

**Capitol Region Council of Governments
Regional Planning Commission Virtual Meeting
Thursday, March 16, 2023, 7:00 pm**

Attendance

Jennifer Bartiss-Earley
Lisa Levin
Tom Manning
Elizabeth Vinick
Charlie Allen
Henry Pawlowski
John Petronella
Corey Turner
Lawrence Niland
Raúl De Jesús Jr
Mike Stebe
Louanne Cooley
Bart Pacekonis
Alan Cavagnaro
Deb Goetz

Town/Organization

Plainville
Avon
Bolton
Bolton
East Granby
East Hartford
Enfield
Glastonbury
Glastonbury
Hartford
Manchester
Mansfield
South Windsor
South Windsor
Tolland

Staff

Caitlin Palmer
Jacob Knowlton
Kyle Shiel

CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

Others

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chairperson Jennifer Bartiss-Earley called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

2. Adoption of Minutes: June 23, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2022, as presented. Second to the motion provided; it was carried unanimously with Lisa Levin from Avon and John Petronella from Enfield abstaining.

3. Presentation: Public Act 21-29 Regional Survey and POCD 2024 Update

Kyle Shiel from CRCOG presented on the recent Opt-out provisions presented in Public Act 21-29: *An Act Concerning the Zoning Enabling Act, Accessory Apartments, Training for Certain Land Use Officials, Municipal Affordable Housing Plans And a Commission On Connecticut's Development and Future*. The Parking portion of the act saw a 63% opt-in within the Capital Region and a 38% opt-out. The Accessory Apartment (ADU) portion saw a 43% opt-in with a 58% opt-out rate in the Region. The following comments were used as examples of reasonings for the higher rate of opt-outs for ADU state regulations:

- “The Commission decided to change their regulations which are more in line with the provisions outlined in PA 21-29 but wanted to continue to require special permit approval for detached apartments (attached is permitted by right).” -Granby
- “Our community drafted our own customized ADU ordinance to encourage construction of in-law-style units and prohibit stand-alone structures; our average single-family lot size is significantly smaller than 95% of the municipalities in CT and the community felt that stand-alone structures were inappropriate on small single-family lots.” -New Britain
- “The PZC believed that we had certain high-density neighborhoods that the ADUs would not properly fit into. We are going to be re-writing our zoning regulations, and plan on allowing ADUS in certain areas.” -Enfield
- “Bloomfield has strict regulations at the moment, but wants to create more relaxed customized regulations, without being bound to the state statutes.” -Bloomfield

CRCOG staff continued to present on potential Land-use Commissioner Training: PA 21-29 establishes ongoing training requirements for land use commissioners. Beginning January 1, 2023, each member of a land use commission shall complete at least four (4) hours of training. At least one hour must address affordable and fair housing policies. A survey released to the municipalities asking what kind of commissioner training would be most beneficial showed 63% answered Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities.

Kyle Shiel continued into presenting on the updating process for the CRCOG Plan of Conservation and Development for 2024. This presentation was opened for questions and comments by the commissioners.

Elizabeth Vinick asked for elaboration on the areas of focus identified. These areas were identified as major employment centers and areas with high levels of transportation. Commissioner Vinick made the recommendation to not just look at employment centers but to look at where people are moving with a focus on commuting patterns. Caitlin Palmer from CRCOG mentioned that staff can use the transportation model to look at origin destination data and use it to identify areas of focus. Vinick mentions that there are changes occurring in where people are moving to and what people look for in community, noting that immigration should also be considered. Caitlin Palmer validates these changes by noting commuting patterns and rush hour are changing.

Commissioner Cavagnaro mentions he would like to see heavier language encouraging bike-friendly infrastructure as well as walkability to increase a sense of community within the region while also connecting the region. Cavagnaro voiced his concerns with promoting sharrows as bike friendly infrastructure but instead push for protected lanes. Caitlin Palmer pointed out that context is important for infrastructure and this kind of protected infrastructure is part of CRCOG complete streets initiative, and expanding these initiatives while prioritizing the more safe and appropriate infrastructure is a focus moving forward for CRCOG. Caitlin pointed out that due to introduced state regulation all municipalities should be in the process of creating complete street plans if it is passed. Kyle validates Cavagnaro by saying towns are taking these safety measures more seriously now, as they can't ignore the injuries and fatalities on the roads, but requirements should be pushed more firmly to gain coordinated action.

Chairperson Jennifer Bartiss-Earley mentioned that aging in place should be a focus for CRCOG when moving forward as it is important to allow people to engage and stay functional in society regardless of age; paying close attention to housing and transportation making sure that it is placed in areas with vital infrastructure to support people regardless of age and ability. Jennifer mentions that many people go across town borders for services so when moving forward we have to address all the moving parts to

make sure we have better access for everyone in the region. Ensuring that getting across those town boarders isn't too much of a stressor, pointing out that currently limited-transfers, signage, shelters are lacking existing conditions like these should be highlighted to create a plan moving forward to better the access and usability in the region. Caitlin Palmer mentions the Age-well Collaborative and the potential of bringing her on as a speaker for a future RPC meeting to discuss aging in CT further, with a focus on the topics raised by the Chairperson. Kyle Shiel points out that this is a multi-generational problem, and it is a great time to push for it as we all want similar things.

Elizabeth Vinick voices her support for Jennifer Bartiss-Earley's comments directly above. Elizabeth directs attention to starter homes, specifically what is happening to starter homes (aging population with starter homes being occupied by seniors staying longer and living longer). Points to the anecdotal accounts in Canton with apartment building and elevator complexes. Wonders who are moving in and why they are moving in to determine future needs.)- Are these developments useful and who are they useful for (folks in town or out: which/is housing stock freeing up because of the denser units?) Expresses concerns about finding homes affordable for a retired senior.

Chairperson Jennifer Bartiss-Earley made comments linking walkability to the ability to stay active and how that is seen as incredibly important for occupational therapy. She points to the need to meet the affordable housing need by incorporating affordable units into development and redevelopment as well as expanding mixed-use.

4. Report on Zoning and Subdivision Referrals

Jacob Knowlton reviewed recent zoning and subdivision referrals with the RPC.

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

During the "What's New in My Town" segment, members discuss recent activities within their respective municipalities. This can include anything from town business, zoning regulations, new structures, and other updates.

This month's discussion can be found at the 24:58 minute mark in the recording found here.

6. Other Business

Chairperson Jennifer Bartiss-Earley congratulates Caitlin Palmer for her promotion to Director of regional Planning and Zoning within CRCOG.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Bart Pacekonis, South Windsor. The motion was seconded by Alan Cavagnaro, South Windsor and it carried unanimously.