



NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

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Draft MINUTES

Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Regional Planning Commission

Virtual Video Conference Meeting - [YouTube Link](#)

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 6, 2022

RPC Representatives: David White, Bristol; Lori Rotella, Naugatuck; Bob Nerney, Waterbury; Curt Bosco, Middlebury, Gino DiGiovanni, Derby; Bob Clarke, Woodbury, Kim McNeill, Southbury, Margus Laan, Plymouth.

Staff: Josh Lecar, Richard Crowther, Jr., Christine O'Neill, Savannah-Nicole Villalba, Joanna Rogalski.

1. Commencement of Meeting

Chairman David White called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. There was no public comment.

2. Administrative Items

- a. *Adoption of October 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes* – On a motion by Bob Clarke, seconded by Lori Rotella, with Kim McNeill abstaining, minutes of the October 4, 2022 meeting were approved.
- b. *Adoption of Regular Meeting Schedule for 2023* – On a motion by Bob Clarke, seconded by Curt Bosco, Option A (six meetings) for the 2023 regular RPC meeting schedule was approved.
- c. *Referrals Report* – Joanna Rogalski said 20 referrals have been received since the last meeting, many related to cannabis-related uses or accessory dwelling units.
- d. *Correspondence* – Ms. Rogalski said there was no correspondence.

3. Roundtable – Discussion of local activities and municipal land use processes

Derby – Gino DiGiovanni said the Route 34 roadway reconstruction project is progressing with work on the underground utilities. A number of proposed development projects are under review through Planning and Zoning. The Derby-Shelton bridge project is also moving along.

Middlebury – Curt Bosco said an application was received through Inland Wetlands for an 800,000 square foot warehouse on Southford Road. The site includes the former Timex building, the remainder of the former Timex property and an additional 30 acres of undeveloped land.

Naugatuck – Lori Rotella said Naugatuck is working on its cannabis regulations. The public hearing will open next week. The Planning Commission gave a positive referral. The Zoning Commission has chosen to opt out for accessory dwelling units and this will be brought before the Borough board tonight for ratification. Naugatuck is also working on its transit-oriented development project for Parcel B. The public hearing for this will open on December 14. All other approvals have been received. A Dollar General has been approved, built, and opened.

Waterbury – Bob Nerney said Waterbury recently scheduled a public hearing to extend the moratorium on cannabis. Cultivation was turned down as a ballot question in November and retail was approved by the voters. The current moratorium is set to expire on February 9, 2023. Cannabis regulations are currently being worked on. He believes retail will be permitted but regulated through zoning.

Woodbury – Bob Clarke said Woodbury had an applicant attend a meeting last month to make simultaneous applications through Zoning, Planning, and ZBA to reutilize the ski area by converting it into a commercial/retail district.

Bristol – David White said Bristol is entering the final phases of its zoning regulations rewrite. Public hearings will take place. A five-story assisted living and memory care facility was approved and is now under construction.

Southbury – Kim McNeill said Southbury’s new planning director is Judy Lynch. Southbury’s Plan of Conservation and Development is almost ready for final review. There is a new arts and culture subcommittee of the Economic Development Commission. Southbury was awarded Bronze certification from Sustainable CT. A new restaurant and a new Michael’s will be opening. Southbury’s 350th anniversary will be celebrated next year.

4. NVCOG Updates

- a. *Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD)* – Joanna Rogalski said outreach for the RPOCD has been ongoing with visits to Planning or Planning and Zoning Commission meetings at multiple communities including Southbury on December 13 and Seymour on January 13. Additionally, an existing conditions report is being prepared and Ms. Rogalski plans to present it to RPC members at a future meeting.
- b. *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* – Rich Donovan said the public participation survey for the MTP is now closed. The next step will be for NVCOG to put out some initial drafts for public review. Because transportation and land use are so closely related, he would like to receive feedback from the RPC. He requested a link to the project be put in the minutes. [MTP 2050](#).
- c. *Route 8 & Waterbury Branch Line Corridor/Alternative Modes Study* – Mr. Donovan said this study for the Route 8 and Waterbury Branch Line corridor has a study area extending along the Waterbury Branch rail line from Naugatuck through Shelton. The study’s three components are: improvements to the rail line (some of which have been implemented since the study began), a bus rapid transit alternative starting at the Derby-Shelton station down to Bridgeport, and a transit-oriented development component. A draft of the study has just been issued and the public comment period will last until January 15. A hybrid public meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. on December 15 at the Valley Transit District in Derby. Comments from the RPC about the study are encouraged. [Public Info Session on NVCOG Alt Modes Study](#)
- d. *Housing Program* – Savannah-Nicole Villalba said her new title is Senior Regional Planner for Housing and Integrated Development. In this capacity, she invited anyone with housing questions or planning initiatives on the local level to contact her. She is currently working on a project involving PA 22-30 which requires municipalities with populations over 25,000 have to adopt a fair rent commission. In the NVCOG region this is Bristol, Naugatuck, Waterbury, Shelton, and Cheshire. She is drafting a memo that will be sent to those communities.
- e. *Cannabis Zoning* – Josh Lecar said COST held a meeting on November 17 where a presentation was given Attorney Ken Slater of Halloran and Sage who reviewed cannabis legislation. In his presentation, Attorney Slater noted that most towns have been regulating this use via zoning rather than by ordinance. Attorney Slater indicated the current legislative session has removed a statutory cap on the number of establishments by towns. Attorney Slater also suggested that special permit regulation might be a good option for towns that wish to maintain more control on the location of potential cannabis-related uses. In statute, Attorney Slater noted, an adopted town ordinance trumps zoning so if there are conflicts between provisions, the ordinance would be the controlling factor. There is also provision in statute for a distance regulation. NVCOG is available for consultation on best practices.

Replying to a question by Chairman White concerning the acceptance of cannabis sales within the state, Mr. Lecar said that for the most part large urban communities seem to have had more acceptance of it. In some smaller communities, there has been a more negative reaction. Joanna Rogalski said Wolcott had recently redefined micro-cultivators.

- f. *Waste Crisis Story Map* – Christine O’Neill spoke about Connecticut’s waste crisis. Up to one-third of Connecticut’s waste is currently shipped out of state. CT DEEP is funding waste reduction pilot programs across the state, including Ansonia, Seymour, and Woodbury. These pilots may include an evaluation of unit-based pricing and demonstration of organics diversion. NVCOG also received a grant to help educate the region about the waste crisis and has created a story map, which Ms. O’Neill reviewed. Responding to a question by Chairman White about trash to energy, Ms. O’Neill said incineration is a waste disposal method first, although some energy can be generated. She said there is pollution associated with it and incineration facilities have a 30-year lifespan. Chairman White was surprised to hear about the pollution as he had believed the facilities were safe.
- g. *Funding Opportunities*
 - i. Section 319 Clean Water Grant, Due 2/9/23 – Ms. O’Neill said DEEP makes this grant available on an annual basis. Funds can be used to develop a watershed-based plan or to implement actions in an existing plan. A 40% match is required.
 - ii. Aquatic Invasive Species Grant, Due 1/6/23 – Ms. O’Neill said this grant is also offered by DEEP. The grant may be used for three potential purposes: to research aquatic invasives, to manage or remove aquatic invasives, and for public education on this topic. There is a 25% local match.

5. **Adjournment**

At 7:21 p.m., on a motion by Lori Rotella, seconded by Gino DiGiovanni, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
Lauren Rizzo
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments