

APPROVED MINUTES OF
CRCOG Concrete Foundations Issues Meeting
February 22, 2017 11:05 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Name	Town
Steve Werbner	Tolland
Lisa Pellegrini (by phone)	Somers
Kurt Vail	State Rep. 52 nd District
John Elsesser	Coventry
John Ward	Vernon
Carolyn Mirek	South Windsor
Kevin Alvarez	U.S. Congressman Joseph Courtney
John Filchak	NECCOG
Christina Mailhos	Willington
Andy Goodhall	Union
Lori Spielman	Ellington
Michael C. Santoro	Dept. of Housing
Chandler Rose	CAAO Assessors
Tim Ackert	State Representative 8 th District
Tony Frassinelli	Stafford
Pauline Yoder	CRCOG
Lyle Wray	CRCOG
Brad Drazen	NBC Connecticut

Co-Chair Steve Werbner called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Mr. Werbner asked everyone to introduce themselves.

- **Adoption of Minutes**

Action: Christina Mailhos made a motion for the adoption of the minutes; Mr. Elsesser seconded; all voted in favor of the motion.

- **Current Legislative Proposals summary**

Current legislative proposals summary spreadsheet was presented to the committee. Mr. Werbner expressed concern with the situation that the group has been expressing ideas and it is unfortunate that we have not had the opportunity to review legislation before testimony. Although we have offered to help draft the bills no one has reached out. In addition, the two raised bills, (the governor's bill and Senator Larson's bill) does not offer real assistance and the process is causing angst.

A question was asked about the governor's proposal and Mr. Werbner said that it was similar to Larson's bill. He also mentioned that as an example, the current estimate of the potential need in Tolland far exceeds Tolland's bonding authority and would require a referendum among other things and is not feasible for Tolland.

- ***Discussion and Planning Regarding Legislative Hearing Scheduled for the 28th***

An outline created by Ms. Yoder was presented for talking points for the hearing.

Mr. Werbner stated that he does not feel the need for further studies but the need is for a combination of testing and remediation. Of 40 homes that have requested tax assessments in Tolland, 37 of them have received 60% off building value or above. Those indicate immediate need of \$7 MM today, which Tolland expects to double next year and quadruple in five years.

Mr. Werbner outlined broadly that if the \$5MM set aside for testing could be split for remediation and testing and \$30 MM could be set aside to address those that need immediate help now. In addition, the proposal for a surcharge on insurance policies would generate enough funding to address these efforts. The surcharge is something that has been done with coastal towns for Storm Sandy. In addition, we should continue to pursue federal grants through HUD and Department of Housing.

The insurance surcharge would be a simple and provide immediate fix.

Message is that we need something easy and now. The focus has been on other projects (such as the bonding \$50 MM for Brownfields and the \$250 MM for the Civic Center). This is the largest problem facing Connecticut.

Mr. Wray stated that it is worth re-iterating for the sake of the legislators less familiar with the issue that we are not asking for 100% of the funds from the state, but that it would be shared.

In addition, if insurance liabilities were somehow capped, we believe they would come back to the table. It is important to identify that this is a shared responsibility.

Ms. Mirek expressed the need to understand the past insurance history and need to have them come and participate. If you don't like our ideas, bring some of your own.

Ms. Pellegrini stated that we need a coordinated effort and immediate help. Towns cannot do it alone and it will hurt the region. We need to advocate.

Ms. Mailhos stated that the testimony should give feedback to make things better and expressed dissatisfaction with where things were. The public needs to understand that we made requests and were excluded.

Mr. Filchak suggested that perhaps regarding the bills it would be best to dissect and redraft and offer an alternative draft of our own language. This would be appreciated by P&D and enable us to make points and add the language. He also stated the 20 mile radius has to go.

The group agreed to meet for those who would like to meet at Tolland Town Hall at 10 AM on Monday to draft alternative language.

Mr. Ackert mentioned that cgact.gov has a page on how to testify and his advice was as follows: be concise and stay within the 3 minutes. Support or oppose specific legislation and state why. If there are others' testimony you want to support you can do that as well.

Ms. Yoder will send out a link on the "how to testify" to the group.

A suggestion was made to ask Sen. Cassano to reserve the first row for CEO's who will be there. In addition, the group agreed to hold a press conference at 9:30 AM prior to the hearing and Mr. Ackert reserved room 1E for this purpose. Ad-hoc Committee will release a press release at the same time. Ms.

Yoder will collect information on who will be in attendance so that we can publicize the list of towns

Parking at the capitol is a nightmare and people should be encouraged to use buses, or public transportation, and carpool.

Mr. Elsesser stressed the need to have people show up. There is a disconnect at the legislator with many legislators unaware of the issue. A mob of people makes a difference.

- ***Communications Consultant***

Discussion moved the marketing consultant on whether it was valuable. One issue is that CRCOG approved up to 10,000 towards this but NECCOG executive board rejected the proposal. Mr. Filchak stated that this will be a discussion point at the NECCOG board meeting on Friday but he is unsure what the outcome will be.

Mr. Elsesser felt that this is critical because we're not getting the word out. People are not tuned in and we need statewide interest. These are three critical months and we are not getting through to leadership.

Mr. Hart stated that it is important to lobby as well.

Ms. Mirek expressed it's important to get through to the other legislators who don't know about it.

Dr. Wray stated that it has to be a targeted campaign to legislators from other parts of the state, especially those in leadership and on the screening committee.

Mr. Elsesser said that he discussed this with a lobbyist who stated that we need a communications person who doesn't necessarily wear a pin but knows people

Mr. Hart proposed empowering Steve and Lisa as co-chairs to meet with all three and choose one that they feel is most suitable.

Motion was made by Mr. Frassinelli and seconded by Mr. Hart. All voted in favor.

- ***Status of Testing Funding***

There is a meeting with the governor's staff and others the afternoon of the 22nd to discuss the testing funding and CRCOG will have more information on this after that meeting.