

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2020

Present/Absent: [Excused absence (E); Unexcused absence (U)]

Chester: *Margaret (Peggy) Wilson (E), Jenny Kitsen*
Deep River: *Vacancy, Conal Sampson*
East Haddam: **Crary Brownell, Joel Ide**
Essex: **Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov**
Fenwick: *Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden*
Haddam: *Susan Bement (E), Mike Farina*
Lyme: **J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill**
Old Lyme: **Suzanne Thompson (7:08p), Greg Futoma (E)**
Old Saybrook: **Bill Webb, Tom Gezo**
Regional Rep: **Raul Debrigard**
DEEP: **David Blatt**
Staff: **J H Torrance Downes**
Guests: **Steve Karlson, BMP (Chester Point Marina LLC)**

Call to Order

Vice Chair **Woody** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:05pm.

Approval of 10/24/19, 12/5/19 and 1/23/20 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the amended 10/24/19 minutes by **Gezo**, seconded by **Hill**, passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the 12/5/19 minutes by **Debrigard**, seconded by **Webb**, passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the 1/23/20 minutes by **Gezo**, seconded by **Brownell**, passed unanimously.

Following votes, a discussion regarding how minutes should be prepared occurred. By consensus, it was determined that the Governance Committee would take up a discussion on the topic.

Motion to Change Order of Agenda by consensus, allowing Mr. Karlson to present the proposal for revision to the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Chester.

Regulation/Map Review and Approval pursuant to Section 25-102 G CGS.

Chester, Revision of Waterfront Design District Regulations to allow restaurants as an accessory use to a marina.

Steve Karlson presented the proposal as a partner of Chester Point Marina, LLC. The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission had previously approved a special permit to allow for the demolition and reconstruction of a storage building on the marina site to include a marine storage area and the reestablishment of a nonconforming, seasonal restaurant. As a result of abandoning the idea to reestablish the seasonal restaurant and proposing a year-round restaurant, the applicant had to add such a use to the zoning regulations for that district. The revision of zoning regulations affecting property in the Gateway Conservation Zone requires approval of the Gateway Commission. With Gateway approval, it would appear that the approved special permit would require modification to reflect that the restaurant will be year-round and not "seasonal".

After discussion, a motion to approve the regulation proposal was presented by **Brownell** and seconded by **Kitsen**. The motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence and Staff Report

Downes discussed issues including (1) his communication with the real estate representatives for the Norwich Diocese of the Catholic Church, which is in the process of marketing for sale the Mount Saint John's property

adjacent to the Connecticut River in Deep River and (2) registration information for the upcoming CLCC Land Conservation Workshop at Wesleyan University on Saturday, March 21, 2020.

Chairman's Report

Thompson discussed a FOIA presentation that she attended in Old Lyme. **Debrigard, Thompson and Brownell** offered comments on the topic.

Committees Reports

Financial/Treasurers Report. **Matthews** presented the staff bill in the amount of \$2,994.10 for payment. A motion to pay the bill was made by **Ide** and seconded by **Semenov**. The motion passed unanimously.

Land Committee. No report as the committee hasn't met of late.

Governance Committee. **Webb** reports that the committee will be meeting in mid-March and will discuss by laws and the issue of minute brought up earlier in this meeting.

Public Outreach Committee. **Gezo** reported on the committee's work on social media policy, upcoming events including the CLCC workshop on March 21, 2020, and an April 4th "environmental day" that includes speakers. It was reported that, on behalf of the Commission, Downes signed up to be an exhibitor for the "Raptor Festival, which occurs on Saturday, April 18, 2020 at Eagle Landing State Park (RiverQuest dock). A discussion was held on the proposed dates of the annual Gateway Boat Trip. Thursdays June 4th and 11th have been reserved. Members asked that Wednesday June 10th be reserved as well, and a decision will occur by Gateway's March meeting at the latest. **Webb** commented that the real estate agent for the Mount Saint John property should be asked to attend the boat trip as well. **Gezo, Matthews, Hill and Debrigard** commented on social media policies..

Gezo presented a draft of a document entitled "Gateway Overview", which refers more to the Conservation Zone and less to the membership. The intent for the document would be a two-page (one sheet) summary of Gateway to present to Selectmen, Planning & Zoning members, etc. as background.

Old Business:

Sampson presented slides and information on the issue of purchasing a drone for use by the Gateway Commission. Comments regarding licensing and use of the drone over water arose. Comments were presented regarding whether RiverCOG would have interest in sharing the purchase and use of such a drone. **Thompson** suggested that **Sampson** speak to Joel Stecker of Waterford who's contact information was given to **Sampson**. Stecker is a drone enthusiast. Comments were made by **Gezo, Thompson, Woody and Brownell**. **Sampson** will continue to research. The approximate cost of models being loosely considered is \$3,000. **Ide** brought up the idea of whether paying someone to perform drone service would be more advantageous than purchasing and learning to use.

New Business:

Debrigard commented on the issue of ground water pollution in the Tylerville area of Haddam, and commented on a local environmentalist/developer – Lisa Wadge – who has been trying to convince the State of Connecticut take on remediation of the pollution. **Debrigard** expressed that the Gateway Commission is not in a position to "spear-head" such an effort as its primary duties include visual protection of the river. No recommendations have been presented to correct the problem. If Wadge cares to speak to Gateway about this issue, she should be afforded about 15 minutes to express her thoughts. Comments were presented by **Debrigard, Webb, Blatt, Farina, Thompson and Ide**.

Woody updated members on the prospective National Heritage Corridor project being considered by the Gateway Commission. He reported that a conference call will occur when call "attendance" can be arranged in order to ask questions about the "nuts and bolts" of how the corridor was established for the Housatonic River.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 8:38pm by **Hill**, seconded by **Webb**, approved unanimously.