

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

October 27, 2022

Present/Absent:

Chester:	Tom Brelsford, Jenny Kitsen
Deep River:	Jerry Roberts, Kathy David
East Haddam:	<i>Crary Brownell, Debbie Langdon</i>
Essex:	Claire Mathews, Misha Semenov
<i>Fenwick:</i>	<i>Newton Brainerd, Borough Warden</i>
Haddam:	Susan Bement, Mike Farina
Lyme:	J. Melvin Woody, Wendy Hill
Old Lyme:	Suzanne Thompson, Greg Futoma
Old Saybrook:	Bill Webb, Diane Stober
Regional Reps:	Raul Debrigard (N), Judy Preston (S), (vacancy[N], vacancy [S])
DEEP:	Katie Perzanowski
Staff:	J H Torrance Downes
Guests:	Denise Von Dassel, Nick Foster

Call to Order

The Annual Meeting of the Gateway Commission was called to order by Chairman Thompson on the virtual meeting platform Zoom at 7:02pm. Chairman Thompson introduced new members Kathy David (Deep River) and Debbie Langdon (East Haddam), who each discussed their backgrounds.

Election of Officers

Upon a motion by Futoma, which was seconded by Bement, the existing slate of officers was nominated to fill the respective conditions for the two-year period between October, 2022 and October, 2024. The officers nominated are Suzanne Thompson, Chairman; Melvin Woody, Vice Chairman; Claire Matthews, Treasurer; and William Webb, Secretary. The motion and second were unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

Thompson acknowledged the work of members, thanking them for their efforts on the commission and the various committees through the past year. Written and verbal reports of the committee chairs were presented.

Communications and Outreach.

Futoma summarized the status of the marketing project and explained that the fees of Judy Anderson of Community Consultants and Dorene Warner of W-Design will be well under what was budgeted for the overall project. The consultants asked that the contract period be extended to the end of May, 2023, which, by consensus, the Commission approved.

Finance Committee

Matthews summarized the written report for the Finance Committee, highlighting the recent activities in the financial markets and how those activities have impacted Gateway's financial portfolio.

Land Committee

Woody briefed members on pertinent issues concerning the actions and discussions of the committee, including that a Zoning Permit has been issued to the Newport Academy to conduct activities at the Mount Saint John facility in Deep River.

Verbal reports of the Rules Committee and the Grants Committee were provided. Staff was asked to forward the written reports to members. Debrigard requested that the committee assignment document be sent as

well.

Thompson informed the committee of the upcoming departure of Ben Lovejoy, who will be taking a job with the South Central Council of Governments on or around December 1, 2022.

Webb reminds members that each committee should have designated chairs, vice chairs and secretaries as members will likely be taking a more active role in those committees.

Upon a motion by Woody, which was seconded by Bement, the 2023 Schedule of Meetings was approved. The Schedule of Meetings is attached to these minutes.

Upon a motion by Bement, which was seconded by Woody, the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm.

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

Gateway Meeting Schedule for 2023

January 26, 2023

February 23, 2023

March 23, 2023

April 27, 2023

May 25, 2023

June 22, 2023

July 27, 2023

August 24, 2023

September 28, 2023

October 26, 2023

(Regular and Annual Meetings)

December 7, 2023

Finance Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021/2022

I'm happy to report that Dianne Stober, recently appointed alternate commissioner from Old Saybrook, agreed to join the Finance Committee. She has a strong background in finance and has already added value to the team.

The finance committee monitored expenses, reviewed our books and accounts and reported monthly on the same to the full commission.

They met quarterly to review, discuss and make changes to the commission's portfolio with our investment advisors. The portfolio is conservatively balanced and performing as expected during a serious market downturn

They solicited budget recommendations for the 22/23 fiscal year in May of 2022, prepared a budget and submitted it to the committee for approval at its July meeting.

Documents related to commission expenses, investment portfolio and budget are held by the Treasurer and available for review by request.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire K. Matthews
Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair

Communications Committee
Report for Connecticut River Gateway Commission Annual Meeting
October 27, 2022

A continuation of the Commission's comprehensive marketing program to increase awareness of the agency mission and to inspire protection of the estuary occupied considerable committee time during the fiscal year.

The new Connecticut Gateway Commission website – now containing over 60 discrete pages in its draft form – has required a great deal of volunteer time. A relatively small amount of content remains before a public launch. The “work group” process has evolved into ad hoc task completion by Commissioners and RiverCOG staff. A searchable Conservation Zone map is done, and a layer showing river access and view points will be added.

The Commission's <http://ctrivergateway.org> domain was renewed. When the draft site goes live, it will be hosted on Flywheel, better suited than currently used HostGator for WordPress generated updates.

The Committee adopted a social media posting policy in January 2022. A new Commission presence on Facebook and Instagram is now active at the URLs shown. The committee chair attended a workshop on social media posting strategy.

<https://www.facebook.com/ctrivergateway>
<https://www.instagram.com/ctrivergateway/>

A new Gateway land conservation brochure is done and will be posted on the Internet for download. Copies may be printed as needed in the future.

Additional work on the marketing program will include updating and expanding the Commission's current PowerPoint presentation.

The Communications Committee recommended that the Commission provide support for various events held by partners during the fiscal year. The Commission voted to financially sponsor the CT Land Conservation Council's (CLCC) 2022 workshops (formerly its conference) held from May 12 through May 19, 2022. Additional supported events include the Lyme Land Conservation Trust's Tour de Lyme and the Connecticut River Conservancy's (CRC) “Source to Sea” clean-up. The Committee will develop a policy to review 2023 sponsorship requests.

The Commission's annual boat trip was held on October 20, 2022. An earlier cruise date was canceled due to inclement weather. Nearly 40 people traveled on the Connecticut River Museum's boat on a crisp autumn afternoon. Participants included town CEOs from Chester, East Haddam, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook, various town planning and zoning officials, and representatives from CLCC, The Nature Conservancy, CRC, the CT Forest & Park Association, NERR and land trusts.

Gateway Commission
Rules Committee Yearly Written Statement
11/4/2022

2022/2021 was a busy year for the Rules Committee.

Our major focus was to revisit the Gateway Standards, accepting language changes and clarifications recommended by Mark Branse of Halloran and Sage - no changes in substance - and addressing light pollution, and to arrange meetings with all member towns to introduce the new language and to get feedback. As part of the exercise, Torrance Downs provided draft implementation of the changes into each member town's zoning regulations, which provided a first step for town language that reflects the Standards, should they choose to work with it. The next step, after we hear from all the towns, will be to hold another public meeting.

Another focus this year was to work towards a multiyear budget request to cover Rules committee recommended projects. The request, informal, was forwarded to the Finance Committee. More important than the \$s was the discussion of what projects were important to the Rules committee in it's support of the Commission goals and mandate.

This year the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission reduced density requirements below the Gateway minimum standards in parts of Old Saybrook within the conservation zone where the Gateway Commission typically does find that the requested density variance does not affect the Gateway Commission mission but the ZBA afterwards may struggle to establish hardship. Other towns have requested similar flexibility. The rules committee this year will work with the member towns to develop new language for the Standards that accommodate these needs for flexibility while maintaining the Gateway mission. Old Saybrook will update its zoning rules to comply with the new language.