

MINUTES

**Regional Planning Commission
of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley**
Middlebury Public Library Meeting Room
Rte 188 — East of the Village Green at Crest Road
Middlebury, CT
7:00 P.M. Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Attendance: Maria Hill, Bethlehem; Martin Cobern, Cheshire; Joseph McEvoy, Anthony Malone, Naugatuck; Herman Schuler, Oxford; Nancy van Norden, Harmon Andrews, Southbury; Robert Flanagan, Thomaston; Ruth Mulcahy, Watertown; Pam Casagrande, Wolcott. **Guests:** Ed Jurzinski, Beacon Falls **Staff:** Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director; Virginia Mason, Assistant Director; Sam Gold, Senior Planner; Joseph Perrelli, Regional Planner.

PUBLIC HEARING — REGIONAL PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Introductions

Chairman Linda Fercodini called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. Those present recited the pledge of allegiance. COGCNV Executive Director called the roll and introduced COGCNV staff. The Chair opened the public hearing on the draft *Regional Plan of Conservation and Development*.

2. Regional Plan Presentation

Peter Dorpalen and Virginia Mason gave an overview of the draft *2008 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development*. The draft *Regional Plan* was prepared in-house by COGCNV staff. It is an update of the 1998 plan. Dorpalen reported that the state Office of Policy and Management found the draft *Regional Plan* to not be inconsistent with the *State Plan*. It was explained that this hearing ends the required public review period. He reviewed correspondence received on the draft *Regional Plan*.

Regional Plan Correspondence

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| February 20, 2008 | Letter from Naugatuck Town Planner with comments on the draft regional plan. |
| February 28, 2008 | Letter from Virginia Mason to Naugatuck Town Planner responding to his comments and suggestions on the draft regional plan. |
| February 27, 2008 | Letter from Woodbury Town Planner with comments on the draft regional plan. |
| March 3, 2008 | Letter from Virginia Mason to Woodbury Town Planner responding to his comments and suggestions on the draft regional plan. |
| February 29, 2008 | Letter from OPM formally stating that “OPM hereby determines that the Draft Plan is not inconsistent with the Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010.” |
| March 3, 2008 | Email from OPM’s Policy Development Coordinator with comments and suggestions on the draft regional plan. |

3. Public Discussion and Comments

Bob Flanagan, the RPC member from Thomaston, questioned the new parcel mapping initiative. He asked if all towns would have parcel mapping available. Peter Dorpalen responded that all thirteen CNVR towns will have digital parcel mapping, which will improve the technical capacity of future studies and reports.

Jim Sequin, RPC the member from Waterbury, questioned the water service areas map on page 74 and noted that some areas of proposed service are missing. He suggested that the map be called “existing” sewer and public water service area so it is not interpreted as a recommendation for the placement of future sewer and water service.

Mr. Sequin questioned the proposed open space maps on pages 67 and 72. The maps appear to be too specific in some areas and too broad-brushed in others. The proposed Greenway drawn along the Naugatuck River needs to be clarified in order to reflect its narrow and undefined course through the region. Other open space areas seem to target specific parcels that should be left available for development.

Mr. Sequin questioned the recommendation of “providing for small public greens and pocket parks” in urban areas. He expressed concern over the additional maintenance and public safety that would be required and the lack of funding available to urban municipalities to perform these functions.

Mr. Sequin’s final comment regarded the overall fiscal impact of land use and smart growth recommendations that appear in the regional plan and in other plans. These proposals must be accompanied by a discussion of financing through tax-base sharing or other new revenue sources, since their feasibility is driven by fiscal situations.

Peter Dorpalen noted that correspondence was received from Naugatuck, Woodbury, and OPM. Outgoing correspondence notifying the public of the public hearing was also presented. Virginia Mason responded earlier to comments from Naugatuck. The letter from OPM was to inform the COGCNV that the draft plan was “not inconsistent with” the state’s development policies plan.

The public hearing was then closed.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

1. **Introductions**

Linda Fercodini called the regular meeting to order.. There was no public comment. Pamela Casagrande was introduced as the new RPC representative from Wolcott.

2. **Administrative Items**

- a. *Approval of January 8, 2008 Minutes* — On a motion by Martin Cobern, seconded by Herman Schuler, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the January 8, 2008 meeting.

- b. *Correspondence* — Peter Dorpalen summarized recent COGCNV correspondence :

February 12, 2008	Letter from Wolcott’s Development and Industrial Commission appointing Pamela Casagrande as its representative to the Regional Planning Commission, replacing Sam Zotto.
February 26, 2008	Letter to Pamela Casagrande welcoming her to the Regional Planning Commission as a representative from Wolcott.
February 19, 2008	Memorandum from OPM requesting that each RPO director establish a Regional Roundtable, with OPM guidance on the roundtable.
February 19, 2008	Letter from OPM stating that COGCNV has been awarded a Regional Performance Incentive Grant for the Municipal Training Academy (\$145,878).

3. **Regional Plan of Development and Recommendation to COG**

It was decided to table recommending the draft Regional Plan to COG until the May 2008 meeting in order to allow the comments made during the public hearing to be considered and changes made. On a motion by Richard Minnick, seconded by Martin Cobern, it was unanimously

VOTED: To table the recommendation of the draft Regional Plan of Conservation and Development until the May 2008 Regional Planning Commission meeting.

4. **Transportation Planning**

a. *GIS Parcel Mapping* — Virginia Mason reported that the GIS Parcel Mapping includes mapping for eight towns in the region currently lacking parcel data. The cost ranges from \$7,800 for Bethlehem to \$52,500 for Cheshire. Included in the total price is color aerial photography from 2006 for the entire region.

b. *Bus Route Count Survey* — Sam Gold reported that a RFP was issued for bus rider count software and training. Two consultants responded and both were interviewed. The consultant chosen will create software that will allow for bus passenger counts to be recorded on a hand held computer. The software will also enable ridership analysis and aid in bus service planning. A consultant will be recommended to COG by the RFP selection committee in time for the March COG meeting.

c. *Local Road Accident Reduction Program* — Joe Perrelli reported that ConnDOT had accepted Naugatuck's proposed project to install a new traffic signal downtown under the 2007 LRARP.

d. *Naugatuck River Greenway* — Sam Gold reported that he has applied for a grant from DEP's Greenway License Plate Fund for the design of a logo for the Naugatuck River Greenway and to create small trail marker signs. Gold also spoke about continued assistance to Thomaston with their Greenway efforts and the upcoming Greenway Design Workshop that will be facilitated by John Monroe of the National Parks Service on Saturday, May 17 in Thomaston.

5. **Emergency Planning**

a. *DEMHS Region 5 Emergency Planning* — Virginia Mason reported that Prospect and Waterbury are the only municipalities that have expended their 2006 funding, and there is an extension until the end of 2008. The SWOT Analysis will be completed soon and the draft will be available on the COGCNV website. Voting will occur on May 12, 1:00 p.m., at the Bantam Fire House for the following year spending plan, and a regional exercise is scheduled for November 2008. Joe Perrelli is continuing resource typing for the towns not completed.

b. *Pre-disaster Mitigation* — Virginia Mason reported that Milone and MacBroom is in the middle of holding public information meetings with the 6 towns participating in the 07 grant. The Southbury meeting was particularly well attended. Under the 05 grant, FEMA has approved the Cheshire Plan, and it is scheduled for a public hearing and town council vote in April. Wolcott's and Prospect's plans are at FEMA awaiting comment.

6. **Regional Roundtable** — Peter Dorpalen reported that OPM was looking to create Regional Roundtables in Connecticut's fifteen planning region. Instead of creating another group, it was suggested that the RPC would function as the Regional Roundtable. On a motion by Robert Flanagan, seconded by Herman Schuler, it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint the RPC as the Regional Roundtable for the CNVR.

7. **Points of Interest/Local Activities**

Beacon Falls — Richard Minnick reported that:

- Planning and Zoning regulations are being reviewed for changes.
- The town is on the short-list to receive a grant through the Housatonic Restoration Project.

Southbury — Harmon Andrews reported on:

- The new assessment rates and mill rate.
- The recent Pomperaug River studies, particularly the study that analyzed the impact of prescription drugs that have entered the water supply. Mr. Andrews recommended contacting Dr. Mark Taylor for more information about the studies.

Oxford — Herman Schuler reported that:

- GE is looking at available space in the Woodruff Hill Industrial Park to build a power plant.
- The gas compression plant is on schedule and set to be operational by the end of the year.
- Development at Technology Park will avoid wetlands in an effort to solve issues that have been raised by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- A CEPA study was being performed, but has since been delayed because the town has federal money that requires a NEPA study.
- Age-restricted housing is moving along.
- Hangar project at Oxford Airport is delayed until the state signs a contract to lease the land that the proposed hangar will be built on.

Thomaston — Robert Flanagan reported that:

- The project to replace the Altair Avenue bridge for \$525,000 has been on hold for 7 months. It requires a DEP diversion permit to proceed. This is projected to add another \$75,000 to the overall cost.
- The East Main Street bridge project has been halted because a permit is required to move a telephone poll near the rail museum. The bridge is currently operating as a single-lane road.
- The Board of Selectmen approved \$10.5 million in bonding for improvements to Thomaston Road, \$324,000 for dump trucks, and \$346,000 for a sewer system study.
- The over-55 housing is moving along. They are now working on site development.

Wolcott — Linda Fercodini reported that:

- The over-55 development on Route 69 has started.
- The commercial/industrial complex on Old Grilley Road is still in the planning stage.

Cheshire — Martin Cobern reported that:

- The lifestyle center was approved at the last Planning and Zoning meeting.
- Greenwich Coffee shop was briefly closed down then reopened.

Waterbury — Jim Sequin reported that:

- Issues with proposed power plant in the south end. Neighborhood groups have expressed concerns because of the State Siting Council's power
- Revision of land use regulations is under way. The big picture scoping document would be prepared by the consultant this week.
- Condominium projects have reached out-of-court settlements. Opponents have been upset that there was no public review process, though none is required.
- Legislation is being proposed to remove CT DOC correctional facilities from local land use regulations.
- Leo Frank has begun as the new Executive Director at the WDC.

Prospect — Gil Graveline reported that:

- Planning and Zoning is working on some regulation changes, including areas for 2-acre zones.
- There is a new plaza in the town center with retail and a restaurant.
- There are a few new subdivisions in town as well.

8. Other

- *Municipal Training Academy* — Peter Dorpalen reported the program is moving along. OPM's grant funds participation by twelve towns, enabling all towns to be a part of the program.
- *Annual Report* — Peter Dorpalen reported that the *2006-2007 Annual Report*, prepared by Regional Planner Joe Perrelli, is complete and copies are now available.

9. **Adjournment**

At 8:06 P.M., on a motion by Martin Cobern, seconded by Richard Minnick, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
Joe Perrelli
Regional Planner

for

Robert Flanagan
RPC Secretary