

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 27, 2020

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

**Chester:** Tom Brelsford , 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:** Penny Rezendes, Friends of North Cove; Dave Roach, All Habitats

### 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 7:03pm.

### Approval of 6/25/20 and 7/23/20 Regular Meeting Minutes

**Woody Moved** to approve the minutes of the 6/25/20 regular meeting, noting that he had copy edited them. **Bement** seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. **Farina** moved to approve the minutes of the 7/23/20 regular meeting. **Bement** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A short discussion occurred regarding whether motion “seconds” need be included in minutes. The member’s consensus was that “seconds” to motions *should* be included.

### Correspondence and Staff Report

Downes briefly summarized the staff report, which includes short explanations of development applications at 10 Hanna Lane and 174 Saybrook Road, both in Essex. He also called attention to the upcoming Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group conference on October 7<sup>th</sup> and explained that the Gateway Commission will refund registration fees paid by members of the commission who choose to participate.

### Chairman’s Report

**Thompson** thanked members for checking the newest member roster and including it in the member’s handbook and asked that other recently updated documents also be added, including the Staff Tasks and Duty document. She also reported that she has been seeking someone to relieve Downes of the minute-taking task. She also noted that staff supplies a standard Gateway Commission report for each Gateway towns annual Town Report and has always done so. She invited all Commission members to review the standard report and add language as they see fit, as **Gezo** has done for the Old Saybrook Town Report this year .

### Committee Reports

#### Financial/Treasurers Report.

**Matthews** summarized the finance report (treasurers report) for the members. Following the summary, **Matthews** presented the staffing bill for \$2,558.91). **Bement** moved to pay the bill. **Semenov** seconded and the motion passed

unanimously.

#### Land Committee.

**Woody** provided a brief update summarizing the status of the purchase of the Organek/Carrow property in Haddam Neck, with Downes adding that the closing for that property purchase is delayed until the end of September. **Futoma** reported that he is considering taking over the chair of the Land Committee. **Bement** described a larger parcel next to the Organek/Carrow property that may become available and an adjacent property that the Gateway Commission had already helped the Middlesex Land Trust purchase and for which we have been repaid when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased the property. **Webb** suggested, with **Roberts** concurrence, that perhaps the Commission should be seeking purchase of other properties that are in other Gateway member towns. **Bement** and **Debrigard** reminded members that the Haddam Neck purchases are unique in that purchase costs are reimbursed when the US Fish & Wildlife Service purchased the property, as it has in two previous cases.

#### Governance/Ad Hoc Grants Committee.

**Webb** reported that the ad hoc committee has made progress developing criteria by which to judge grant applications and which it has tried to apply to a grant requested by the Old Saybrook Friends of North Cove, which the Committee recommends to the Commission. He introduced Friends of North Cove spokesperson Penny, who described the project to eradicate phragmites in areas of Old Saybrook's North Cove using a methodology similar to that used in the Lord's Cove marshes, which the Gateway Commission supported with a three year \$30,000 grant. A discussion followed regarding the proposed use of the herbicide Imazapyr, alternatives to herbicide use and comments from scientists, who all supported the proposed method. Rezendes explained that the funds requested from the Gateway Commission will be matched by the Sustainable Community Grant fund. **Webb** informed the Commission that the ad hoc committee recommends funding the project at a level of \$1,500. **Bement** moved to increase the amount to \$2,500. **Woody** seconded the motion. A roll call vote was called by town. Six towns voted to approve the grant with one abstention and one vote against. **Debrigard** and **Blatt** noted that since only "town" representatives were asked to vote, their votes were not included. This brought up a wider discussion of whether and how alternates should vote if their town's representative is present, and whether a member and alternate should be given time to discuss what their town's vote will be prior to the chairman calling the vote. The Chair then asked for the two missing votes. **Debrigard** abstained and **Blatt** voted to approve. The final vote tally was therefore 7 in favor, 1 against, and 2 abstaining. The motion carried and a \$2,500 grant will be provided to the Friends of North Cove.

**Thompson** reported the Roger Tory Peterson Center is preparing a grant request to cover project including public education, volunteerism, removal of invasive plants and replanting of native plants. The request will probably be proposed in September and will likely be a multi-year proposal.

#### Public Outreach Committee.

**Gezo** provided a short review of committee activities.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: **Bement** moved that the meeting adjourn. **Kitsen** seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.