

**MINUTES OF
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

March 17, 2016

ATTENDANCE

RPC Attendees:	Staff Attendees:
Lansford Perry - Canton	Mary Ellen Kowalewski
William Rice – Simsbury	Emily Hultquist
Sandra Bobowski - Hartford	Lynne Pike DiSanto
Andy Powell - Tolland	
Monty Aheart - Vernon	Other Attendees:
Stanley Sobieski - Newington	Mark Abraham, DataHaven
Ted Cabata - Southington	
Nancy Mayeda-Brescia – Rocky Hill	
Brendan Malone - Suffield	
Ed Marek - Coventry	
Julian Stoppelman - Manchester	

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes, January 21, 2016

Andy Powell made a motion seconded by Stanley Sobieski to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2016 RPC Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation & Q&A on the 2015 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey

Mark Abraham of DataHaven gave a presentation on the 2015 Community Wellbeing Survey conducted statewide. CRCOG was one of many contributing partners of the Survey. Mr. Abraham explained the methodology of the survey and highlighted several data points of interest which relate to the themes of the CRCOG Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. Some of the themes highlighted were the quality of place in the context of raising children, residents sense of food security, community health, residents desire or reticence to bike and walk within the context of infrastructure and safety, etc. The DataHaven Website at www.datahaven.org has the data crosstabs available for communities to look at their individual results compared with other communities or the state. Mr. Abraham stated that DataHaven hopes that this data will be useful in multiple ways to communities and groups across the state.

Regional Planning Commission Rules of Procedure

Emily Hultquist of the CRCOG staff gave a brief description of the impetus for bringing a draft set of Rules of Procedure before the RPC.

During the timeframe when the State of Connecticut voted to consolidate the state's regions and reorganize into nine Councils of Government, the State also repealed the State Statute governing Regional Planning Commissions and they are no longer required. In accordance, CRCOG recently adopted new agency bylaws which designate the Regional Planning Commission as one of CRCOG's Standing Committees. As each Standing Committee has its own Rules of Procedure, Policy and Planning Staff would like to take this opportunity to formalize updated Rules of Procedure for the RPC to include in the updated CRCOG bylaws.

CRCOG staff stated that the agency feels it is important to continue convening the RPC. The input from RPC members on Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Referrals is very helpful to the agency. Furthermore, the RPC is an excellent link between regional planning initiatives and local decision making. CRCOG staff asked RPC members whether the RPC is a group that they find value in and would like to continue convening. The consensus around the room was yes, that the RPC is a great way for commissioners to learn about what is happening in other communities.

Ed Marek made a motion to adopt the draft RPC rules of procedure as presented pending the approval of the CRCOG Policy Board. Stanley Sobieski seconded the motion and made a suggestion that the Rules of Procedure go into effect ten days after the approval of the CRCOG Policy Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Report on Zoning and Subdivision Referrals

Lynne Pike DiSanto presented the report on zoning and subdivision referrals. Ted Cabata made a motion seconded by Ed Marek to approve the zoning and subdivision referral reports of 3/10/16 and 3/17/16 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

What's New in My Town?

Sandra Bobowski reported that The City of Hartford is working on phase II of its zoning regulation adoption that will deal with the definition of family, roomers/boarders and accessory dwelling units. She also stated that the Downtown North redevelopment will see a hotel and brewery among other uses before its completion. The area is 19.3 acres in size.

Ms. Bobowski also mentioned the Hartford Parks which have been recommended for capital improvements. Elizabeth Park will receive new entrances on the Hartford side of the park.

The Town of Manchester has adopted new sign regulations and has referred some issues to the Town Council such as the removal of obsolete signs. The town is looking at adding new uses to its commercial zones. The town's Planner, Mark Pellegrini has announced his retirement. A large initiative of the new planner will be the redevelopment of the old Parkade site. The town has made some plans to create an entrance to the Parkade area from a local park.

The Town of Tolland has been working on updates to its regulations to make the language more consistent with current legal findings such as the MacKenzie v. Town of Monroe Planning & Zoning Commission decision.

The Planning & Zoning Commission in Tolland has also become reacquainted with its Design Advisory Board which is a group of architects, designers and landscape architects who can advise the commission on design issues relating to development proposals.

The Town of Newington is also reviewing its zoning regulations with regard to the MacKenzie v. Town of Monroe Planning & Zoning Commission decision. The town is also working on plans and proposals for vacant property near the Cedar Street CTfastrak Station. A Starbucks has been approved for the corner of Myra Cohen Boulevard which will be a drive through as well. Traffic considerations in that area remain a concern as Cedar Street volumes are currently very high.

Other Business

Emily Hultquist stated that the Plan4Health Initiative of the Eastern Highlands Health District has finished their Healthy Communities Toolkit and that there will be two workshops targeting rural planning and zoning commissioners. The workshops will be held on March 31st in Mansfield and on April 20th in Coventry. Ms. Hultquist stated that the flyer for the meetings can be sent to the RPC and posted on the RPC webpage on the CRCOG website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM