

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2022

### Present/Absent:

<b>Chester:</b>	<b>Tom Brelsford, Jenny Kitsen</b>
<b>Deep River:</b>	<b>Jerry Roberts, (vacancy)</b>
<b>East Haddam:</b>	<b>Crary Brownell, (vacancy)</b>
<b>Essex:</b>	<b>Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov</b>
<b>Fenwick:</b>	<b>Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden</b>
<b>Haddam:</b>	<b>Susan Bement, Mike Farina</b>
<b>Lyme:</b>	<b>J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill</b>
<b>Old Lyme:</b>	<b>Suzanne Thompson, Greg Futoma</b>
<b>Old Saybrook:</b>	<b>Bill Webb, Diane Stober</b>
<b>Regional Reps:</b>	<b>Raul Debrigard (N), Marilyn Gleeson (N), Judy Preston (S)</b>
<b>DEEP:</b>	<b>Katie Perzanowski</b>
<b>Staff:</b>	<b>J H Torrance Downes</b>
<b>Guests:</b>	None.

### Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Thompson on the virtual meeting platform Zoom at 7:03pm.

### Approval of Regular Minutes

A motion was made by Gleeson to approve the May 28, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Roberts and approved unanimously. Gleeson abstained.

Discussion of Grants Application Documents. Roberts opened the discussion by stating that the two documents (a summary and a longer application document) have been provided two times and he had received comments from Debrigard and Matthews. A summary of the reason and process for forming the Grants Committee was presented. Members acknowledged the need for separation of review duties for applications concerning land versus requests for grants as well as donations. Once the grant application documents are final, a formal Grants Committee needs to be formed (the current is still an ad hoc committee). Thompson commented that the Commission still needs to have a strategic plan that will, among other things, provide guidance for how much in funds is to be provided for grant award purposes in any given year. Roberts also reiterated the need for a scientific review function or committee, commenting that perhaps an expert in any given field can be chosen to review such grant requests upon request on behalf of Gateway. Members were reminded that Perzanowski is the DEEP Commissioner's representative and could be an avenue for such reviews. All sponsorship projects go to Communications Committee. Roberts will work the comments provided and discussed this evening into the documents and recirculate.

### Correspondence/Staff Report

Staff briefly summarized several report items including the concept plan that was presented for the "Between the Bridges" marina facility in Old Saybrook. Members were reminded of the application history of "Marina Village", an affordable housing application that was approved but never built. Members discussed the earth materials fill violation that has occurred at 1242 Saybrook Road in Haddam, including the removal of approximately 80 or so trees within the "required vegetation buffer" of the property located between the Valley RR tracks and the CT River. Roberts, with Webb's support, proposed that a drone flight documenting the river shoreline every several years would be worthwhile. For the Sarner violation in Hamburg Cove, staff reported that the Lyme ZEO is working to get the recalcitrant property owners to restore the riparian buffer as required. If progress fails, the file and violation will be forwarded to Town Counsel for prosecution. Matthews commended the Town of Lyme for pursuing such violations, commenting that such pursuit doesn't seem to happen in her town (Essex). The removal of the buffer and the planting with grass has occurred numerous

times through the years [the riparian buffer regulation wasn't adopted by the Essex Zoning Commission until fall of 2018 while the other seven towns adopted that and the other standards back as far as 2004 when the standards were originally adopted by Gateway]. Staff updated members on the violation remediation at the property located at the mouth of Chester Creek and the CT River. Photos were shown of each of the three violation situations.

Chairman's Report None presented except notice that it is National Pollinator's Month.

Finance Committee. Matthews apologized that the budget draft should have been presented and discussed at this meeting but hadn't been prepared. A request was made for members to review the Finance spreadsheet and to provide any comments about the 2022/2023 budget that they would care to make. The draft budget will be worked upon during the week of June 27, 2022 with the intent of having a proposed budget for discussion and approval at the July 28, 2022 regular monthly meeting. Matthews pointed out that the staffing budget was overspent, likely due to the significant work put in by staff for the numerous committees that met through last fiscal year. The work for the Communications Committee, it was said, was particularly time-consuming. Thought needs to be put into what budget numbers should be used for staffing going forward with the communications project winding down. Thought also needs to be made about what maintenance of the new website will entail and how much time may be spent. Futoma reminded members that depending upon the skill set of the staff successor, there may be a need to budget for use of a consultant to assist in website maintenance. Webb indicated that a Rules Committee meeting will be convened shortly to discuss an annual budget amount for that committee. Staff will send the invitation out to *all* Commission members, not just Rules Committee members. Debrigard brought up the fact that current staff's retirement is coming up (October) and urged Thomspson to reengage with RiverCOG to further discuss succession planning.

Bill were presented for payment as follows:

Staffing – JHTD/\$1360.97; Paula Fernald/\$60.09; Overhead/\$1,794.37. Total Staffing: \$3,215.43  
Donation/Support for CRC "Source to Sea" annual clean-up - \$2,500.  
Total bill amount: \$5,715.43

A motion to approve the payment of the RiverCOG staffing bill was made by Matthews and seconded by Roberts. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the donation to CT River Conservancy for the "Source to Sea" clean-up was made by Futoma and seconded by Webb. The motion was passed unanimously. It was noted that these types of donations and the publicity that results is a matter for the Communications Committee and not the Grants Committee.

Communications Committee

Futoma updated on the final stages of the website development, indicating that he has gone through the pages one-by-one to insure accuracy and consistency. Members will meet to discuss plans for the October boat trip. Thompson thanks Futoma and others for all of their work on the communications project.

Rules Committee. Downes updated the Commission on the status of the sending of regulation documents and cover letters to individual Gateway members. Standards documents have been sent to all town staff with instructions for forward on to eh respective P&Zs. Town staff are currently in the process of reviewing prior to forwarding to their commissions. In May, Downes, Woody and Hill met with the Lyme P&Z to discuss the standards and received numerous comments and some concerns. The P&Z indicated that they will take up adoption after completing several regulation tasks that they are currently trying to bring to completion. Downe reported that he had a long conversation with Old Saybrook ZEO Chris Costa about standards that seemed redundant and unnecessary. Costa reported she will prepare a memo with such comments, a memo that hasn't been completed as of the time of this Gateway meeting. Finally, Debrigard and Bement sat with Haddam Town

Planner Bill Warner and had a productive meeting that resulted in numerous comments and suggestions that Gateway should consider. Communication with other town staff has not occurred as of yet. Debrigard asked town representatives to initiate contact with their Town Planners to determine what plans were for moving forward with adoption.

Debrigard mentioned one comment made by Warner expressing desire for some kind of Gateway support in local violation proceedings where Gateway standards are the subject of the violation. Acknowledging that Gateway has no enforcement authority (all enforcement authority rests with the Town), perhaps Gateway would consider financial support in what are very expensive legal proceedings in the enforcement of violations. Members of the Commission were positive about the suggestion and commented that the idea should be pursued further.

Webb commented that, with the departure of current staff, he along with other committee members would like to develop "standard" letters for use in variance review, special exception review and regulation review responses. After attending numerous ZBA hearings, Webb acknowledged that the information imparted in such letters is almost secondary to *how* the information is presented.

Debrigard mentions that the issue of not applying Gateway standards to areas in the Conservation Zone that are hidden by topography was again raised by Town Planner Warner. Debrigard also emphasized the need to have the list of property owners in the Conservation Zone completed (staff completed a list of the property owners of *riverfront* property owners only).

#### Land Committee

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 8:37pm upon a motion by Matthews and a second by Bement. At 8:50pm and upon a motion by Bement, seconded by Webb, the members exited Executive Session. No votes or actions were taken.

Grants Committee. No further comments.

Old Business. None raised.

New Business. Brelsford announced that he has arranged the possibility of Gateway meetings at Camp Hazen in Chester. Debrigard commented that after having lunch with Andy Fisk of the CRC and the interim ExDir of the CT River Museum, he came to the conclusion that Gateway isn't "networking" enough in the valley and may be missing partnership opportunities in the process. Perhaps an effort can be coordinated through the Communications Committee to develop a strategy.

#### Adjournment

A motion was made by Bement to adjourn at 8:56pm, which was seconded by Brelsford. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
J H Torrance Downes, Staff to the Gateway Commission

**Staff Report**  
**June 23, 2022**

**CT Examiner Article, “Between the Bridges” Marina facility in Old Saybrook.**

<https://ctexaminer.com/2022/06/21/ambitious-redevelopment-of-old-saybrook-riverfront-pitched-to-zoning-commissioners/>

This article appeared in the CT Examiner on 6/21/2022. Long-term members will recall that Gateway was involved in the approval of a development called “Marina Village” several years back. It had an “affordable housing” component which meant that the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations didn’t apply, per Section 8-30g CGS. Long, long story, but the summary is that the developer took Gateway’s involvement seriously enough to have Gateway members join them on a boat trip to discuss the project and discuss what kinds of thoughts Gateway members had about the project. The “elephant in the room” was, if the zoning regulations didn’t apply due to the “affordable housing” component, would Gateway’s “zoning authorities” apply. In essence, would Gateway’s statutory mission of protecting the “natural and traditional riverway scene” “trump” the policies of Section 8-30g CGS, the “Affordable Housing Act”. That question was never raised. The Gateway Commission, after participating in design discussions, found that the new design (colonial design, grays and whites) was a sight better than the eyesore that the current property is and supported the application, or rather, didn’t attempt to stand in the way. The new development was better for the “scenic quality” of the river than the existing development.

The discussion that occurred at Monday’s zoning meeting is described in the article. It was the writer who mentioned the Gateway Commission, not the developer. The article describes that zoning changes will need to be made to pave the way for the development, so Gateway will be in the position of “approving” or “disapproving” such changes. As described, Gateway will have authority over this project rather than just the ability to “comment” with hopes that the local commissions and boards would embrace Gateway’s comments and cautions. Cal Caldarella is a longtime resident of Old Saybrook. He with partners owns Island Cove Marina just north of the I-95 bridge. This is very early in the process. Cal’s just sending the flag up the flagpole to get a read on reaction.

**Grants Review Documents**

Members were sent several documents regarding the Grants Approval process. The documents will be discussed as an agenda item during the June 23, 2022 meeting. The documents to be discussed and comments provided by Raul are included at the end of this document as an FYI.

**Renovation of Existing Historic Structure on Hamburg Cove, 100-5B Joshuatown Road. Kim and Kevin Hecht.** The Land Division of the CT DEEP has issued its approval of the plans to renovate the dwelling located at 100-5B Joshuatown Road in Lyme. The property is encumbered by a scenic easement established decades ago by Dennis and Diana Milne, who have both since passed away.

**Special Exception Comments for New Dwelling at 14 Mill Road, Falls River Cove, Essex.** An applicant is proposing the construction of a residential structure totaling 4,869 square feet in Total Floor Area on a vacant lot on the innermost portion of the cove. The structure meets all zoning regulations and Gateway standards (height, setbacks, etc.) and no variances are required. A letter of review has been submitted to the Essex P&Z for the record of the public hearing. The letter requests conditions be placed by the P&Z as follows:

- (1) Before any site work, vegetation clearing or otherwise, is begun, the developer, the site engineer, the ZEO and a representative of the Gateway Commission shall meet on site to discuss the limits of vegetation clearing and removal. No work shall commence until such meeting has occurred.
- (2) A brightly colored tape delineating the 50-foot line beyond which no vegetation cutting shall occur shall be marked and confirmed adequate by the ZEO during or prior to the aforementioned site meeting.
- (3) The developer shall survey the finished height of the structure as measured from the point where the foundation is exposed at grade on the Falls River Cove side of the house to the peak of the main roof to confirm that the height meets the 35-foot maximum height requirements of Section 101D, Building Height (Conservation District) and Building Height (Definition).
- (4) There shall be no excessive lighting of the site and the structure (architectural facade lighting) nor uplighting of trees so as to minimize excessive lighting of the Falls River Cove and the night sky in the area of the property. Only lighting required for safety purposes are permitted at the site.

**Ongoing Enforcement Actions, Conservation Zone**

- **Chester, Chester Creek Property Enforcement Action at the Confluence of Chester Creek and the Connecticut River.** Gary Rooke (property owner), Tom Brelsford and GW Staff met at the site to discuss the replanting that needs to be accomplished to remediate the site. The property owner asked if existing riparian vegetation that *wasn’t* removed could be used to replant areas where vegetation was removed. Brelsford, Kitsen and staff agreed to ask Judy Preston to visit the site to evaluate the existing buffer vegetation to determine if removal and replanting would be advisable (such vegetation, although protecting the shoreline, may be non-native, invasive plants that shouldn’t be replanted in another location). A schedule for this work is still being worked upon. The town has been informed that the effort is moving forward. The property owner appears cooperative.

- **Lyme, Sarner Enforcement Action, Joshuatown Road.**

**Report from ZEO Ross Byrne’s, 6/21/22:**

As expected, a half effort. She [Mrs. Sarner] wasn't there (hiding in the house?) and Peter [Sarner] was digging a shallow trench and planting more plants. I told him I would run the photo by "my expert" but I believe the depressed area has to be larger, he needs to use a level to be sure the area will hold water and the plants should be meant for a more wet condition. I also stressed that the deck needs to go [be removed, subject of the State enforcement action] and he should contact DEEP and comply with the document they need for the proper permit.

I got the expected humble reply. At this point I promised myself to just turn it over to the lawyers but I have one active suit against the town, another starting up any day, and a third does not sound appealing but I can't let this go. My rep' is riding on it. I'm supposed to meet

next week again.

- Haddam, 1242 Saybrook Road Filling/Clearing.

Report from Town Planner Bill Warner:

Had a productive meeting with the owner. He has stopped importing material. He is hiring an engineer to prepare a grading plan. DEEP was down there with their surveyor assessing the incursion onto state property.

Report from Rob Bradway, Vice President, Valley Railroad Company:

Valley Railroad brought the CTDEEP contingent via rail to the site last Friday (6/17/22). They included the surveyor, two ENCON officers, and two biologists to quantify the tree damages on the east side of the railroad embankment. They had extensive conversations with the homeowners.

The entire west side of the railroad embankment (non-river side of the tracks **and outside of the 50 foot "riparian vegetation buffer"**) on State [property] had been completely stripped of vegetation, with some grading performed, since last inspected by the railroad the week prior.

The railroad expressed concern to CTDEEP that the State property on the west [inland] side of the track needs to be re-seeded and covered with hay to prevent soil erosion of the roadbed immediately. The railroad is accepting of the homeowner or his/her contracting performing this function, otherwise the railroad will perform the work itself and charge the homeowner for restoration costs. Again, this is needed immediately, before any significant rainfall causes damage. It had the appearance of a productive, calm encounter. Everyone seemed OK at the end of it. The railroad contingent (two of us) stayed off to the side, as there are plenty of you in the arena already handling it, and the railroad's interests have not yet been damaged (other than the concern of the loss of vegetation).

Return Communication Town Planner Bill Warner from Gateway Staff:

Is there a willingness on the part of the "Town" to require planting beyond stabilizing ground cover? Perhaps numerous trees (although they won't grow to become "effective" visual buffers for some time). Gateway would definitely support that requirement and provide a letter stating as such.

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- Chairman's Report. As presented in Chairman Thompson's absence.
  - Finance Committee: Presentation of bills. Staffing bill, \$2,500 invoice for CRC "Source to Sea" Project
  - Rules of Procedure Committee: Report on status of standards adoption effort. All sets of standards and cover letters have been distributed to the Staff in the eight Gateway towns. Discussions have been held with the Lyme Planning & Zoning Commission (Downes, Woody and Hill) and with the Haddam Town Planner (Debrigard and Bement). The definition for "Light Pollution" was further refined by Semenov and approved by Attorney Mark Branse before sent to the towns.
  - Community Relations/Communications Committee: Report on status of project, planning for Fall boat trip.
  - Land Committee: Update on Land Committee initiatives (**Executive Session, if needed**).
  - Grants Review Committee: Update on status. Two documents have been forwarded to members that include comments by committee member Jerry Roberts. The intent is for members to review the documents and be prepared to discuss at Gateway's June meeting. As a note, Greg Bugbee of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station had presented a grant proposal to Gateway in January of 2022. Chairman Thompson instructed that, if there are any questions about grants, the applicant is to contact her directly. Bugbee was provided with Thompson's email address.

**A. Overview:**

Gateway Commission Grants will be used to support actionable and measurable projects that directly support the Commission's mission to maintain the traditional view corridor and character (historic, esthetic and environmental) of areas within the Gateway Conservation Zone.

Applicants should demonstrate due-diligence, collaboration, sustainability and measurable project value. It is recommended that at least 50% of the total project cost be funded by the requesting organization or partner organizations and/or sponsors.

**B. Areas of Interest:**

1. Land Acquisition and conservation easements (often through Land Trusts)
2. Research & Studies
3. Public Awareness, engagement & education
4. Maintaining or Improving the Traditional and Historic Character of the River Corridor
5. Maintaining or Improving the Environmental health of the River Corridor

**C. Applications Must Include:**

1. Name of Project
2. Name of person/organization requesting support (with complete contact information)
3. Project description and goal (including how it directly supports the Gateway mission)
4. Specific funding requested and intended use of funds
5. Detailed budget including costs of supplies and materials, equipment, labor, admin/staff, consultants, permits, etc.
6. Project time-line and measurable milestones
7. List of other sources of support: Confirmed, pending, or not yet applied for
8. Clear explanation of how success will be measured and sustained
9. Verification of valid science behind project, when applicable
10. At least five relevant endorsements of the project methodology and value
11. Plan for reporting data for that it can be integrated into existing databases
12. List of participating partner organizations and their roles
13. Approval and endorsement from those with jurisdiction over the involved property(s)

**D. Evaluation:**

1. Relevance to Gateway mission
2. Collaborative plan
3. Relevant endorsements
4. Sustainability
5. Budget (including materials, equipment, labor, consultants, administrative, etc.)
6. Plan to measure success
7. Plan to integrate reporting with larger databases such as Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, CT River Conservancy, etc.)

**E. Process and Timing:**

1. Requests for funding must be received no less than three months prior to project kick-off to allow for orderly review and decision-making process.
2. A grant review committee will preview and vet all applications in advance of review by the commission to ensure all criteria have been met.
3. Grants will be reviewed by appropriate GC committees and vetted through relevant expert organizations and/or individuals when appropriate.
4. When relevant, Town representatives will review for questions and input.
5. Approved projects will be presented to the full board for comments and questions, at least one full meeting cycle before a vote is called for.

**Committee Notes:** These are some additional thoughts and the opinions of the grants committee but policy must of course be set and approved by the full board.

- How much funding do we provide each year?
- What should our individual grant size cap be?
- How do we handle multi-year grant requests especially in terms of accountability and measurable results?
- \*It has been the strong feeling of the grants committee that we should not as a general practice be funding another organization's operational staff and that a cap (??%) be placed on percentage of total project budget that can be allocated towards staff/admin.
- The committee has felt that we should not become a major funding source for invasive species control projects as these should be funded through granting organizations and agencies whose missions are more directly related to projects like this. Our focus should be on land acquisition and conservation easements, and other projects that help maintain the traditional view corridor within the Conservation Zone.
- Any Gateway Commission board member or advisor involved with the grant evaluation or decision-making process that has any conflict of interest will recuse themselves from the process.

See the **Committee Notes** section at the end of this document.

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission (Commission) has provided financial support to various projects, which sought to further the Commission's legislative mandate, on a "first-come, first-served basis. As government funds dwindle and grants become more difficult to acquire, others have turned to the Commission for funding. In order to provide Commission members an opportunity to fully evaluate all requests for financial support, we have developed a more formal application process. This document provides guidance to those requesting funds for projects benefitting the lower Connecticut River. A separate application form, supplied by the Gateway Commission, shall be used for any grant application.

**A. Overview of Successful Grant Requests:**

1. The following mission, taken from Section 25-102a of the Connecticut General Statutes, was adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1973 and guides all work done by the Connecticut River Gateway Commission and will guide decisions on funding provided as a result of this program:

*"It is found that the lower Connecticut River and the towns abutting the river possess unique scenic, ecological, scientific and historic value contributing to the public enjoyment, inspiration and scientific study, that it is in the public interest that the provisions of this chapter be adopted to preserve such values and to prevent deterioration of the natural and traditional riverway scene for the enjoyment of present and future generations of Connecticut citizens...."*

2. Grants will support actionable projects and research initiatives that directly support the legislative finding stated above and advance the mission of the Commission.
3. Projects must be in or directly impact properties or resources, including *scenic, ecological, scientific and historic* resources within the Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone ("GCZ").
4. The Commission will prioritize projects where at least 50% of project cost will be matched by the requesting organization, other organization(s) or funding sources and where proposed budgets clearly outline how grant funds will be utilized. Exceptions may be made but must be justified.

**B. Areas of Interest for Use of Gateway Grant Funds:**

1. Land acquisition, preservation and conservation in perpetuity either through fee-purchase or acquisition of development rights, scenic easements or other similar tools.
2. Support of scientific research, studies and investigations of the lower Connecticut River that provide clear direction for decisions to enhance our understanding and management of the resources of the GCZ.
3. Research, studies, and investigations that identify potential threats to the resources of the GCZ and suggest achievable solutions to identified threats.
4. Educational projects that promote public awareness and support for Gateway Commission's mission. Such projects include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Development of public outreach and educational programs to increase the public's awareness of the need to preserve and protect the lower Connecticut River and its resources with special attention to developing in our young people a sense of the value of the Connecticut River to our quality of life.
  - b) Videos and other promotional material about the importance of the Connecticut River to be distributed to area and statewide elementary schools and other audiences
  - c) Educational signs that inform the public about the natural, cultural, and historic resources in the GZ
5. Projects that enhance, protect, and preserve natural resources in the GCZ. Such projects may include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Protection and restoration of habitat essential to the Connecticut River ecosystem including tidal (salt, brackish and freshwater) wetlands, tidal flats, riverine migratory corridors, and coves/embayments to ensure the future survival of important plant and animal species and their habitats.
  - b) Projects that generally promote the ecological health of the lower Connecticut River.
6. Projects that propose implementation of techniques and tools to better manage development along the river's hillsides and provide guidance for minimizing impact of residential development including, but not limited to light pollution and other similar impairments.

**C. A successful grant application will provide:**

1. A detailed project description
2. A detailed project timeline
3. Project lead organization and participating partner organizations with respective roles and capacities explained - with address and contact information
  - a. Project Coordinator with address and contact information
4. Coordination and Cooperation
  - a. An explanation of how the project expands, duplicates, or replicates other projects within the GCZ. Please explain.
  - b. An explanation regarding any opportunities to coordinate this project with other similar projects in the lower Connecticut River. Please explain.

- c. Substantive funding by other organizations
  - i. **At least (50%?) from other sources.**
- d. A plan for integrating reported data into existing project databases
- 5. List of state/local government entities with jurisdiction/expertise with addresses and contact information.
- 6. Approvals:
  - a. A list of federal, state, or local permits that may be required to complete the proposed project, where applicable
  - b. List of affected property owners with submission of letters of permission, if applicable.
- 7. Support:
  - a. At least three relevant endorsements that demonstrate significant local support and significant support by entities with jurisdiction/expertise.
  - b. Endorsements from Gateway towns where the activity will occur addressing support and coordination with town activities – ~~GC representatives may play a role here~~
- 8. Verification of valid science behind project, when applicable, including:
  - a. Identification of and coordination with local and regional centers of expertise.
    - i. Typically DEEP, NERR/UConn, Connecticut Agricultural Research Station. USFW, RiverCOG
  - b. An explanation of the methodology to be used for the project
    - i. Comparison to alternatives including non-chemical methodologies
    - ii. Complete detail on the methodology from start to completion.
      - 1. Potential risks and plans to address
      - 2. Explicit discussion of potential for adverse impacts to flora and fauna and demonstrate how those potential adverse impacts will be mitigated
- 9. A specific project budget, including:
  - a) Detailed project line-item budget including costs for materials, equipment, labor rates, explanations if not competitively bid, and any other pertinent information that may be required.
  - b) Specific funding requested and limits on when and how the applicant wants to receive the money.
  - c) Funding sources and level of funding provided. If matching funds have already been awarded a copy of the award will be a required submission with the grant application.
  - d) Any other information as the Commission may request.

**D. Evaluation will be based upon:**

- 1. Relevance to the Gateway Commission mission.
- 2. Location in the Gateway Conservation Zone.
- 3. As least **(50%?)** of the project cost being borne by partner organizations other than the Gateway Commission.
- 4. Where science-based, demonstration that the project is based on proven science
- 5. Qualifications of consultants and principal participants and their organizations, where applicable.
- 6. Where permits, approvals and permissions are required to conduct the project, are such permits currently in place? If not, a description of the timeline for acquisition of such permits, approvals and permissions.
- 7. Collaboration with other organizations and projects, where applicable.
- 8. The sustainability of the results of the project, where applicable.
- 9. A clear, detailed budget, including factors of matching grant availability.
- 10. A description of the measuring and reporting of the success of the project.
- 11. Whether project will be or could be integrated with larger projects by sharing data or combining initiatives (CAES, CT River Conservancy, etc.). Please explain.

**E. Process and Timing:**

Applications may be submitted any time of year, but applicants must allow no less than three months for the Gateway Commission's review and approval of an application. Timing starts when the Gateway Commission Grants Committee informs the applicant it has accepted the application. Exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances by a unanimous vote of the Grants Committee.

- 1. The lead organization seeking the grant must submit their proposal to the Gateway Commission for review and questions.
- 2. Once an application is submitted, the Gateway Commission will transmit the application to the Grants Committee which will review and vet such grant applications to ensure all criteria have been met and the application is complete.
- 3. Grant requests will be provided to other Gateway Commission committees, as appropriate, for comments and recommendations.
- 4. **Town representatives will receive a review opportunity as a part of the Grants Committee review.**
- 5. Consensus on a recommendation is desirable, but failing that, all views of the Grants Committee members will be shared with the Gateway Commission.
- 6. Once the Grants Committee has reached a conclusion on the approvability of the grant, said committee will forward the grant application to the Gateway Commission with a recommendation.

**Committee Notes: Some additional details to be worked out**

- How much funding do we provide each year?

- What should our individual grant size cap be?
- How do we handle multi-year grant requests especially in terms of accountability and measurable results?
- \*It has been the strong feeling of the grants committee that we should not be funding another organization's staff.
- The committee has felt that we should not become a major funding source for invasive species control projects as these should be funded through granting organizations and agencies whose missions are more directly related to projects like this.
- Any Gateway Commission board member or advisor involved with the grant evaluation or decision-making process that has any conflict of interest will recuse themselves from the process.

Comments, Grants Review Documents

June 21,2022

Comments by R. Debrigard

OVERVIEW

The Gateway Commission entertains two types of Grant Requests:

A. Grants in support of Scenic & Open Space Preservation via the purchase of land or easements.

B. Other Grants that contribute to the mission of the Gateway is preserving the Scenic and Environmental Quality of the river in the Gateway Zone.

A. Open Space Preservation Grants.

These grants, managed by the Gateway Commission's Land Committee, might involve projects initiated by the Commission, but more typically, projects in which the Gateway comes to the assistance of a land trust, municipality, or other entity qualified to own, manage, and protect such land or land rights in perpetuity.

Participation by the Gateway typically depends on the following factors:

1. The land in question must be in the CT River Gateway Zone
2. The Project is evaluated according to the the priorities set out in Article III, Section B of the Gateway Rules of Procedure
3. The project must be actionable. That is, the proponent must have a Plan of Action that provides reasonable assurance that the financial contribution by the Commission will be cost-effective, properly used and that the Project will bring together the needed resources and will yield the intended preservation outcome within a defined period of time.
4. The financial commitment must be affordable, and comply, in terms of size and timing, with how the Commission chooses to allocate its money. Possibilities of future reimbursement substantially enhance the prospects of any grant.
5. The most desirable projects are those for which the contribution by the Gateway facilitates, encourages, or is matched by contributions of others towards the same project and/or others like it.

[NOTE: If you are agreeable with the format, I will run these words by the Land Committee to insure they are on target. Consider them a draft for now. Then continue with the following, which largely parallels your text.]

B. Other Grants.

Grants for other projects not centered on Land acquisition but which advance the Gateway mission of protecting the scenic and environmental quality of the Connecticut River and its tributaries in the Gateway Zone. These are managed by the Grants Committee

Such grants must support actionable and measurable projects that directly support the Commission's mission to maintain the traditional view corridor and character (historic, esthetic and environmental) of areas within the Gateway Conservation Zone.

Applicants should demonstrate due-diligence, collaboration, sustainability and measurable project value. It is recommended that at least 50% of the total project cost be funded by the requesting organization or partner organizations and/or sponsors....

This then is followed by Items B and C as you have them, but leaving out item B1.

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 If you make the above changes, (and take out the comments at the end), the result is a document that the Director (Torrance or his successor) can use in understanding and explaining to others how the Commission responds to anyone seeking financial assistance from the Commission. Having such a document will become more important now, as we transition now to a new director.

Finally, regarding the comment section at the end, I do agree with you that, at budget time, we might want to set "targets" for the money that might be readily available for these purposes. I also believe we should make it known (e.g via the web page) that we are prepared to assist others with projects that contribute to the advancement of Gateway's goals.

However we should make it clear these are one-of-a-kind requests, evaluated on a case-by-case basis, or as a way to advance particular priorities. *We don't want to be in the business of operating a grant-making program that distributes a set amount of money per year, like the Rockfall Corporation in Middletown does.*

Therefore, the above-mention targets should be just a guide to the committees as to the money that can be dispensed. If the target is exceeded in a given year, this will have to be compensated the following year. Conversely, if not all money not spent, this becomes a factor to be considered when a target is set for the following year. The guide also helps in structuring multi-year grants, because it gives some idea of

how the multi-year commitment is likely to constrict the allotment available in future years.