

MINUTES

Regional Planning Commission of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

COGCNV Conference Room
60 North Main Street – 3rd Floor
(Waterbury Savings Bank Building – North Lobby)
Waterbury, CT
7:00 P.M. Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Attendance: Richard Minnick and Peter Betkoski, Beacon Falls; Ellen Samoska, Bethlehem; Martin Cobern, Cheshire; Ken Long and Mary Barton, Middlebury; Joseph McEvoy, Naugatuck; Harold Cosgrove and Herman Schuler, Oxford; Gil Graveline, Prospect; Nancy Clark and Harmon Andrews, Southbury; Geoffrey Green, Waterbury; Ruth Mulcahy and Judy Wick, Watertown; Linda Fercodini, Wolcott. **Staff:** Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director; Virginia Mason, Assistant Director; Samuel Gold, Senior Planner; Joseph Perrelli, Regional Planner. **Guests:** Carmine Trotta, ConnDOT

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions

Chairman Linda Fercodini called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. Those present introduced themselves and recited the pledge of allegiance. Nancy Clark and Geoffrey Green were welcomed to the Regional Planning Commission. There was no public comment.

2. Administrative Items

- a. *Approval of March 3, 2009 Minutes* — On a motion by Martin Cobern, seconded by Harmon Andrews, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the March 3, 2009 meeting.

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

March 17, 2009	Letter to Mayor Jarjura in support of the Waterbury's Naugatuck River Greenway project as a Congressional appropriations request.
March 18, 2009	Letter to Town Manager Charles Frigon stating that Watertown's housing rehabilitation program, to be funded through a Small Cities grant, is in conformance with COGCNV's regional plan of conservation and development.
April 9, 2009	Letter in support of Naugatuck's EPA application for smart growth implementation assistance for the Renaissance Place downtown revitalization project.
April 9, 2009	Letter from ConnDOT to Sam Gold responding to his comments on the I-84/ Route 8 interchange study.
April 20, 2009	Letter to ConnDOT with COGCNV's regional priorities for FTA Section 5310 minibuses grants.
April 29, 2009	Email from Joe Perrelli to Congressman Chris Murphy's office transmitting three transportation reauthorization project applications.

- c. *Appointment of a Nominating Committee* — Chairman Fercodini appointed Richard Minnick, Ken Long, and Linda Fercodini as the Nominating Committee for RPC officers.

3. **I-84/Route 8 Interchange Study — Recommendation of a Preferred Alternative (Alt 7 or 8)**

Peter Dorpalen and Carmine Trotta presented the proposed improvement to the I-84/Route 8 Interchange in Waterbury. ConnDOT has been working with Wilbur Smith Associates since 2004 on developing upgrades to the interchange. Improvements have been refined to three alternatives: near-term improvement alternative #6 (estimated at \$400 - \$600 million) and long-term full-build alternatives #7 & 8 (estimated at \$1.4 - \$2.5 billion each). Either of the long-term alternatives would be combined with the short-term alternative. Mr. Trotta asked the committee to recommend Alternative #8, which relocates Route 8 NB to the east side of the Naugatuck River. Details are available at www.i84wins.com.

Committee members had questions about the modeling process used to identify capacity needs and the impacts of the long-term alternatives. Mr. Trotta responded that the project concepts would evolve over time to address changes in ConnDOT's highway capacity model and to minimize impact to structures and land use. In response to a question about the potential relocation of businesses under Alternative 8, Mr. Trotta referred to the economic impact study performed by the DECD. The study found that while Alternative 8 would impact businesses in the Freight Street corridor, it would free up land on the west bank of the river that is currently occupied by Route 8. Committee members discussed the confusing layout of the ramps in the study area and asked about the operational improvements that would be included in the reconstruction. In response to a question about property acquisition by the City or State, Mr. Trotta responded that the project was still in the conceptual stages and that it was too early to decide on which properties would be needed. Members asked about the surrounding land use, which is mainly industrial with residential areas in the Brooklyn neighborhood. Mr. Trotta mentioned that improvements to local streets in the area would minimize impacts to the neighborhoods. It was noted that Alternative 8 might allow for the transfer of contaminated land (Freight Street) for potentially uncontaminated land (the current Route 8 footprint on the west bank of the river) and that the City would have right of first refusal to the land. On a motion by Mary Barton, seconded by Geoffrey Green, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend a combination of Alternatives 6 & 8 as the preferred alternative for the *I-84/Rte 8 Waterbury Interchange Needs Study*.

4. **Project Updates**

- a. *GIS Parcel Mapping Project* — Virginia Mason reported that the consultant has finished mapping for 7 of the 8 towns, of which 6 have can be accessed online. The towns of Oxford and Naugatuck have agreed to join the parcel mapping project. The parcel layers will be available online via our website until the end of December 2009. There is a link to the project at the bottom of the main page. The consultant is speaking with towns to see if they wish to continue paying for online access after December. Ms. Barton asked if it was possible to see a breakdown of hits to the site by geographic location. Ms. Mason said that she would follow up on that question with the consultant. Ms. Mason mentioned that Cheshire was interested in creating its own password-protected areas to work with the digital parcels internally.
- b. *ARRA Shovel-ready transportation projects* — Joe Perrelli said that he is continuing to work with ConnDOT on project development. A memo was received from ConnDOT's engineering division stating

that a bridge project in Middlebury was approved. COGCNV is working with Congressman Chris Murphy's office on requests for funding appropriations to support projects on major highways in the region.

- c. *Bus Route Ridership Study* — Samuel Gold reported that bus route ridership counts started in early March. Most of the weekday counts are complete with weekend counts expected to be wrapped up in June.
- d. *Naugatuck River Greenway* — Samuel Gold reported on the two ongoing greenway studies. A workshop was held on April 28th to solicit input from the public for Waterbury's routing and feasibility study. COGCNV staff is working on selecting a consultant for its regional routing study, which includes the four other towns along the river in the CNVR. Mr. Gold reported that the committee hopes to have a consultant selected by the end of the week. Staff will then work on negotiating a scope and budget for the project with the goal of starting the study over the summer.
- e. *Emergency Planning* — Virginia Mason reported that in April there was a regional tabletop exercise, "Operation Gridlock," which dealt with a disaster on the I84/Route 8 interchange. The exercise was regionalized by causing long-term traffic impacts to neighboring towns. It was well-attended by CNVR emergency personnel. The Region 5 Steering Committee is working to develop the 2008 budget. The Steering Committee has had to narrow down a long list of potential projects to develop the region's spending plan. The Committee will vote to recommend the spending plan to the CEOs of the 43 towns represented. A diversion plan for I-84, Routes 7 and 8 was recommended as the regional project, which is required for this year's budget.
- f. *HomeCT Program* — Virginia Mason reported that Thomaston received approval for Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) plan earlier in the Spring. Watertown also submitted the necessary paperwork to apply to OPM. Since that time, OPM has ceased reviewing applications due to anticipated funding shortfalls in the program, making the outcome uncertain for Watertown's application. OPM had also indicated that funding for applications that had already been approved may be taken back by the state. Nonetheless, Ms. Mason reported that Thomaston's IHZ committee is moving forward with interviewing consultants to prepare the town's IHZ plan. Interviews will commence on May 15th.

5. Points of Interest/Local Activities

Cheshire — Martin Cobern reported that:

- The Housing Authority just received approval to add 20 affordable housing units in front of Beachport.
- The Lifestyle Center continues to be delayed by the state of the economy.

Naugatuck — Joe McEvoy reported that:

- Bob Mezzo was elected the new mayor of the borough on May 4, meaning a new administration with new initiatives.
- Conroy is still having difficulty in acquiring the General DataComm property, a necessary component of the Renaissance Place Development.

Waterbury — Geoffrey Green and Gil Graveline reported that:

- Revision of land use regulations is proceeding.
- The new Gilmartin School is being built in the south end for K-8.
- Duggan School is being renovated in the Brooklyn neighborhood.
- City Hall renovation project is moving slowly. Discussions will soon begin on renovating the Chase Building across the street.

Watertown — Ruth Mulcahy reported that:

- 62-unit condo project coming up on the P&Z agenda, requesting a partial road abandonment.
- 80-unit single-family residential development coming up on the agenda for preliminary discussion.
- Two car dealerships want to build buildings for automobile repair.
- Third school project coming on, making a total of three schools under construction in town.
- Echo Lake Brownfield, LLC wants to bring in fill to an old landfill site and pipe a stream underneath. They want to apply for a blanket permit from DEP to allow them to bring in clean fill from multiple unknown sites. They have already received approval from Wetlands and an extension of their Army Corps of Engineers' permit. The proposals affect a nearby residential property
- A recreational metal building proposed for Veteran's Park is also on the agenda.
- All proposals are expected to create traffic issues.

Oxford — Harold Cosgrove and Herman Schuler reported that:

- The municipal budget is flat.
- The town received funding through OPM to study potential locations for an IHZ. The study is looking at sites along the Rte 67 Corridor where sewer has been extended.
- Two more lots have moved in the Woodruff Hills Industrial Park.

Middlebury — Ken Long reported that:

- Things have been quiet.
- The Census Bureau has come in and rented space in the old Timex building.
- The State Supreme Court ruled in favor of the town's WPCA in the Forest Walk LLC case, saying that they were within their right to deny access to sewers, since it fit in with their longstanding "sewer avoidance policy."
- The Middlebury water line interconnect is still moving along. It is expected to break ground this month.

Bethlehem — Ellen Samoska reported that:

- The Region 14 budget is up for a vote today. It represents roughly 70% of the town's budget.

Beacon Falls — Richard Minnick reported that:

- The town received two Housatonic Restoration Area grants.
- The town is moving forward in accepting the O&G pond for a future recreation area.
- The Depot Street bridge project has been bid out.

Southbury — Harmon Andrews and Nancy Clark reported that:

- The town will drop its mill rate from 21.1 to 20.9.
- The town is looking to establish a full-time police department by June to replace the resident State Trooper and 23 constables currently in place.
- Southbury Training School has been talking to the town about its sewer issues. The pumps at the facility have been designed to take the effluent from the facility to the Paparazzo sewer plant when the existing sewer plant closes down.
- There is a new proposal for a model plane park on open space that is owned by the town.
- There is an application before the P&Z for the first stacked parking facility at an office building.

Prospect — Gil Graveline reported that:

- A new windmill test site has opened up in the south end of town on Kluge Rd.
- Homes continue to be built at the Toll Bros. development.
- The Scott Road-Austin Road connector is under construction. It will improve access from Rte. 69 to I-84 via Scott Road.

Wolcott — Linda Fercodini reported that:

- There was a public hearing for a proposal to add a propane tank on the Musco Fuel property.
- An application came in to put up a sign for the businesses in an existing industrial park off of Rte. 69.
- Some people have been coming in for small subdivision applications.

6. Other

No other business was reported.

7. Adjournment — On a motion by Mary Barton, seconded by Ruth Mulcahy, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Joseph Perrelli
Regional Planner

for

Bob Flanagan
RPC Secretary