

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

Rules of Procedure Committee Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2023, 6pm

Attendance

Bill Webb (Chairman), Raul Debrigard, Claire Matthews, Misha Semenov, Jenny Kitsen, Jerry Roberts, Suzanne Thompson, Sam Gold, Matthew Willis of Halloran & Sage.

Call to Order

This meeting was convened using the Zoom online platform at 6:02pm. The agenda was sent by email to the clerks of all 8 member towns with information directing interested members of the public to join the meeting online.

The meeting was called to discuss: Gateway Standards next steps.

The discussion focused on how to accommodate article 58.8 of the Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations, which relaxes the Gateway coverage standard in properties meeting specific criteria, and requests for similar flexibility by member towns Deep River and East Haddam.

Matt Willis of Halloran & Sage called the committee's attention to proposed CT Senate Bill 915, which might relax the standards for determining hardship.

The committee discussed a request to RiverCOG to develop a map using topography and geography to determine areas where relaxation of height standards might not affect the Commission statutory mandate. There was consensus that other standards such as lighting and permeable coverage might still be required to protect the Commission statutory mandate, and that the view from the river was not the only consideration.

Other committee comments included:

- Support for more residential density along the river that wouldn't run counter to the Commission statutory mandate
- Reluctance to reduce the role of the Commission in commenting on specific requests by property owners and changes in zoning regulations
- A suggestion to revisit Commission guiding principles to reflect changing conditions while still protecting the Commission's statutory mandate.

The committee requested Matt Willis to outline new standards draft language that would specifically accommodate Old Saybrook's article 58.8 and the town of Deep River's request for flexibility with respect to the Gateway Standards as described in the discussion. Chairman Webb proposed a follow-up Rules Commission meeting with the Chair of the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission, and the consensus of the committee was to support.

Jerry Roberts then restated his request that the Rules Committee consider in a separate meeting how the Commission might better prevent the trend towards larger houses along the

river that appear to not meeting Gateway Commission Standards Section J4 'Review Criteria for Applications for Construction in the Gateway Conservation Zone'. Sam Gold, Executive Director of RiverCOG, shared that his staff, in response to prior discussion on this topic, are developing historical data on house size, to support potential next steps for the Commission.

Upon a motion by Webb, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Webb
Chair, Rules Committee