MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Regional Planning Commission (RPC)
of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
49 Leavenworth Street – 3rd floor, Waterbury, CT
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Attendance: Gary Giordano, Bethlehem; David White, Bristol; Nicole Cignoli, Derby; Brendan Browne, Middlebury; Lori Rotella, Naugatuck; Margus Laan, Plymouth; Jim Baldwin, Seymour.
Staff: Joanna Rogalski, Senior Regional Planner; Keith Rosenfeld, Shared Municipal Planner.
Members of the Public: 0

The meeting opened at 6:35 PM.

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions, Public Participation.
   - The pledge of allegiance was recited. All those present introduced themselves. No public comment. A quorum was obtained for this meeting.

2. Administrative Items
   Joanna Rogalski reported on the following topics:
   a. Adoption of April 2, 2019 Meeting minutes (motion)
      Motion made by Gary Giordano, seconded by David White.
      Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.
   b. Referrals – 38 referrals since May 29, 2019, 4 regionally significant, 1 POCD, 1 subdivision
   c. Correspondence – review of resignations and appointments and Executive Committee emails

3. Discussion of Regional Planning Commission
   Joanna Rogalski led discussion regarding a proposed restructuring of the Regional Planning Commission. The timeline of issues was reviewed from 2015 to 2019, focusing on the ability of the RPC to achieve a quorum. The NVCOG Executive Director, Rick Dunne, has noticed the inability to achieve a quorum and during the November 8, 2019 NVCOG Council meeting reported that he will direct staff to develop an alternative to the existing RPC structure which may involve professional planning and zoning staff meeting during the day, as opposed to volunteers meeting in the evening. Joanna Rogalski reviewed conversations with Commissioners and Planners which have taken place between September and November 2019. If changes are made to the RPC structure and functions, the Operating Procedures and/or the NVCOG By-laws may need to be amended.

Discussion ensued. The following points were discussed:
   - The Valley Council of Governments (VCOG) RPC felt like each town supported one another, they all had similar planning issues, the larger NVCOG RPC feels like there is a greater disconnect among the Towns.
   - Future form of the NVCOG RPC would be better with the following:
     o Be more of an educational forum, where Towns can learn from each other. Current roundtable discussion is very helpful.
     o Give more recommendations for municipal plans of conservation and development (POCD)
     o NVCOG staff providing more tools, methods and information to help towns counteract shortsighted thinking on proposed zoning and developments.
     o Be a setting where members could get a sense that “you’re not alone, we’ve been through this, and this is how we did it.”
   - Referral reports are helpful; current format is OK.
• Frustration with discontinuity of planning issue discussions. Would like to have more follow-up and education about Broadband/5G infrastructure, solar farms/fields.
• Lots of people at the table – too large for a consensus
• Have a “Hot Topics” segment to help planners and commissioners be up to date on planning issues.
• Advise the NVCOG staff to ask to be on the meeting agenda for municipal Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, get a chance to introduce themselves, ask for volunteers to join the RPC
• The RPC representatives would like the RPC to be the group which brings expertise to a discussion on planning issues, bring technical background, understand the logic behind regulations, understand why location matters.
• Education reiterated as important aspect of the RPC – provides a forum for Commissioners to step back and understand the reasons behind proposed planning actions.
• Suggest more training opportunities through the RPC for municipal Commissioners.
• Perception that residents have a general loss of pride in their Towns.
• Helpful if there was more information about grants for municipalities.
• Of the RPC representatives present, three preferred day meetings, two preferred night meetings, the rest had no opinion.
• Concern that an RPC with representatives from only planning staff would be biased; the Commissioners give another perspective on planning issues.
• The RPC representatives were OK with referrals becoming entirely an NVCOG staff function.

4. Discussion of the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) – Joanna Rogalski reported on the following concerning the regional POCD:
   a. Public participation and outreach – will be coordinated with NVision conference in October 2020
   b. Regional Profile – would be linked to the POCD, the 2019 profile was published December 2, 2019 – uses US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year data 2013 – 2017.
   c. Regional Plan of Sustainability – would be linked to the POCD, drafting since August 2019, aspirational, steps municipalities may take, tie in with Sustainable CT
   d. Economic Profile – would be linked to the POCD, needs to be updated for 2020

5. Roundtable – Discussion of Points of Interest/Local Activities
Consensus among representatives that this agenda item was discussed adequately during discussion of the regional planning commission.

6. Other –
   • A proposed regular meeting schedule for 2020 was reviewed. No comments.
   • NVCOG newsletter, if there are any items from your Town, NVCOG staff member Gabriel Filer needs the information by Dec 20, 2019.

7. Adjournment
   Motion: To adjourn meeting.
   Motion made by Lori Rotella, seconded by Margus Laan.
   Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Joanna Rogalski, Senior Regional Planner
NVCOG