

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

Rules of Procedure Committee Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022

Attendance: Bill Webb (Chairman), Raul Debrigard, Jenny Kitsen, Misha Semenov, Suzanne Thompson, J H Torrance Downes

Call to Order

This meeting was convened using the Zoom online platform at 5:30pm. The agenda was formally posted in all eight Gateway member towns and on the CT River Gateway Commission website with information directing interested members of the public to join the meeting online.

The meeting was called to discuss Gateway standards concerning lighting and light pollution, and how to move the standards adoption process forward so that member towns can adopt the new standards.

Debrigard discussed his thoughts on how to proceed including his presentation of a draft cover letter that could be utilized to send Gateway standards to each local commission. Members recognized that the new language for managing “light pollution” has been “approved” by consensus of the members of Gateway (and of Attorney Mark Branse) but they will still need to be officially adopted through a Gateway public hearing process. A question raised was, should the new lighting language be adopted by Gateway by public hearing *prior* to presentation to the towns, or after presentation so that towns would be able to provide input.

Committee members recognized that the best path would be to present the new lighting standards to the member towns *prior* to holding the required Gateway public hearing rather than holding the adoption hearing first, perhaps in April. This path would provide opportunity for each town to comment and not feel like the adoption of this language will occur without town input. Downes provided a single-page sheet with the schedules of each of the eight Planning & Zoning Commissions with contact information for town staff and identifying the chairman of each of the local P&Zs. The list also included the names of the specific town representatives for the Gateway Commission.

Downes presented one example of the seven completed examples that demonstrates how the local regulations have been revised to show additions and deletions to be recommended by Gateway along with a second document that incorporates all of the foregoing changes into a “final” document that is formatting in each town’s regulation format. The intent would be to make the local adoption process as easy and expeditious as possible using the Gateway-created “final” document.

As for the referenced cover letter, when finalized, it would be sent to the chair of each of the Planning & Zoning Commissions along with the documents that Gateway will be requesting that they review. Gateway representatives from each town, along with Gateway staff, will coordinate a time to meet with each commission to explain the revisions to the satisfaction of each commission after the local commissions have had to time to review. Once support has been gained from each of the eight towns, Gateway would hold a hearing to adopt the new lighting standards and adopt, at the same time, all of the other modifications that resulted from the legal review by Attorney Mark Branse in early 2021. Following Gateway adoption, the new and officially adopted Gateway standards would be sent to each town for adoption into the local zoning regulations.

Downes offered to write a relatively brief paragraph or paragraphs describing the extent of revisions that can be used in the cover letter. The explanation would include bringing local regulations up to date with Branse-reviewed and approved standards that were originally adopted in August of 2018 by the Gateway

Commission. Also included would be an explanation of Gateway's research and efforts to develop language that will allow each local commission to better manage light pollution in the Gateway

Conservation Zone. Finally, the revisions would bring all eight zoning authorities into compliance per Section 25-102g CGS and have all eight sets of Gateway regulations be consistent from town to town.

Regarding the preparation of documents showing the eight different Gateway sections of zoning regulations and the additional documents showing specific additions and deletions and, finally, the final document that incorporates all of the changes, Downes reported that he has completed documents from seven of the eight towns, with the regulations of the Town of Essex left to do.

Webb reported that he was looking to make a presentation of the plans for moving the adoption of standards forward at the March 24, 2022 Gateway meeting, discussing the intent of the cover letter, the potential timing of the local commission meetings and the status and schedule for the Gateway adoption of the lighting standard language. The committee will look to gain the consensus of the Commission as a whole.

Upon a motion by Debrigard, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,
J H Torrance Downes, Staff