



**COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS  
CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY**

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**MINUTES**

**Regional Planning Commission**

**of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley**

COGCV Conference Room

49 Leavenworth Street, Ste. 303

Waterbury, CT

7:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 13, 2013

**Attendance:** Richard Minnick, Beacon Falls; Ken Long, Middlebury; Harold Cosgrove, Oxford; Nancy Clark and Leslie Kane, Southbury; Robert Flanagan, Thomaston; Dennis Casey and Jim Sequin, Waterbury; Cathe Sherman, Wolcott; Joel Serota, Woodbury. **Staff:** Samuel Gold, Acting Executive Director; Pat Gallagher, Regional Planner; Aaron Budris, Regional Planner – GIS Specialist.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions**

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

**2. Administrative Items**

- a. *Approval of September 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes* — On a motion by Rich Minnick, seconded by Joel Serota it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the September 10, 2013 RPC meeting.

- b. *Recognition of Outgoing RPC Members* – Ken Long and Samuel Gold recognized Rich Minnick and Martin Cobern for their service to the RPC. Mr. Minnick is retiring from the RPC after nine years of service, including the last three as chairman. Martin Cobern is also retiring after serving on the RPC for over ten years. Mr. Minnick thanked his fellow RPC members and COGCV staff for all the work they have done for Beacon Falls.

- c. *Correspondence* — Samuel Gold summarized recent correspondence:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| October 7, 2013  | Letter to Naugatuck's Town Planner Keith Rosenfeld with review comments on Naugatuck's draft Plan of Conservation and Development.   |
| October 25, 2013 | Letter from Samuel Gold to Senator Jay Rockefeller, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Surface Transportation Committee, describing the importance of the aging passenger rail network in Connecticut and asking for support for its improvement. |
| October 31, 2013 | Submitted Planning Study Screening Form to CTDOT for the Waterbury Regional Bus Operations and Needs Study.  |

**3. Director's Report**

Samuel Gold presented the Director's Report, which summarized COGCV staff activities in October and November 2013.

#### *U.S. House Bill 612*

Mr. Gold received a phone call from U.S. Congresswoman Esty's office about U.S. House Bill 612. Congresswoman Esty is not supporting bills that would allow longer and heavier trucks on the federal aid highway system and the bill did not make it out of the House Transportation Committee.

#### *Bus Rider Count*

COGCNV is conducting a comprehensive bus rider count of the Waterbury regional bus system. The ridership data is an important component of the upcoming Waterbury Regional Bus Operations and Needs Study. The project is ahead of schedule and will be completed by the end of November.

#### *Regional Buildout Report*

The Regional Buildout Report has been completed and is available on the COGCNV website. Ken Long asked if the report has been sent to municipal planning and zoning offices. Aaron Budris confirmed that each municipality received a buildout report for their town.

#### *Planners Lunch: Open Source Technology for Municipalities*

COGCNV hosted a planners' lunch on October 24, 2013 that introduced three free software programs that municipalities may find useful. COGCNV staff gave introductions to QGIS, Libre Office, and Sketchup.

#### *Naugatuck River Greenway*

The Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee, which is hosted by COGCNV, was awarded the silver medal award by the Valley Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the Valley Community Foundation donated \$500 towards the greenway effort.

#### **4. RPO Consolidation Update**

Samuel Gold explained that the state legislature passed a statute in June 2013 that will reduce the number of regional planning organizations in the state. Two or more planning regions can either consolidate voluntarily by January 1, 2014, or the State Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will redraw regional boundaries for them. Regions that merge voluntarily will to be 'held harmless' from further redesignation and receive an additional \$125,000 for each former region. Nancy Clark asked how long the additional funding will be in place. Mr. Gold responded that the additional funding is uncertain after next fiscal year. This fiscal year, COGCNV will receive an additional \$125,000 from OPM. After January 1, 2014, towns bordering other regions may petition OPM to join a neighboring region. The new RPO boundaries will be effective for at least 20 years and may be the building blocks for service delivery areas such as social services, senior services, employment, and transportation.

Samuel Gold stated that on October 1, 2013 OPM released a draft report on regional consolidation which presented two scenarios, with the only difference being where to put the Greater Bridgeport region. The Stamford and Danbury regions have already agreed to merge and are held harmless from being in a region with Bridgeport. Mr. Gold explained that unless COGCNV voluntarily merges with one of its neighboring regions, the state could create a new region comprised of COGCNV, Greater Bridgeport, and Valley COG. COGCNV can pursue voluntarily consolidations with Valley region and/or the Central Connecticut region. Merging with either agency would allow COGCNV to be held harmless from further redesignation. Gold expressed some concerns over a Waterbury-Bridgeport Region, which would combine towns from Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield Counties. It would mix the issues of I-84 versus I-95, and the Waterbury Branch versus the New Haven Line. Gold stated that the Central Naugatuck Valley shares many service delivery regions with the Valley

COG municipalities, but not with the Greater Bridgeport Region.

Samuel Gold reported that on October 11, 2013, COGCVN passed a resolution to voluntarily merge with Valley COG. Valley COG will be meeting on November 20, 2014 to consider whether they want to accept COGCVN's offer. Letters were sent to the chief elected officials (CEOs) of Valley COG's four towns and Valley COG's executive director. COGCVN received a letter of support from the Mayor of Derby but no responses from the other three CEOs. On October 9, 2013, Valley COG passed a resolution supporting a voluntary merger with both COGCVN and Greater Bridgeport. Valley COG currently shares a metropolitan planning organization with the Greater Bridgeport Region.

Mr. Gold stated that on November 8, 2013 the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) passed a resolution to voluntarily consolidate with COGCVN. Rich Minnick explained that CCRPA operates differently than a COG and has a board of representatives rather than CEOs. Samuel Gold explained that CCRPA is a regional planning agency (RPA) whose board is comprised of appointees. CEOs and planning and zoning commissions each get one appointee to the RPA board and larger municipalities get an extra representative. CEOs may appoint themselves to sit on the RPA board. Gold said that CEOs will have to serve on the board in the future since all RPOs will become COGs.

Gold explained that COGCVN has three options for consolidation. The first is to wait for Valley COG to approve a resolution to merge with COGCVN. The second is to accept CCRPA's merger offer. Merging with CCRPA would not preclude a merger with Valley COG. The third option is to do nothing and allow OPM to redraw the boundaries. COGCVN's board passed a resolution to hold a special meeting on November 22, 2013 to determine a course of action for reorganization.

Samuel Gold said that there will be changes for the Regional Planning Commission beginning January 1, 2015. According to the new state statutes, RPC members can only be appointed by municipal planning and zoning boards. Currently, CEOs also appoint members to the RPC.

Ken Long asked Samuel Gold if the legislation will impact COGCVN's MPO functions. Gold explained that the majority of COGCVN's funding comes through its MPO functions. Connecticut has eight MPOs, but the state wants to reduce this number. In July 2014, Connecticut DOT will release a study which will make recommendations for MPO consolidation. Gold said that MPO consolidation is something that hasn't happened before. When CT River Estuary RPA and Midstate RPA merged into a single agency, they maintained their distinct MPO boards. The RPO consolidation legislation does not change the MPO boundaries. Gold went on to explain that MPOs are set up by federal statute and that the state cannot redesignate MPO boundaries without the approval of municipalities representing 75 percent of a region's population and approval from the region's largest municipality.

## **5. Regional Profile and Demographic/Economic Trends**

Pat Gallagher summarized some recent trends from the Profile of the CNVR: 2013. A new, detailed economic document is also being prepared which will examine each sector of the region's economy.

## **6. Points of Interest / Local Activities**

*Beacon Falls –Rich Minnick reported that*

- He will be retiring from both the RPC and the Beacon Falls Inland Wetlands Commission.
- The town is waiting for new appointments to its planning and zoning commissions and the

appointment of a new RPC representative.

- On November 13, 2013 the gate will be coming down on Cold Spring Road giving residents access to Naugatuck State Forest.

*Southbury – Leslie Kane and Nancy Clark reported that*

- Southbury had an energy fair to celebrate the new solar panels on the library.
- The Southbury Training School Governor’s Task Force will be conducting a public meeting in early December.
- Leslie Kane thanked Samuel Gold for attending the Connecticut Urban Forest Council Conference and presenting on the Naugatuck River Greenway.
- There are several new subdivisions.
- A 5,000 square foot addition to a medical building on Main Street South has been constructed.
- The town received an application for a new movie theater.
- The streetscape committee is having discussions on maintenance and improvement of town streets.
- Southbury has eight properties in the airport enterprise zone.

*Waterbury – Dennis Casey and Jim Sequin reported that*

- The city administration has suggested a zoning regulation that limits the placement of halfway houses to IG zones.
- An application for a residential campus near the Cheshire town line is under review. There is an upcoming public meeting.
- Two applicants are looking to locate a medical marijuana production facility and dispensary in Waterbury. Marijuana production and dispensing is not on the city’s list of permitted uses in its zoning code. The applicants have filed an appeal to the ZBA.

*Woodbury – Joel Serota reported that*

- Plans are moving forward to purchase the 221 acre reservoir property. Aquarion, the current owner, has expressed interest in selling to the town. The town is currently applying for grants to fund the purchase.
- The Trust for Public Land is interested in negotiating the purchase of the reservoir property.
- DEEP Commissioner Dan Esty and U.S. Representative Elizabeth Esty walked the reservoir property with local officials on Saturday November 9, 2013.

*Wolcott – Cathe Sherman reported that*

- Local road projects are finishing up.
- A new dog park has been passed by planning and zoning. Groundbreaking is expected in the spring of 2014.
- Wolcott High School completed upgrades to its water system.
- A walking trail around the reservoir is nearing completion.
- A developer is trying to acquire a property near the Waterbury line for an 8-30G development.
- The town is looking to update its regulations to proactively handle 8-30G applications.

*Oxford – Harold Cosgrove reported that*

- An old quarry property on Route 67 will be redeveloped into a food store.

- The Glendale development has been rejected since it did not meet the minimum 8-30G requirements for affordable units. In addition they wanted to put homes in the flight path of Oxford Airport.
- A developer wants to put in 140 modular homes near the airport.

*Thomaston – Bob Flanagan reported that*

- First Selectman Ed Mone was reelected.
- The town is completing the final stage of a 2.9 million dollar emergency communications system.
- The police department purchased three new vehicles.
- Downtown parking continues to be a concern. The town will be exploring opportunities to increase parking downtown.
- Bob Flanagan thanked COGCNV for its role in establishing Sunday bus service in Waterbury.

*Middlebury – Ken Long reported that*

- The utility company is putting up a monopole electric system extending from the Stevenson Dam in Oxford to Watertown.
- Half of the homes in the Triangle Hills neighborhood have been torn down. Seven more homes are scheduled for demolition.
- Middlebury's dispatch center is now being run out of Prospect.
- The remodeled library will be open to the public in late November.
- The zoning board is holding a workshop on its Plan of Conservation and Development to address COGCNV staff's comments and issues on Route 64.
- Pump station upgrades are underway.
- The Ridgewood housing development has completed its model home.
- The zoning board approved new regulations for condominiums in the Lake Quassapaug Protection Zone on West Lake Road.

## **7. Other**

- *Bus Rider Counts* – Pat Gallagher reported that bus ridership is up from 2009. The counts will be completed by mid-November.
- *Regional Animal Shelter Study* – Pat Gallagher stated that the Regional Animal Shelter Study Committee selected Middlebury as the site for a regional animal shelter. The new shelter will be located on the site of the existing Middlebury shelter and incorporate the existing building into its design. There will be a committee meeting on November 14, 2013 to discuss management structure. Several towns have run into problems with the sheltering of large numbers of animals obtained from police seizures.
- *Bike Share Feasibility Study* – Samuel Gold said that the Capitol Region Council of Governments and Greater Hartford Transit District proposed a bike share feasibility study. COGCNV is participating in the study and will examine whether a bike share system can be implemented on the Waterbury Branch and Naugatuck River Greenway. The RFP has gone out to bid and the study is set to be complete by the middle of 2014.
- *State Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)* – Samuel Gold explained that the state is implementing a Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) which

will fund local transportation projects. Connecticut DOT will use STP-Urban funding for state projects and use LOTCIP funding for municipal projects.

- *Product Stewardship for Mattresses* – Pat Gallagher explained that product stewardship legislation for mattresses has passed. The program will provide free mattress recycling by placing a small fee on newly purchased mattresses. Municipal transfer stations may voluntarily participate in mattress collection.
- *Nutmeg Network* – Samuel Gold stated that COGCNV will be submitting a regional application for the Nutmeg Network, a statewide fiber optic network. The Nutmeg Network is now allowing municipalities to connect and may provide cheaper and faster internet connections and may allow for shared IT infrastructure.

## **8. Adjournment**

On a motion by Rich Minnick, seconded by Jim Sequin it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:46 pm.

Submitted by  
Pat Gallagher  
Regional Planner  
for  
Gil Graveline  
RPC Secretary

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