting the river. RiverCOG also will submit a letter of support for the grant application.

A **motion** was made by W. Webb, seconded by M. Woody, to write a general letter of support for the grant application as described because it will increase the public's accessibility of the river and information of its history AND Mr. Webb requests that J. Preston, Old Saybrook Commission members and work together on the letter prior to it being sent to the Old Saybrook Economic Development Commission.

Voting in favor: T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, M. Woody, S. Thompson, W. Webb, R. de Brigard, J. Preston; **Opposed:** none; **Abstaining:** K. Perzanowski. The motion **passed**, 10-0-1.

Annual meeting about the Yankee Nuclear Powerplant decommissioning is upcoming. Ms. Langdon is to send Commission members meeting details. Commission members are encouraged to attend. For background, contact Mr. de Brigard, who is on the CT Yankee River Citizens Advisory Committee.

10. Adjournment

A **motion** was made by S. Bement, seconded by T. Brelsford, to **adjourn** the meeting.

Voting in favor: T. Brelsford, J. Roberts, C. Matthews, D. Langdon, S. Bement, M. Woody, 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 8:53 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, March 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Please see the agenda posted at <https://ctrivergateway.org> for the link.