

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

July 26, 2020

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

Chester: **Margaret (Peggy) Wilson , Jenny Kitsen**

Deep River: **Jerry Roberts, Conal Sampson**

East Haddam: **Crary Brownell, Joel R. Ide**

Essex: **Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov**

Fenwick: **Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden**

Haddam: **Susan Bement, Mike Farina**

Lyme: **J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill**

Old Lyme: **Suzanne Thompson, Greg Futoma**

Old Saybrook: **Bill Webb, Tom Gezo**

Regional Rep: **Raul Debrigard**

DEEP: **David Blatt**

Staff: **J H Torrance Downes**

Guests: None.

Call to Order

This meeting was convened using the Zoom online platform. The agenda was formally posted in all eight member towns as required with information directing interested members of the public to join the meeting online. Chairman **Thompson** called the online regular meeting of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to order at 7:06pm.

Approval of 6/25/20 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by **Woody** to table discussion of the 6/25/20 regular meeting minutes with approval being taken up at the August meeting. The motion was seconded by **Farina** and passed unanimously. A substantial discussion ensued regarding minute taking with **Woody, Webb** and **Thompson** offering opinions on how to proceed. Further discussion is to take place at the August meeting.

Correspondence and Staff Report

Downes briefly discussed the disposition of the Essex case involving development at 46 Crosstrees Hill Road. Downes also sought guidance on how to process a possible variance application for a small shed located within the 100-foot structure setback and 50 foot riparian buffer setback at 11 Hanna Lane, also in Essex.

Variance Applications, Special Permit Applications and Map/Regulation Change Petitions

There were no applications or petitions on which to report.

Chairman's Report

Thompson requested that the Gateway roster be reviewed for accuracy so that a final list can be developed. The new committee list will be updated and sent out to members shortly as well. Newest members should review to decide what committee they could join, and others can review if they have the desire to join another committee.

Committee Reports

Financial/Treasurers Report.

Mathews summarized the finance report (treasurers report) and the quarterly meeting held with Essex Financial (EF) on July 20, 2020 noting that the portfolio value as rebounded well after the drop in value in March of 2020. Although **Mathews** expressed appreciation for the guidance provided by EF, she indicated that it is members of the Gateway Commission that take credit for guiding investments into environmentally friendly funds that have done

well. The portfolio is sufficiently balanced moving forward

Matthews presented the staffing bill in the amount of \$2,758.94 and a legal bill from Halloran & Sage (46 Crosstrees Hill Road) in the amount of \$962 for payment. A motion was made by **Bement** to approve, and a second was provided by **Wilson** to pay the two bills. The motion and second were unanimously approved.

Land Committee.

Wilson summarized the Land Committee meeting which was held on Friday, July 17, 2020 including reports on Gateway's history of land conservation in all eight Gateway member towns. **Wilson** summarized that Gateway has spent over \$2 million during the last several decades saving over 2,000 acres in all eight towns. **Thompson** suggested the convening of a workshop for Gateway members on the operation of the land committee, easements, etc. The Land Committee attendees agreed that each committee should have a write-up describing what each does. **Wilson** noted that the Land Committee needs a new chairman as well now that she is stepping down. **Wilson** then provided an update on the 3.11 acre Organek/Carrow property purchase in Haddam Neck. The purchase should be concluded at the beginning of August. Finally, **Wilson** reported that her term in office ended at the end of June and she will be stepping off the Gateway Commission immediately.

Governance Committee. The Committee will schedule a meeting to generally discuss Rules of Procedure moving forward. **Webb** further reported that there was confusion over the purpose of the formation of the Grant Ad Hoc Committee, whether it would BE the new committee, or make recommendations to the Commission about how the new committee will operate. A short discussion of the Gateway Handbook then occurred.

Public Outreach Committee. **Gezo** reported that the committee chose not to meet in July but recommends that Gateway cancel any plans for the 2020 river trip. A motion was made to cancel any consideration for the river trip in 2020 by **Woody**, which was seconded by **Matthews**. The motion passed unanimously. The CRC Source to Sea cleanup, to which Gateway provided \$2,500 in funds, will be held. Information can be found at the CT River Conservancy website. **Gezo** updates members on the Gateway social media presence. **Roberts** notes that he has over 6,000 aerial photos taken when he wrote his book on the Connecticut River.

Grants Ad Hoc. The committee met on July 20, 2020. Discussion was to include more general criteria for future inclusion in a checklist. Much of the meeting, however, was taken up by revisiting whether the Commission should reconsider funding the Snarski grant request from the June meeting. **Debrigard** wrote a summary that indicated Gateway would *not* revisit the issue. After a long discussion, the Committee moved on to the broader grants approval process. A memo included decision criteria was passed between members for the purpose of convening another meeting to continue discussions. The committee asked Downes to put together a spreadsheet over all of the grants provided by Gateway through the years, which he has started researching.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: A motion for adjournment was made by **Bement** with **Woody** seconding. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.