

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 PM Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Attendance: Richard Minnick and Peter Betkoski, Beacon Falls; Ellen Samoska, Bethlehem; Martin Cobern, Cheshire; Ken Long, Middlebury; Harold Cosgrove and Herman Schuler, Oxford; Nancy Clark, Southbury; Robert Flanagan, Thomaston; Ruth Mulcahy, Watertown; Linda Fercodini, Wolcott. **Staff:** Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director; Virginia Mason, Assistant Director; Samuel Gold, Senior Planner; Joseph Perrelli, Regional Planner. **Guests:** Jeff Olson, Alta Planning + Design; Stephen Livingston, ConnDOT.

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions

Chairman Linda Fercodini called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M., and the pledge of allegiance was recited. Those present introduced themselves. There was no public comment.

2. Administrative Items

- a. *Approval of May 5, 2009 Minutes* — On a motion by Richard Minnick, seconded by Ken Long, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the May 5, 2009 meeting.

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

May 13, 2009	Letter to Congressman Chris Murphy in support of Thomaston's application for funding of its portion of the Naugatuck River Greenway
May 19, 2009	Letter of support to the USDA-NRCS for Flanders Nature Center's application for funding for the purchase of the Fleming Preserve to preserve as farmland
May 19, 2009	Letters from ConnDOT notifying Cheshire, Naugatuck Human Resource Development Agency, Oxford, Waterbury Association for Retarded Citizens, Wolcott, and Woodbury that they have been awarded Section 5310 minibus grants (7 out of 40 awarded statewide).
May 27, 2009	Letter of support for Wolcott's Small Cities application for its housing rehabilitation revolving loan fund

May 27, 2009 Letter of support for Bethlehem's Small Cities application for renovations of the North Purchase housing development

May 29, 2009 Email to Jesse Young of Congressman Chris Murphy's office with a proposed Revision in Local Road Project Design Review to be considered in the new National Transportation Bill

June 3, 2009 Email to ConnDOT on its requested TIP action to remove the last phase of the I84 upgrade in eastern Waterbury from the TIP. Mayor Jarjura and COGCNV staff did not concur with the proposed action.

June 27, 2009 Letters to Congressional Delegation with suggestions for the new federal transportation bill to address issues with the SAFETEA-LU act.

July 19, 2009 Email from Bethlehem Assessor Carolyn Nadeau thanking COGCNV for funding the town's GIS parcel mapping and COGCNV staff for helping to implement it. She notes that the response from appraisers, taxpayers, town employees, and out-of-towners has been wonderful.

July 24, 2009 Email from GIS Coordinator Glenda Prentiss to COGCNV members summarizing the final status of the GIS parcel mapping project. Eight of the thirteen towns have their parcel data on the COGCNV GIS parcel mapping website, and three more are anticipated by September.

July 28, 2009 Letter to Woodbury First Selectman from Regional Planner Joe Perrelli on his review of town roads in Woodbury for eligibility for the federal-aid road network.

August 19, 2009 Letter from EPA Region 1 acknowledging the agency's acceptance of all reports required to closeout Waterbury's Platts Mill force main and pump station project that COGCNV has been overseeing.

August 21, 2009 Email from ConnDOT stating that the planned, final phase of the I-84 east of Waterbury project is not included in the new draft Transportation Improvement Program because of fiscal constraints. (Funding is going largely to the Q bridge in New Haven.)

August 27, 2009 Letter to Oxford in support of its Recreational Trails grant application for a trail in the Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary

- August 28, 2009 Letter to ConnDOT concurring with the I-84 West of Waterbury EIS coordination plan
- August 29, 2009 Letter to Waterbury Development Corporation in support of its Recreational Trails grant application for repair of a footbridge across the Naugatuck River
- September 1, 2009 Letter to Thomaston First Selectman supporting Thomaston's Recreational Trails grant application for the Clock Walk.

3. Election of FY2009–10 Officers

Linda Fercodini reported that the recommended slate of officers were Martin Cobern, Chairman; Richard Minnick, Vice-Chairman; and Ken Long, Secretary. There were no nominations from the floor.

On a motion by Robert Flanagan, seconded by Ruth Mulcahy, it was unanimously

VOTED: To elect Martin Cobern, Chairman; Richard Minnick, Vice-Chairman; and Ken Long, Secretary, for fiscal year 2009-2010.

4. Regional Roundtable Outreach and Recommendations

Peter Dorpalen referred to an August 13 memorandum on responses to the public outreach on the Regional Roundtable and an August 20 memorandum on the Regional Roundtable's recommendations. He briefly noted the comments from the outreach and his responses. Mr. Dorpalen requested closure on the Roundtable recommendations, given the limited OPM planning funding.

On a motion by Martin Cobern, seconded by Robert Flanagan, it was unanimously

VOTED: To express support for the Regional Roundtable recommendations as summarized in the August 20, 2009 memorandum.

5. Transportation Planning

- a. *Bus Route Ridership Study* — Samuel Gold reported that bus route ridership counts were collected during the Spring. Initial findings show that ridership has grown significantly from earlier counts. The Wolcott Street bus, which stops at the Naugatuck Valley Shopping Center, receives the most use, averaging 600 riders per day during the week. Ridership on that route is even higher on the weekends. The equipment and software used for the survey provides more data than was available in the past, including running time information for the buses. Staff will be able to make more comprehensive route, schedule, and stop evaluations as well as recommendations for improving the service.

- b. *Naugatuck River Greenway* — Samuel Gold and Jeff Olson discussed the next steps for the Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Plan, starting with a Thursday morning kick-off meeting. Mr. Olson also discussed the Waterbury Greenway Routing project, which is now underway. The second public meeting for that project will be held tomorrow night at Kennedy High School. Mr. Olson encouraged the RPC members and anyone in the region, who is interested in the greenway, to get involved and communicate with the planners during the process.

Mr. Gold also reported that COGCNV will purchase a large fiberglass duck as part of Beacon Falls' "Parade of Ducks" event. The artificial duck will be used to promote the Naugatuck River Greenway project. COGCNV authorized the purchase at its September meeting.

- c. *GIS Parcel Mapping Project* — Virginia Mason reported on the progress of the parcel mapping project, noting that the consultant is still working on Wolcott's parcels. Mrs. Mason gave a presentation of the COG's parcel map website, where the completed parcel maps are available, (www.cogcnvgis.com).
- d. *Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Study* — Joe Perrelli presented the regional Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety study, showing trends and locations where there are high frequencies of reported accidents. Preliminary findings indicate that the largest concentration of accidents occurs in Waterbury's CBD and other community centers. Accidents are more common during the early evening on weekdays in the fall and early winter. The report will detail other trends that are found in pedestrian and bicycle accidents. The document will also include recommendations. It will be shared with public officials, local police, and other interested organizations to raise awareness of the hazards faced by pedestrians and cyclists in the region.
- e. *ARRA Project Update* — Joe Perrelli reported on the ten regional highway and bridge stimulus projects funded under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. All projects have been reviewed by ConnDOT, and the next step is for the towns to submit their initial design plans. The two bridge projects are expected to go out to bid soon.

6. Emergency Planning

Virginia Mason reported that Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) between DEMHS and the Region 5 towns are being collected for the 2008 Spending Plan application process. As of Friday, twelve of the MOAs are still outstanding. Once the MOAs are collected, the funding award will take another month, and then a few more months until they can actually expend the funds. Region 5 recently purchased GPS units for EMS vehicles with the 2007 funding. The devices provide traffic information to reroute around traffic delays. The region also amended its 2007 Spending Plan in June so that CNVR towns can purchase much-needed shelter supplies.

7. HomeCT

Virginia Mason reported that the consultant has been selected for Thomaston's incentive housing grant. The consultant, Concord Square, started with a site visit of the town in July to get a sense of the neighborhoods in the area. Several sites were identified and presented to the Planning Commission in September. The consultant is also gathering local input from the various town committees.

OPM has not decided whether it will fund any additional plans or whether it will begin funding the incentive housing zones in towns that have already completed their plans. They expect to make a decision by October.

8. Points of Interest/Local Activities

Cheshire — Martin Cobern reported that:

- \$ The town is having ongoing problems with the pool. The bubble was taken down for the summer, and it may not be raised again in the fall. The locker rooms in the facility have been closed because of mold problems.
- \$ The developer for the Lifestyle Center recently assured the town that they anticipate starting work in the spring.

Oxford — Herman Schuler and Harold Cosgrove reported that:

- \$ The sewer and water extension on Route 67 is done.
- \$ The town is looking at building and site plan for a medical facility, daycare, and two retail businesses in the area.
- \$ In the industrial area, several new site plans were approved, including a new jewelry company.
- \$ The airport hangar project is moving along. There is a CEPA study being mandated to be completed by the end of December. The town will be providing the fill for the airport hangar.
- \$ "Made in Connecticut" Fair is coming up on October 4 at the Colonial Tavern. The event features CT-made specialty foods, artisan crafts, local artwork, and local farm products.
- \$ The Planning & Zoning Commission voted to cease action on an affordable housing incentive zone study that was already underway.
- \$ The judge will make a final decision in September on a legal matter brought against the town by the lawyer representing the developer of the Garden Homes project. The developer proposed to build 135 manufactured homes in an area zoned "Industrial."

Beacon Falls — Rich Minnick and Peter Betkoski reported that:

- \$ The Chatfield Farms development received an award for "Best 55+ Community in CT."
- \$ There is a new bakery/deli in town.
- \$ Work on the Depot St Bridge project was awarded.
- \$ O&G will give the town a piece of property along the river for canoeing and kayaking. DEP is evaluating the property. It is expected to be turned over to the town by mid-October.

- \$ Activity in the industrial park has been slow. Stone Construction in Southbury has been building some lots there.
- \$ The Duck Race will be held October 4.

Southbury — Nancy Clark reported that:

- \$ Large medical facility has been approved near the corner of Old Waterbury Rd. and Route 6.
- \$ Nardelli's has opened a deli in Southbury.
- \$ An FOI request was submitted regarding the planning commission.

Bethlehem — Ellen Samoska reported that:

- \$ The Bethlehem Fair was a success, providing money for college scholarships.

Watertown — Ruth Mulcahy reported that:

- \$ Echo Lake Brownfield, LLC received P&Z approval to bring in 212,000 yd³ of "clean fill" to an old landfill site.
- \$ A proposal for a medical building, requiring a zone change will come before P&Z next month.
- \$ There is a proposal for a new professional office building in a special district at Bunker Hill Rd. and Straits Tpke.
- \$ One of the schools is almost finished. The other has started. The high school is 3/4 complete. Residents are complaining about the traffic light that was installed as a condition of the approval.
- \$ The 60-unit condominium project has not gone away. The plans will probably be altered, maybe with a reduction of units, and resubmitted.
- \$ The other 80-unit condominium proposal is still before the Wetlands Commission. The application will require a zone change.
- \$ An investor who purchased the Baldwin School building with hopes of subdividing the property and adding 18 condominium units has discovered that the zone does not allow it.

Thomaston — Robert Flanagan reported that:

- \$ The Thomaston Opera House is still having troubles. The town can no longer provide funding to sustain the arts with many other priorities. The Opera House is looking to obtain non-profit status.
- \$ He will be vacating his position on the RPC to go out with the outgoing administration.

Middlebury — Ken Long reported that:

- \$ The Ridgewood development has had no construction in a year. Sales are flat.
- \$ Water line interconnection project will be completed by next week. The lower half of the system should be up and running this week. The pump station has recently been approved and advertised.
- \$ The zoning department is developing a blight ordinance.
- \$ The bids have come in for the Long Meadow Road bridge project. Companies have proposed starting the work in the fall, but the town does not want to have the road closed throughout the winter.

Wolcott — Linda Fercodini reported that:

\$ Some developers have proposed elderly rental properties in town.

\$ The town has a new police chief; former Waterbury Police Chief Neil O’Leary.

\$ She will be also vacating her position on the RPC.

9. Other

- a. *ConnDOT Liaison* – Peter Dorpalen introduced Stephen Livingston from ConnDOT Field Operations, who is COGCNV’s transportation planning liaison. He briefly discussed his role at ConnDOT.
- b. *Referrals* – Dorpalen noted a listing of recent land use referrals received by COGCNV to keep the RPC apprised of referral activity.
- c. *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* – Mr. Dorpalen stated that a new draft Transportation Improvement Program will be sent out shortly for public review and comment. The TIP is the four-year funding schedule for federally-funded highway and transit projects.
- d. *Bulk paper shredding* – The first regional event will be held on September 19 in the morning at Veterans Memorial Park in Watertown.
- e. *Tour de Farms* – Sam Gold stated that the annual bicycle tour of local farms will take place on September 26. The tour will take off from Jones Farm in Shelton with a number of area farms along the route.
- f. *Route 8 Study Public Involvement Meeting* – ConnDOT’s project manager contacted COGCNV staff to request that the public meeting for the Route 8 Study be held during the upcoming RPC meeting. Staff recommended that the consultants choose a more appropriate time and location for the public meeting.

10. Adjournment — On a motion by Robert Flanagan, seconded by Linda Fercodini, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Joe Perrelli
Regional Planner

for

Ken Long
RPC Secretary