

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

October 28, 2021

Present/Absent:

Chester:	Tom Brelsford , Jenny Kitsen
Deep River:	Jerry Roberts, (vacancy)
East Haddam:	<i>Crary Brownell, (vacancy)</i>
Essex:	Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement, Mike Farina
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill
Old Lyme:	<i>Suzanne Thompson, Greg Futoma</i>
Old Saybrook:	Bill Webb, Diane Stober
Regional Reps:	Raul Debrigard (N), Marilyn Gleeson (N), Judy Preston (S)
DEEP:	David Blatt
Staff:	J H Torrance Downes
Guests:	Katie Peranowski, DEEP; Joe Wren, PE; Joe Bergin, Architect

Call to Order

The Annual Meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission was called to order by Vice Chairman Melvin Woody on the virtual meeting platform Zoom at 7:02pm.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Kitsen, which was seconded by Matthews, the minutes of the October 23, 2020 Annual Meeting were approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Conflict of Interest Forms

The annual distribution of Conflict of Interest forms occurred prior to this Annual Meeting. Members were asked to fill out the forms and submit them to staff via mail or email, whichever is most convenient.

Committee Reports

The following summarizes the presentations of the five Gateway Committees. Submitted written reports are included at the end of the minutes:

- 1) Land Committee. Committee chair Melvin Woody provided a summary of the general activities of Land Committee during the past year as the meetings have been held in Executive Session. Committee meetings included discussions regarding potential land acquisition in the Gateway Conservation Zone.
- 2) Communications and Public Outreach Committee Report. Committee chair Greg Futoma provided a written report summarizing the activities of the committee. The report is included at the end of these minutes.
- 3) Finance Committee. Committee chair Claire Matthews provided a written summary of the activities of the committee. The report is included at the end of these minutes.
- 4) Rules and Procedures Committee. Committee chair Bill Webb summarized activities including the effort to update the bylaws (Rules of Procedure) of the Commission. The efforts included the formalization of a Grants Review Committee that was formerly an ad hoc committee to discuss grants and grant application possibilities and how the Commission should proceed in this area of endeavor. The committee also oversaw the clarification and revision of the 2018 adopted Gateway standards to be consistent with the guidance of Gateway attorney Mark Branse, who also represents numerous Planning & Zoning

Commissions in the eight Gateway member towns. Towns that have not adopted the 2018 standards, with the acceptance of Branse, would in turn be encouraged to adopt the newest standards. The committee also has started an effort to look at other opportunities for the development of standards including those that manage light pollution and tree cutting. Those efforts will continue and will likely be brought to the member towns for consideration following the adoption of the Branse-revised standards.

- 5) Grants Review Committee. Acting committee chair Jerry Roberts provided a written summary of the activities of the committee. The report is included at the end of these minutes.

Following the committee reports, a request was made to send the committee membership listing to all members.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Debrigard, which was seconded by Bement. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm

Respectfully submitted,
J H Torrance Downes

Communications Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020/2021

The Community Relations & Communications Committee began a comprehensive marketing program in 2021 to increase awareness of the Commission and to inspire protection of the estuary.

An RFP was issued in November 2020, with five responses received. After a committee review to pare the list, interviews were held with Community Consultants and Halagan Design. While both providers are well qualified, the committee unanimously recommended that the Commission contract with Community Consultants.

The recommendation was presented to the Commission, and a motion made and unanimously passed at the March 2021 meeting to expend up to \$35,000 for the marketing project. MOUs were subsequently entered into with Judy Anderson, of Community Consultants, and Dorene Warner, of W Design, effective from March 2021 through December 2022.

The full Community Relations & Communications Committee was supplemented by the formation of "work groups." A small guidance team was formed to work with the consultants on overall project administration. Other groups were formed to work on a website revamp, publications, social media, and a PowerPoint presentation.

Committee Chair Tom Gezo resigned from the Commission following a relocation to a new home. He generously volunteered to continue working on the marketing program. Greg Futoma was elected new Committee Chair.

Work continued through the summer and early fall on the project. A marketing and engagement strategy document was created by Judy Anderson, with input from Commission members, to guide project and future communications. Wireframes, or static mock-ups, of new website graphics were created, reviewed and the new site design approved. Dorene Warner was given a go-ahead to begin coding the new site. RiverCOG was hired to create improved map

products for the website, with assistance from Torrance Downes and Marilyn Gleeson as the committee's liaison.

Although COVID concerns led to cancellations of various public events, the Commission, with the committee's recommendation, helped sponsor the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's 2021 virtual conference and the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to Sea" Cleanup. Members also represented the Commission at the Haddam Neck Fair and the Eightmile River Fest 2021.

A trip on the Connecticut River, via RiverQuest, was organized on October 7, 2021. An effort was made to connect with partners in protecting the river. Town zoning officials, architects, non-profit organization leaders, land trust representatives and others joined Commission members on the cruise.

Rules of Procedure Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020/21

Committee chair Bill Webb summarized activities including the effort to update the bylaws (Rules of Procedure) of the Commission. The efforts included the formalization of a Grants Review Committee that was formerly an ad hoc committee to discuss grants and grant application possibilities and how the Commission should proceed in this area of endeavor. The committee also oversaw the clarification and revision of the 2018 adopted Gateway standards to be consistent with the guidance of Gateway attorney Mark Branse, who also represents numerous Planning & Zoning Commissions in the eight Gateway member towns. Towns that have not adopted the 2018 standards, with the acceptance of Branse, would in turn be encouraged to adopt the newest standards. The committee also has started an effort to look at other opportunities for the development of standards including those that manage light pollution and tree cutting. Those efforts will continue and will likely be brought to the member towns for consideration following the adoption of the Branse-revised standards.

Finance Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020/2021

The finance committee monitored expenses, reviewed our books and accounts and reported monthly on the same to the full commission.

They met quarterly to review, discuss and make changes to the commission's portfolio with our investment advisors. The portfolio is conservatively balanced and performing well despite an uncertain environment.

They solicited budget recommendations for the for the 21/22 fiscal year in April 2021, prepared a budget and submitted it to the committee for approval at its June meeting.

Documents related to commission expenses, investment portfolio and budget are held by the Treasurer and available for review by request.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire K. Matthews
Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair

Grant Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020/21

This new committee which was an evolution of the Grants Ad Hoc committee chaired by Bill Webb got off to a good start earlier in the year. Chaired by Joel R. Ide it also included Jerry Roberts and Tom Brelsford. The committee held two in person meetings and two Zoom meetings to work on criteria and procedures for grants. An evolving a draft document was created. The goal has been to create a comprehensive system that is not overburdensome or complicated, especially for smaller grant requests. The primary considerations have been relevance to Gateway's mission, value for money, sustainability, integration with similar projects by other organizations to avoid redundancy, and to make sure that the science behind projects can be independently vetted. It is also critical that outcome can be measured and that reporting adds to a shared knowledge data base. The Committee also spent significant time looking at a substantial grant request from CT Audubon. Additional clarifications were requested and are still pending.

Unfortunately, when Joel stepped down for personal reasons, work came to a standstill requiring the committee to step back and reorganize. The plan is now to finish the primary document and vet it through the procedures

committee before presenting it to the full board for input as soon as possible.
Jerry Roberts

