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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,
Middletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

April 28, 2014

Members:

Chester: Sally Murray * (7:22 p.m.)
Clinton: Alan Kravitz
Rodney Kirouac
Cromwell: Alice Kelly *
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton *
Durham: Frank DeFelice *
Joe Pasquale *
East Haddam: Crary Brownell
Lou Salicrup *
East Hampton: Meg Wright *
Essex: Alan Kerr *
Haddam: Stasia DeMichele
Raul deBrigard *
Killingworth: James K. O'Brien *
Stephanie Warren
Lyme: David Tiffany
Phyllis Ross *
Middlefield: Robert Johnson
Middletown: Beth Emery *
Molly Salafia
Old Lyme: Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Kenneth Soudan *
Karen Jo Marcolini *
Portland: Christian Rubenbauer *
Westbrook: Bill Neale *
Marie Farrell *

Staff Present:

Torrance Downes
Judy Snyder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

* Members Present

2. ROLL CALL

The members introduced themselves and attendance was taken.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Alternate Louis Salicrup was seated for East Haddam member Crary Brownell.

4. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

There were no amendments to the agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion of Christian Rubenbauer, seconded by Alice Kelly, it was unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

6. PUBLIC SESSION

Frank DeFelice asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. There was no one at this time.

7. APPROVAL OF MARCH 24th, 2014 MINUTES

Upon motion of Bill Neale, seconded by Alice Kelly, it was unanimously voted to approve the March 24, 2014 minutes.

Meg Wright, Bruce Edgerton and Ken Soudan abstained from voting.

8. REFERRALS

a. Middletown

Torrance Downes presented the Middletown referral on the proposed riverfront development floating zone. Portland is across the river and the only town within 500' of this proposed zone. The area in which the floating zone would be allowable is along River Road from the intersection with Harbor Drive and Silver Street, Walnut Street, Eastern Drive, Silver Street (north side), Omo Street and Maplewood Terrace. This floating zone is required to also have three acres of land. Raul deBrigard stated that the Connecticut River Assembly had standards. Beth Emery stated she would like to review those standards. Phyllis Ross suggested that the three acre minimum for this zone be contiguous. Members felt that a condominium or apartment complex would limit the view for others to enjoy. Some of the negative issues were discussed such as

noise, lighting, public access to the water front, and parking required that could result in pollution. The members suggested Mr. Downes compose a draft letter to be reviewed.

Upon motion of Alice Kelly, seconded by Bill Neale, it was unanimously voted that inter-municipal impacts are possible and a letter stating those concerns will be sent to the Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission.

b. Deep River

Torrance Downes presented the Deep River referral. Essex is the only town within 500' of this proposed regulation change which would allow, if special exception standards were met, gasoline stations, motor vehicle service stations and motor vehicle repair services after receiving a "locational" approval by the town's Zoning Board of Appeals.

Upon motion of Bruce Edgerton, seconded by Phyllis Ross, it was unanimously voted to notify the Deep River Planning and Zoning Commission that the proposal will have a positive inter-municipal impact on the adjacent town of Essex.

9. POCD DISCUSSION WITH FRED CARSTENSEN

Fred Carstensen, Professor of Finance and Economics and Director of the University of Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) spoke to the members about Connecticut and the economy. He has contracted to work with the RiverCOG on a comprehensive economic analysis (non-market assets) for the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. He has already performed some preliminary analysis of the cultural institutions, open space, amenities overlooking the river, the ocean and woodlands.

He stated that a few years ago he had appeared before the Cromwell board in opposition to the proposal to construct a big box store. He explained that usually the big box stores do not increase employment opportunities or help to decrease the taxes in a town. These stores actually drive up the cost for all the taxpayers of a town because the needs for additional services increase. The size of the fire department increases both in personnel, buildings, and equipment, due to the larger, higher height buildings. Additional police are needed due to increases in traffic volumes and in accidents, shoplifting and vandalism to vehicles in the parking lots. Mr. Carstensen suggests a ratio of building heights to street setbacks making a more desirable, attractive community.

Mr. Carstensen said that he has worked with Dan Esty, DEEP to compile an economic impact analysis of state forests, state parks, and fisheries in the State. The results showed the enormous importance of these resources. The state generates about \$38 in economic activity for every \$1 the state invests.

Sally Murray said that the river is the core of the RiverCOG and the river should be utilized for tourism.

Alice Kelly stated that legislation should be changed from a "fees in lieu of open space", to a portion or percentage of those fees being used for benches, maintenance of grounds, marking trails and enhancing the open space property.

Beth Emery said that the Portland Brownstone Exploration Park and the Middlefield Powder Ridge Mountain Park are two unique recreational facilities in our region. She stated that research needs to be done to find out what other places people visit when they are here, where do they eat, do they stay in hotels, motels, camping, visit the beaches, museums? Mr. Carstensen said surveys need to be compiled and a catalog be developed stating all the tourism sites and activities people would be able to do in the region.

Frank DeFelice asked Mr. Carstensen what work he is doing for the RiverCOG. Mr. Carstensen replied that work will be done on a description of the non-market value assets and what creates value for the region.

Fred Carstensen's e-mail address is: Fred.Carstensen@Uconn.edu

10. MISCELLANEOUS

Frank DeFelice asked Judy Snyder to make copies of the document "The Power of Place in Connecticut, Weaving the Threads of Branding, Innovation, History, Art and Tourism Into the Fabric of Plan" by Kip Bergstrom and e-mail to the members. Also to be e-mailed is a letter from the Town of Old Saybrook Planning Commission to the Governor regarding Senate Bill 405.

Frank DeFelice read a letter stating that Frank Hall has resigned from this commission.

Frank DeFelice updated the members on Linda Krause's recent hospitalization.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Christian Rubenbauer, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9.55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary