



NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

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MEETING MINUTES

Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Regional Planning Commission

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

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 4, 2023

RPC Representatives: David White, Bristol; Mike Marganski, Seymour; Lori Rotella, Naugatuck; Gil Graveline, Prospect; Kim McNeill, Southbury; Gino DiGiovanni, Jr., Derby; Margus Laan, Plymouth; Ginny Harger, Shelton; Stacey Sefcik, Thomaston.

Guests/Other: Becky Bradley, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Staff: Josh Lecar, Joanna Rogalski, Christine O'Neill, Richard Crowther, Jr., Elliot Wareham.

1. Commencement of Meeting

Chairman David White called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll was called. There was no public comment.

2. Administrative Items

- a. *Adoption of February 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes* – On a motion by Kim McNeill, seconded by Gino DiGiovanni, with Ginny Harger, Lori Rotella, and Mike Marganski abstaining, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the February 7, 2023 RPC meeting.

- b. *Presentation and Adoption of Metropolitan Transportation Plan* – Elliot Wareham said the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) had been adopted at the March 17, 2023 NVCOG meeting. Mr. Wareham said the MTP is a federally required document that must be updated every four years and have at least a 20-year outlook. The MTP provides an overall assessment of, and vision for, the region's transportation system. He explained the collaborative effort of the plan's development and said the goals and priorities identified in the plan represent the collective vision of stakeholders, staff, visitors, and residents of the region. There was a robust public engagement process and equity is at the center of the plan. Mr. Wareham then reviewed the main concerns of the plan, the identified needs, and the expected outcomes. He outlined funding and implementation of the plan. The four major categories of the plan that will receive funding are improvements, major projects, system preservation, and transit. The MTP may be viewed on the NVCOG website.
- c. *Referrals Report* – Josh Lecar said there were two housekeeping items he wanted to note. The first was that the NVCOG website will be receiving an update to enhance user friendliness and the second was a request to move the informational presentation on land use impacts associated with distribution centers and warehousing to later in the meeting to allow for a timing issue on the part of the presenter.

Mr. Lecar said that since the beginning of the year there have been 32 referrals, 28 of which occurred since the last RPC meeting. Twelve referrals were from within the region and 16 from outside. For the most part, the referrals have been for relatively modest zone changes and amendments. Additionally, Mr. Lecar said Waterbury has implemented an overlay zone in the Cherry Valley shopping center area.

- d. *Correspondence* – There was no correspondence.

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

Bristol – Mr. White said the City of Bristol is in the process of rewriting its zoning regulations. A new item in the regulations will be elderly housing developments.

Derby – Gino DiGiovanni said the Route 34 project is moving forward. The Trolley Point project has broken ground in the downtown area. Derby's zoning regulations will be undergoing an update. Responding to a question from Ginny Harger, Mr. DiGiovanni said the Cedar Village project is approved but has not yet been started.

Naugatuck – Lori Rotella said Naugatuck now has an approved hybrid-retail cannabis establishment coming to town. A positive referral from the planning commission for zoning was received regarding an application for 112 Bridge Street; Chipotle would like to locate there, and the public hearing will open in a few weeks. The affordable housing plan is being worked on, along with an update to Naugatuck's POCD. Ms. Rotella commended Savannah-Nicole Villalba of NVCOG for her assistance at two recent one-on-one meetings. May 20-21 is the first town festival of the year. A new skate park will also open that weekend. A fair rent ordinance is also being developed.

Plymouth – Margus Laan said Plymouth is working on cannabis regulations and an affordable housing plan.

Prospect – Gil Graveline said Prospect had an application for a new gun range. The application has since been withdrawn. There was also a text amendment to eliminate gun ranges in Prospect. That went down and it was left the way it was. The town is also working on its POCD

Shelton – Ginny Harger said Shelton approved a 43,000 square foot addition to an existing 40,000 square foot industrial building. Also, a gas station and retail building was approved in the Bridgeport Avenue-Constitution Boulevard area. A modified site plan for a nursery on Bridgeport Avenue was approved. A 152-apartment application on River Road and a 129-apartment application on Canal Street are currently open. An applicant had items approved previously on River Road where there is a marina, but he has since acquired an additional three acres of land and would now like to expand his operation, this would relocate and increase the size of a previously approved restaurant event facility and add a 7,800 square foot office building. There were 102 apartments previously approved for this applicant, but this has since been reduced to 90 apartments with the addition of 35 condo units. A moratorium on cannabis applications was extended. A moratorium on applications for multi-family, high-density rentals, except in the downtown area, was also extended. Shelton's affordable housing plan was finalized and is in the hands of the Board of Aldermen for approval. Bigelow Tea has purchased 25 acres of a 70-acre parcel owned by the City of Shelton. Several other companies have entered into agreements with the city for the remaining acreage. The Board of Aldermen is establishing a fair rent committee.

Southbury – Kim McNeill said Southbury has approved its POCD. There is a new land use director working on consolidating land use files and improving efficiency with interdepartmental collaborations. The Southbury website will be updated. Land use commissioners have been attending training sessions.

Seymour – Mike Marganski said he is replacing Jim Baldwin on the RPC. Seymour's Planning and Zoning Commission has completed its overhaul of the regulations. They became effective on April 1. He thanked Joanna Rogalski and Josh Lecar of NVCOG for engaging the Planning and Zoning Commission with regard to the RPOCD and how it relates to what will be Seymour's POCD. An amendment change and a request for a definition will be considered for a mental health care facility. There is currently a proposal about whether to amend Seymour's accessory dwelling unit regulations.

Thomaston – Stacey Sefcik said Thomaston has submitted a Sustainable CT application. Renovations to Seth Thomas Park have been approved. An application has been submitted to get some of the greenway in Thomaston underway. A new website for the town is being developed. The Planning and Zoning Commission will be hearing an application on behalf of the Opera House. This is a historical building. Proposed improvements include a freight elevator and loading dock. Ms. Sefcik said work is concluding on the town’s affordable housing plan. A renters’ roundtable was initiated.

4. **Informational Presentation on Land Use Impacts Associated with Distribution Centers and Warehousing**
Becky Bradley, Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission in Pennsylvania, gave a presentation about how distribution centers and warehousing facilities impact land use. Her full presentation may be viewed by clicking on the YouTube link provided at the top of these minutes.

5. **NVCOG Updates**

- a. *Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD)* – Joanna Rogalski said staff is in the process of drafting the sections for the existing conditions report. The sections, as well as other updates, are being posted on the NVCOG website.
- b. *Sustainable CT* – Christine O’Neill said a Sustainable CT fellow will be working at NVCOG over the summer. The fellow will be available to help towns earn certification levels through the Sustainable CT program.
- c. *HHW Collection and the Composter Sale* – Ms. O’Neill said the first household hazardous waste collection event will take place on April 22 in Middlebury at the Shepardson Community Center. The online store for the composter and rain barrel sale is now live.
- d. *Environmental Sustainability Forum for Invasives Management* – Ms. O’Neill said these forums about different environmental topics are held on a quarterly basis. Invasive species management will be the topic at the April 27 forum.

6. **Adjournment**

At 8:12 p.m., on a motion by Ginny Harger, seconded by Lori Rotella, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
Lauren Rizzo
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments