

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 23, 2021

### Present/Absent:

<b>Chester:</b>	<i>Tom Brelsford , Jenny Kitsen</i>
<b>Deep River:</b>	<b>Jerry Roberts, (vacancy)</b>
<b>East Haddam:</b>	<i>Crary Brownell, (vacancy)</i>
<b>Essex:</b>	<b>Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov</b>
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden</i>
<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>	<i>David Blatt</i>
<b>Staff:</b>	<b>J H Torrance Downes</b>
<b>Guests:</b>	Katie Peranowski, DEEP

### Call to Order

This meeting was called to order on the virtual meeting platform Zoom at 7:05pm.

### Approval of Minutes

Woody offered corrections for the discussion on Gateway standards regarding cupolas regarding whether the 10% area limit was a “minimum” or “maximum” standard. The word “minimum” is to be deleted. Revised language was requested in the paragraph describing the preliminary review of improvements at 201 North Cove Road in Old Saybrook. The draft language didn’t express the level of concern expressed by some members when it came to the proposal of a two-story detached garage that would be totally located within the 100 foot structure and riparian buffer setbacks. Finally, in Chairman’s report, Thompson asked the minutes to reflect that her historical society commitment occurred *in* the North Cove area where she was able to see the property in question. Debrigard moved to approve the 8/26/21 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Roberts. With the corrections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Introduction of New Member Diane Stober of Old Saybrook. Chairman Thompson introduced Diane Stober to members.

Regulation Proposals, Town of East Haddam concerning Agriculture, Seasonal Use Conversions, Building Structures, Height and Occupancy, Home Occupations, and Drive-Through Service for Food Establishments, Pharmacies and Banks. Members reviews all five proposals, providing comments after each regulation review. Following the review and a determination that the regulations had little bearing on Gateway interests, a motion was made by Debrigard to approve the five proposals consistent with Section 25-102g CGS. The motion was seconded by Woody. Debrigard asked that the letter reporting on the approval include a comment regarding Gateway’s understanding is that the use of the term “reasonable height” in the Building Structures, Height and Occupancy regulation refers to rooftop structures (cupolas) and not the structure roof peak elevation itself. Following this discussion, members approved the motion unanimously.

Regulation Proposal, Town of Old Saybrook regarding Cannabis Establishment Moratorium. A motion to approve a regulation that establishes a moratorium on the establishment of cannabis businesses through the end of May of 2022 was made by Woody. The motion was seconded by Roberts. Upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously as the regulation has no impact on Gateway interests.

Regulation Proposal, Town of Old Lyme regarding the Prohibition of Cannabis Establishments. A motion to

approve a regulation that prohibits the sale of cannabis in town was made by Woody. The motion was seconded by Roberts. Upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously as the regulation has no impact on Gateway interests.

Regulation Proposal, Town of Old Lyme. Regulations concerning setbacks for mechanical equipment, issuance of building permits and offsite construction storage and staging. After determining that the proposed regulations have little if any impact on Gateway interests in the Conservation Zone, a motion was made by Woody, which was seconded by Roberts, to approve the proposals pursuant to Section 25-102g CGS. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### Correspondence/Staff Report

Downes went through items listed in the Monthly Staff Report, including an update on the violations at 100-1 Johshuatown Road on Hamburg Cove in Lyme, a report on a riverfront residential dwelling proposal that was the subject of the last Gateway appeal of a municipal decision (2007, the property formerly known as the “Barnick” property), the comments being prepared by Gateway member Preston to address the draft NERR Environmental Impact Statement and the Draft NERR Management Report (comments due by October 18, 2021), the CRC “Source to Sea Cleanup” conducted by the CT River Conservancy (Gateway donated \$2,500 to the effort), and a report on the CRC’s “Samplepalooza” river sampling effort (Semenov collected the lower river sample in Essex for the second year running).

Comments on the NERR (National Estuarine Research Reserve system) report were offered by Debrigard, who said the submitted comments should make reference to the northern extent of the NERR in the Connecticut River, stating that comments should suggest that the boundary be moved north to include more of the river valley. Downes indicated he would pass that comment on to Preston for consideration.

An inquiry was raised with respect to concerns expressed at the August meeting regarding tree removal in Haddam Neck. A discussion ensued pointing to the desire of members to find a way to develop standards that will exert more control over hillside tree cutting. Mention was made of the use of drones and the fact that former member Sampson started to look into the effort. Given the licensing requirements, Downes commented that the best path may be to hire a professional drone pilot to photo/video the river valley for use on the new website, as pointed out by Gleeson.

The Monthly Report is appended to these minutes.

#### Chairman’s Report.

Thompson re-introduced new Old Saybrook alternate Diane Stober and noted the recent appointment of Judy Preston as the first of two southern “regional” members to the Commission, and updated members on the vacancies that currently exist. Reference was made to an upcoming meeting of the Lower CT River Land Trust (a 501(c)(3) organization (formerly controlled by the Gateway Commission before bylaws were amended to allow RiverCOG to take over the 501(c)(3) – with Gateway representation on the new trust) and the Land Trust Exchange on September 29, 2021 at 7p. Woody provided a brief history of the organizations. Thompson mentioned that she spoke to Brownell about leading a “Zoning 101” workshop for new members.

#### Finance Committee.

In Matthews absence, Downes presented the Treasurers Report spreadsheet and presented two bills for payment. The bills were (1) to RiverCOG for staffing in the amount of \$4,055.66, and (2) to W-Design/Dorene Warner in the amount of \$4,560.00. The W-Design invoice was submitted for website work performed

between July 7, 2021 and August 17, 2021. Debrigard asked that future invoice submissions be accompanied by an overview of how the payments are tracking with the proposed budget to know if work and payments are on-target. Upon a motion by Woody to approve, which was seconded by Gleeson, members unanimously voted to approve payment of the submitted bills.

#### Communications and Public Outreach Committee

Futoma updated members on the status of work being conducted by the Committee, commenting that content is being submitted for review of the committee as well as a wealth of photos, now including numerous aerial photographs of the river valley submitted by Roberts (the photos are to be credited to Tom Walsh Shoreline Aerial). Also noted was the recent receipt of the Engagement and Strategy document prepared by Community Consultants, a document that will guide Gateway communication efforts into the future. Committee members will review and discuss with the consultants on September 30, 2021.

Downes updated the members on the RiverCOG mapping project, indicating that the initial parcel map with the Conservation Zone boundary is close to being finished. RiverCOG's Kevin Armstrong will coordinate with Gleeson and Dorene Warner to have the map incorporated into the new website. Further, Armstrong reported that additional layers (public access points and vista-viewing locations) should be relatively simple and quick to carry out. Debrigard commented that he'd like to see topographic information incorporated into the available layers.

Discussion of the October 7, 2021 boat trip took place following the map discussion. The current list of confirmed attendees was presented for member consideration. Webb requested that, next year, invitation opportunities be opened to members first. Roberts suggested that, for drinking cups, recyclable paper cups be used rather than throw-away plastic.

#### Land Committee

At 8:32pm and upon a motion and second by Woody and Roberts, the Commission entered Executive Session. The meeting recording was paused. At 8:46pm, upon a motion by Woody, the Commission existed the Executive Session. The discussion, concerning potential land acquisition in the Conservation Zone, included no actions to be taken or motions.

#### Grants Committee

Roberts indicated that no further information has come in from Alisha Milardo of the CT Audubon regarding their grant request. Further, with the resignation of former member Ide, the Grants Committee is in the reorganization process.

Old Business. None.

New Business. None

#### Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:52pm by Bement, which was seconded by Woody. The motion was unanimously approved.

