



Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Catherine Iino, Chairman
Richard Smith, Vice Chairman
Susan Bransfield, Secretary
Edmund Meehan, Treasurer

Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,
Middletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook,
Middletown Area Transit, Estuary
Transit District, Middletown
Chamber of Commerce

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MPO

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

March 27, 2014

Members:

Chester: Edmund Meehan *
Clinton: Willie Fritz
Cromwell: Jonathan Sistare
Deep River: Richard Smith *
Durham: Laura Francis *
East Haddam: Mark Walter
East Hampton: Michael Maniscalco *
Essex: Norm Needleman *
Haddam: Melissa Schlag *
Killingworth: Cathy Iino *
Lyme: Ralph Eno
Middlefield: Jon Brayshaw *
Middletown: Daniel Drew
Old Lyme: Bonnie Reemsnyder *
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna *
Portland: Susan Bransfield
Westbrook: Noel Bishop *
Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Darlene Briggs *
CT Dept. of Transportation: Edgar Wynkoop *
Estuary Transit District: Joe Comerford *
Middletown Area Transit: Andrew Chiaravallo *

Others Present:

Bob Bell, President Essex Steam Train and River Boat
Pat Bandz, CL&P Community Relations
Stuart Popper, Cromwell Town Planner (9:20)
Bill Warner, Middletown Town Planner
Michiel Wackers, Middletown
Cathy Lezon, CL&P Community Relations
Deanna Rhodes, Portland Town Planner

* Members Present

Staff Present:

Linda Krause
Jean Davies
Judy Snyder
Rob Haramut
Torrance Downes
Dan Bourret
Janice Ehle-Meyer
Jeremy DeCarli
Erin Bodan

MPO AGENDA:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cathy Iino called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. at the offices of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments in Essex.

2. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 26TH MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion of Bonnie Reemsnyder, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2014 meeting.

3. TRANSIT UPDATES, JOE COMERFORD, ANDY CHIARAVALLO

Andy Chiaravallo announced that ridership has increased and that younger people are using the buses for transportation. He said that the fee charged to the towns for this service has not increased. The new storage/maintenance building being constructed for the buses is coming along. Cathy Iino mentioned the proposed Route 81 bus service.

Joe Comerford stated that the 9 Town Transit is trying to secure funding for a bus route along Route 81 from Clinton through Killingworth into Haddam with connecting buses to Middletown. CDOT will make a presentation at a public meeting on April 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the Clinton Town Hall to discuss this proposal further.

4. MOBILITY MANAGER

Jean Davies explained that the mobility manager is a program to connect the regions together by a form of public transportation. Joe Comerford, Rob Haramut and Ms. Davies have met with the New Haven Transit District to try and coordinate efforts with the 9 Town Transit. This program is very successful in other regions in the state.

5. 5310 APPLICATIONS

Robert Haramut explained that the 5310 application program makes it possible for towns and non-profits to be able to purchase lift equipped vehicles. The FTA's 5317 program has changed and is now folded into the 5310 program under the Map 21 legislation. This provides funding for the enhancement ADA service, above and beyond what exists in the region. Previously the funding pot went directly to the state, then the regions prioritized their projects, submitted them to DOT and DOT forwarded the information to the feds. Under the new legislation the money will go to the transportation management areas (TMA). This means that the River COG MPO will have to coordinate with three in our region. The former Midstate towns (Cromwell, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Middlefield Middletown, and Portland) will be in the Hartford TMA, the towns west of the river (Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook) in the New Haven TMA and towns east of the river (Lyme and Old Lyme) will be in the New London TMA.

6. VALLEY RAILROAD PASSENGER- FREIGHT STUDY – SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Jean Davies explained that there is a subcommittee of the Valley Railroad passenger-freight study to review the RFQ, (attachment A) guide the project, select the consultant and to report to the COG. The subcommittee consists of: Carl Fortuna, Old Saybrook; Norm Needleman, Essex; Dick Smith, Deep River; Melissa Schlag, Haddam; Ed Meehan, Chester, and Michiel Wackers is representing Middletown.

Melissa Schlag suggested that the title "Request for Qualifications for Valley Railroad State Park Passenger-Freight Economic and Structural Feasibility Study" be changed to include the word "impact" in the title because the rail would go through major commercial and residential parts of our towns. The changed title would be: "Request for Qualifications for Valley Railroad State Park Passenger-Freight Economic, Structural Feasibility and Impact Study". Ms. Schlag noted that Springfield, MA is referred in the report (page 1, Study Area). She felt this should be changed to Hartford.

Laura Francis asked what the estimated cost will be and where the fund was coming from. Ms. Davies stated that the estimated cost is between \$30k, and \$50k and it will come from the PL funding for Transportation, a carryover from '11 and '12.

Ed Meehan said he has no problem with adding the word "impact" in the title however where will this study lead to. Ms. Davies stated that the timeline for the completion of this study is February 2015. Some of the information from this study will be used in the long range transportation plan due to the state in May 2015.

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Jean Davies stated that the subcommittee will go through a RFQ process and not a bid process. A bid process would not allow for the flexibility to select a consultant that would best fit the wants and needs for this area.

Bill Warner stated that he felt the reference to Springfield should stay because that is what that line is known as, the Springfield/New Haven line. He also asked if the entire MPO board will vote on this study. Ms. Davies said that the subcommittee decided that the entire River COG MPO board would vote on this.

Carl Fortuna stated that he does not have a problem with the addition of the word "impact" in the title, however on page 1 "Study Area" he felt that the word "impact" could be added to "etc".

Dick Smith added that "impact" can be negative or positive.

Ed Meehan felt that the full board should vote on this issue.

Ms. Schlag had other changes, on page 3, bullet point 7 - "Market analysis for potential commercial/industrial uses "by town" in the region requiring freight rail". She felt that "by town" should be added. On page 4, under the section entitled; "Determine any costs of upgrading for freight, passenger, and/or tourism rail use" bullet point 7; "Safety issues and "traffic impact" and financial impact of public and private crossings on VRR right-of-way". She felt that "traffic impact" should be added.

Michael Maniscalco spoke that quality of life is a huge issue that needs to be discussed in the study such as noise, train whistles, timetable, and where and what is next to the tracks.

Bill Warner said that this should be a regional transportation plan and should be reviewed without town boundaries and not a plan for individual towns.

Cathy Iino asked if the members were in agreement that this document should be revised with the changes and resubmitted to the MPO at the next meeting.

Melissa Schlag made a motion to amend page 3, bullet point 7 – by adding the words "by town" to "Market analysis for potential commercial/industrial uses by town in the region requiring freight rail". This motion was withdrawn.

Dick Smith asked for clarification of the RFQ. Ms. Davies explained that once the RFQ is approved by the MPO it will be submitted to CDOT. CDOT will go through the process, review the language, then once approved, will go out to notice. The committee will be interviewing and selecting the consultant for the project.

Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Norm Needleman, it was unanimously voted to add the word "impact" in the title. "Request for Qualifications for Valley Railroad State Park Passenger-Freight Economic and Structural Feasibility Impact Study".

7. LETTER TO GOVERNOR – MPO REDESIGNATION

Jean Davies explained that apparently the letter sent to the Governor several months ago by the COG is being review by the legal department.

Upon motion of Jon Brayshaw, seconded by Bonnie Reemsnyder, it was unanimously voted to send a reminder letter to the Governor.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Jean Davies distributed a draft of the UPWP (attachment B). She explained that usually this is a 2-year report but due to the merger this will be for 1-year to get Midstate and the River Estuary on the same cycle. Ms. Davies and Dorothy Papp, Financial Administrator, met with CDOT to discuss the financial report with them. Ms. Papp will distribute the financial information and Ms. Davies will prepare a final report to be voted on at the April meeting.

Ms. Davies also reminded the members that the municipal grants need to be submitted if the towns are applying.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary