

APPROVED Minutes
Regional Planning Commission Meeting
West Hartford Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT
Thursday, March 8, 2018
7pm

Attendance

Daniel Mara
Ed Marek
Lans Perry
Tim Moore
Keith Durao
Chris Griffin
Anthony Koos
Jay Stoppelman
Stanley Sobieski
Jennifer Bartiss-Earley
Nancy Brescia
Bill Rice
Steve Wagner
Brandon Malone
Bruce Mayer
Lamont Aheart
Karl Profe

Town/Organization

Bloomfield
Coventry
Canton
East Windsor
Ellington
Glastonbury
Hartford P&Z
Manchester P&Z
Newington P&Z
Plainville P&Z
Rocky Hill P&Z
Simsbury
South Windsor (Alternate)
Suffield
Tolland
Vernon
Windsor

Staff

Kimberly Bona
Mike Cipriano
Emily Hultquist
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Lynne Pike-DiSanto

CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

Guests

Rich Armstrong

DOT

With a quorum present, Chair Karl Profe called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Karl Profe welcomed everyone, and introductions were done.

2. Adoption of Minutes: January 18, 2018

Karl Profe asked for a motion to adopt the minutes of the January 18, 2018 RPC meeting.

Stanley Sobieski made a motion to approve the RPC meeting minutes of January 18, 2018 with the following revision:

Newington- The town voted and approved a new town hall building. They are waiting on funds from CT DOT for a parking garage at the National Welding Site.

Tony Koos seconded the motion and it carried with Brendan Malone, Dan Mara, Chris Griffin, Tim Moore and Keith Duroo abstaining.

3. Presentation: Update on I-84 Hartford Project

Rich Armstrong of CT DOT gave a powerpoint presentation entitled, "Re-Building a Better I-84 in Hartford" to the Commission. He stated that he has been leading this project for approximately 5 years. Rich Armstrong discussed the following reasons for undertaking this project:

- Average daily traffic of up to 175,000
- Structurally deficient bridges
- Operational deficiencies
- 8 interchanges within 3 miles
- Nearly 2 accidents per day
- Community Impacts

In addition, the bridge is approximately 50 years old and rather unattractive.

Rich Armstrong discussed the urban design and key challenges of the project. He explained that the highway divides downtown core and disrupts in function. The highway separates neighborhoods from each other and downtown, and the highway is also considered by many to be a blighting influence on adjacent land.

Rich Armstrong stated the design goals of this project are to reconnect the City across the highway and to strengthen the character and functioning of districts on either side of

the highway. It would also integrate highway access points within urban fabric, and promote TOD around Union Station.

Mr. Armstrong discussed the “Lowered Highway” as well as development opportunities and reviewed the project schedule. He explained that currently, this project is one of many that have been put on hold due to the funding issue with the STF. Discussion followed.

Jay Stoppelman asked about the impact this project will have on highway travel. Mr. Armstrong explained that the first few years will consist of relocating the railroad tracks, then they would begin staging traffic, taking down the highway, etc. He stated that this project would impact the highway for 5 or more years, and though shutting down the highway is very unlikely, it could always happen.

Mr. Armstrong reviewed the I-84/I-91 Interchange Study, which began approximately a year and a half ago. He stated that this interchange serves 275,000 vehicles per day. I-84 and I-91 have two through lanes in each direction. Ramp geometry is substandard for system interchange. Discussion followed.

Brendan Malone asked about maintenance and snow removal cost. Mr. Armstrong stated the project would allow lower maintenance costs and easier snow removal.

Nancy Brescia expressed concern that parking under the viaduct will no longer be available if this project moves along. She stated that when Hartford Public Schools were redesigned, they did not plan for parking very well. Right now, a lot of people park under that viaduct. Mr. Armstrong explained that he is not sure, but feels this would be decided by the municipality. Discussion followed.

Karl Profe asked if there has been any feedback from surrounding businesses, i.e. Aetna, etc. Rich Armstrong stated Aetna is quite supportive of this project.

Emily Hultquist asked about security considerations. Rich Armstrong explained that they have met with the Department of Homeland Security regarding reinforcing the structuring Cap so it would be able to withstand explosions.

Discussion followed.

To view the entire presentation, please click [here](#).

Emily Hultquist thanked Rich Armstrong for his time tonight and for his presentation to the RPC.

4. Report on Zoning and Subdivision Referrals

Lynne Pike-DiSanto presented these referral reports to the committee. Discussion ensued.

Stanley Sobieski moved to approve the referrals. Lamont Aheart seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. What's New in My Town-A Discussion and Report on Local Planning and Development Activities in the Municipalities of the Capitol Region

Windsor-160 of 180 apartment buildings along railroad tracks are being leased and occupied. Combined dog pound in conjunction with Bloomfield is complete. Pine trees next to Bradley have been cleared for allow more "air" for planes when landing.

Rocky Hill- Still undecided as to what to do with the former Ames store building. Indian artifacts were discovered while developing near the river. The developer is researching this.

Vernon- The town is working on conversion of the old mills to housing.

Suffield- Subdividing 63 acres into lots, one sold immediately. There is some controversy going on regarding subdivison in the historic district.

Tolland – Interest has been expressed in opening a winery in town. Looking into devloping regulations pertaining to farm wineries, cideries, etc. i.e. commercial/agriculture regulations.

South Windsor- Waiting for plans for two school projects. Discussion about new regulations for farm based tourism and there has been discussion about aquiring farmland from the old tobacco company. There has been a proposal for new assisted living facility near Evergreen Walk. Town Manager is working on ideas regarding I-291 zone.

Plainville- Will be choosing consulting firm for POCD. Working on text amendments for accessory apartments and doggie daycare.

Hartford- In the 6th phase of restoring the building under the onion dome portion of the Colt complex.

Bloomfield- Apartments opening up for leasing in the town center. The Planning and Zoning department and commission is preparing for its POCD update. Discussion for a possible roundabout in town green area.

Glastonbury- Putting together POCD. Roundabout on Hebron Ave is complete, and there has been discussion of another roundabout down the road from this one. Emily Hultquist asked if tactical urbanism style testing was done for the roundabout before constructing it. Chris Griffin stated he doesn't believe so.

Newington- Issues have been arising with doggie daycare that has been operating for approximately 7 years. Possibly construction of assisted living on top of Cedar Mountain. Discussion of putting a hotel at welding site.

Coventry- Subdividing lots on developments.

Simsbury- Town is appealing approval of solar project.

Manchester- Possible redevelopment of parkade. Solar regulations being reviewed. A subdivision was rejected recently, new plans will be proposed.

East Windsor- Began taking down the cinemas off I-91.

Ellington- Solar regulations being worked on. Discussion of implementing POCD.

6. Other Business

With no further discussion items, Lamont Aheart made a motion to adjourn. Stanley Sobieski seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.