

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 25, 2017

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

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|----------------------|---|
| Chester: | Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, Errol Horner |
| Deep River: | Nancy Fischbach, Kate Cotton |
| East Haddam: | Harvey Thomas, Crary Brownell (E) |
| <i>Essex:</i> | <i>Claire Matthew (E), Jerri MacMillian (E)</i> |
| <i>Fenwick:</i> | <i>Fran Adams, Borough Warden</i> |
| <i>Haddam:</i> | Susan Bement, Chip Frey (E) |
| Lyme: | J. Melvin Woody, Emily Bjornberg (E) |
| Old Lyme: | Peter Cable, Suzanne Thompson (Arr. 7:32p) |
| Old Saybrook: | Madge Fish, Vacancy |
| <i>Regional Rep:</i> | <i>Raul Debrigard (E)</i> |
| DEEP: | David Blatt (Arr. 7:33pm) |
| Staff: | None. |
| Guests: | Chad Frost, Doug Vanderhorn, Bruce Lawrence, Carley |

Call to Order

Chairman **Woody** called the regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at RiverCOG offices located at 145 Dennison Road, Essex at 7:30 pm.

Approval of 4/27/17 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by **Fischbach**, seconded by **Cable**, the 4/27/17 regular meeting minutes were approved unanimously with **Fischbach** abstaining.

Treasurers Report

Wilson reported that the Financial Committee met with the Essex Financial investment advisor who is to replace Patrick Gingras. The committee plans to meet with two other Essex Financial advisors to insure that the committee and the advisor are well matched.

Bills: **Wilson** reported that a bill is presented for payment for March staffing in the amount of \$1,725.93 (JHTD \$672.86; PF \$17.51; Overhead \$1,035.56). Motion by **Bement**, seconded by **Fischbach** to approve, passed unanimously.

Items of Interest Report

Office Relocation. As of the end of July, RiverCOG will be moving its office location to 7 Island Dock Road in Haddam. The building is located across the street from the entrance to Haddam Meadow State Park. This move was necessitated when RiverCOG's 5 year lease was to be renewed. The landlord sought to raise the rate from about \$10.50 per square foot to \$17 per square foot. That increase, which the agency found unacceptable, forced us to start looking around for other opportunities. The landlords efforts to negotiate only occurred after we indicated that we had found a better situation. The July Gateway meeting will likely have to be held in another location, if the Commission chooses to meet. The August meeting will occur at the new location.

A little closer for those who come from a long distance, like Susan Bement and Harvey Thomas.

Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement/Campbell Hudson.

No update.

Phragmites Eradication Partnership, Lords Cove, Lyme.

The project continues to move forward. Communication with the DEEP analyst involved in the project revealed that he wasn't sure he was going to be able to finish the required "Management Plan" by the time of the June spraying. As a "preserve", any work in the Lords Cove marsh would require an approved management plan. Similar to the permission sought and received for the mowing of the phragmites, a request was made for permission to conduct the herbicide spraying despite not having the management plan in place. Since regulations permit activities that have been historically conducted to be

continued without the management plan, we sought to gain permission for the spraying, much like the request for the mowing. Both mowing and herbicide application has occurred at the location going back several decades. DEEP provided permission to conduct the activity of herbicide application, which will be conducted next month.

CT River Conservancy River Celebration, 2017. "Come and celebrate our rivers with us!" For more information, go to www.ctriver.org/celebration

Carlson Landing/CT River Museum. The CT River Museum sent out an email blast to its members and others entitled "Carlson's Landing Project in Essex and its Impact on CRM". The document summarizes the project and presents some concerns that the CRM hopes to resolve through input during the public hearing process. The next Zoning Commission hearing was scheduled for May 15th. GW members will recall that they approved an Essex Zoning Regulation revision that extended maximum height in that waterfront district to 35 feet from 30 feet. The 35 foot height maximum from "existing natural grade" is the Gateway minimum standard.

Preliminary Discussion, Demolition and Reconstruction of a Residential Dwelling

Vanderhorn presented the application including a photo of the current structure. The site was described as on a high point on River Road with a steep slope leading from the road immediately down to the flatter flood plain at the base of the slope. Numerous mature trees exist on the steep slope (all on the street side of the existing which would be the site of the proposed structure). Landscaping exists on the river side of the existing structure and no mature trees exist between the proposed site and the river. Discussion included the measurement of the existing grade of the slope. **Fischbach** shared photos of the structure as seen from the property on the west (inside) of River Road across from the property. Although not an issue under review for the Gateway Commission, the applicant discussed the proposed hardship that will be presented to the Essex Zoning Board of Appeals. **Thomas** asked, is the proposed structure "more or less" conforming than the existing structure. The applicant replied that it was "about the same". Further discussion occurred regarding what modifications could be done to bring the structure more into conformance with the Gateway mission and reduce its visual impact as seen from the river. **Fischbach** reminded members that the hardship is not the purview of the Gateway review, rather the consideration is the visual impact of the proposed structure on the view from the river. The applicant said that they will ask the ZBA to either postpone the opening of the hearing or commence the hearing and immediately continue the hearing so that the applicant can begin the process of modifying the design to accommodate Gateway concerns.

Staff Review of Variances: None of significance.

Committee Reports

Land Committee No new reports on efforts in Haddam Neck.

Outreach Committee

Members reviewed boat trip assignments. **Bement** is tasked with the purchase of food products, plates, cups and other paper products. **Cable** will purchase wine and other similar beverages. **Cotton** will purchase non-alcohol beverages. Downes is tasked with providing the past inventory of purchases which includes how much of the inventory was used based upon how many people were on the trip. Downes will provide copies of the Gateway Mission Booklet and the March 15, 2017 Gateway "summary" that was produced for the March 2017 CLCC workshop.

Governance Committee

No report on standards. **Fischbach** reported that she is reviewing the latest draft of the proposed Land Trust bylaws produced by Attorney Steve Mednick in partnership with RiverCOG Executive Director Sam Gold. **Fischbach** intends to streamline the draft based upon her experiences on various non-profit boards including the Community Foundation of Middlesex County.

New Business. None.

Old Business . None.

Adjournment. Upon motion by **Bement** and **Thomas**, the meeting adjourned at 8:47p.