

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION
Communications and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2021

Attendance: Greg Futoma, Judy Anderson, Dorene Warner, Tom Gezo, Wendy Hill, Suzanne Thompson, Jerry Roberts, Marilyn Gleeson (arr. 11:22am), J H Torrance Downes

Call to Order

This meeting was convened using the Zoom online platform. The agenda was formally posted in all eight Gateway member towns, with information directing interested members of the public to join the meeting online. Chairman Futoma called the meeting to order at 11:03am.

Futoma provided an update on the communications project efforts, the Marketing/Strategy document (which is the blueprint for the overall project and future communications and outreach efforts) and other related issues. Anderson spoke about the document noting that Warner contributed visuals and reported that she had a virtual meeting with Judy Preston and Downes with Preston providing input. Anderson then noted that Downes and Preston will be sitting with Woody to record his thoughts on Gateway history.

A brief discussion on the terminology that will be used for the Conservation Zone occurred with Woody noting that the word "Zone" has been used ambiguously. Questions requesting clarification on just what the "Zone" entails were asked.

Work on the website to date has concentrated on photos and written draft content primarily written by Downes. Those who have volunteered to edit that draft content, however, haven't been able to move forward with that work for various reasons.

Futoma summarized work on the website noting that the committee gave the "go-ahead" to Warner to build out "wireframes" to start building in content. Based upon some comments, Warner went through the website (which is not "live" at this point) with those attending the virtual meeting.

Gezo presented an update on the committees thoughts on social media posting and discussed a draft social media strategy document that outlines proposed posting "rules" to be followed by staff, who is presumed to be the leading posting agent. The document outlines a "green light", "yellow light", "red light" process where posting in the green category requires no committee review, yellow light where committee review is required, and red light where posting on sensitive subjects should not occur. The draft document will be distributed for committee consideration. Gezo also spoke of the need to establish a posting content library to support an aggressive posting schedule (potentially three posts a week). The library will allow staff to post pre-approved content. Gezo spoke of posting suggestions including ecological content on one day followed by public access content another day and development-related posts on a third day.

Warner summarized how the social media accounts are integrated and shared with other organizations and reported that she and Downes spend time on 11/2/21 on straightening out conflicting registration information on Facebook and Instagram. Downes is searching for the owner of ctrivergateway@gmail.com, the email address that would be the desired one to use. It was registered by some unknown person. An email was sent to the address with a request to contact Downes. Warner briefly explained technical issues concerning the use of videos on social media and on website (videos should be run through YouTube and not embedded in the website so as not to overtax website resources).

Futoma brought up the need for additional publications/display materials. Thompson references the recent brochure developed by Downes (with older logo), highlighting this brochure as one that can be used first. Downes indicates that he has an electronic copy of the brochure. Anderson reminds that several brochures can be used in different venues.

Woody reminds that the important “audience” are the voters who can vote to have their towns pull out of Gateway, that they think Gateway is a bureaucratic imposition rather than the group who’s job it is to protect the river view. Gleeson opines that any materials should be reviewed by those outside of the conservation community to ascertain if the materials are clear to everyone, not just “constituents”.

“Insider terms” should be avoided. “Jargon”. Avoid academic word “dumps”. Language should point out why the information matters to the audience. In essence, less “yay” Commission and more “yay” the Conservation Zone and its resources. Messaging on equity and diversity needs to be kept at the forefront of all development materials.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:36pm by Woody, which was seconded by Hill.