

## **Minutes of Special Connecticut River Assembly Meeting**

**Greater Hartford Jaycees Community Boathouse  
Riverside Park Road  
Hartford CT**

**October 8, 2009**

### **Attendance:**

#### **Members**

Joseph Smith, Chairman	Wethersfield
William B. Garner	Enfield
Philip H. Benoit	Rocky Hill
Raul DeBrigard	MRPA
Mark Quinlan	Governor's Representative
Jeanne Dilworth	Portland
George Frick	Middletown

#### **Others**

Mary Ellen Kowalewski	CRCOG
Marc Nicol	Director of Planning and Park Development, Riverfront Recapture, Inc.

The meeting began at 4:30 p.m. with a guided walking tour of the Hartford Riverwalk from the Greater Hartford Jaycees Community Boathouse to Downtown Hartford. Joseph R. Marfuggi, Riverfront Recapture Inc. (RRI) President and CEO, and Marc Nicol, Director of Planning and Park Development, provided expert commentary on the development and ongoing maintenance of the park system. Along the way, CRA members learned about notable natural features, manmade features, art installations, and gathering places designed to withstand flooding and provide visitors with excellent access to the Connecticut River. The Tour ended at the Connecticut Science Center at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza.

Members also learned about and saw first hand strong interest in RRI's Community Rowing Program, which serves both students and adults.

The group returned to the Boathouse at about 6:45 p.m. for dinner and to conduct the business meeting.

### **Adoption of Minutes: May 21, 2009 and September 10, 2009 Meetings**

Raul DeBrigard made and William Garner seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of the May 21, 2009 and September 10, 2009 meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

**Presentation on Hartford/East Hartford Riverfront Park System and Possible Connections to Neighboring Communities**

Marc Nicol of RRI made a presentation on plans for completing the Colt Gateway/Riverwalk South, which will complete the Hartford/East Hartford Riverfront Park System loop. Mr. Nicol reviewed plans for riverwalk development. While this part of the park represents a small span (approximately 3,800 feet), it is a challenging area due to proximity to I-91, the Hartford Dike system, and a pump house associated with the Hartford Steam Company, which provides heating and cooling for a number of downtown buildings. The total cost for the project is expected to be \$18 to \$19 million. Environmental assessment work on the site will begin fall 2009/winter 2010. The environmental site assessment will be funding in part by CRCOG's EPA-funded MetroHartford Brownfields Assessment Program. It will take 3-5 years to complete the work from planning through construction. This section of the Riverwalk will provide excellent connections to the Sheldon-Charter Oak neighborhood, and the potential redevelopment of the Colt complex.

Mr. Nicol also talked about activities in neighboring communities that in the future, might somehow link to the RRI Park System:

- Windsor. Town is starting to develop a riverfront trail in the southern part of town that could potentially link to the RRI parks. This could lead to potential links to the East Coast Greenway.
- Hartford. The closing of the Hartford landfill in North Hartford, along I-91 opens opportunities for the creation of a new passive recreation area close to the river.
- East Hartford. Planning is underway, and construction funds have been raised, to link the RRI park system to the Charter Oak Greenway. The Greenway currently runs through parts of East Hartford and Manchester, and links to other trails in Vernon. Future links to trails in Bolton are also anticipated.
- East Hartford and Glastonbury. Goodwin College is acquiring large tracts of land along the Connecticut River, and there may someday be trail expansion opportunities through these areas.

Members went on to discuss the special construction and maintenance needs of trails built in floodplain areas, something that RRI is an expert on due to their 20+ years experience in building and maintaining their park system. Riverfront trails and public boat launches are wonderful ways to provide public access to one of the region's most significant public resources—the Connecticut River.

CRA members thanked Marc Nicol and Mr. Marfuggi for the enlightening tour and presentation.

**Working Session on CRA Conservation Zone Map Resource Project**

Due to the late hour, the decision was made to defer this discussion to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

