

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 522-2217 FAX: (860) 724-1274
Web Page: www.crcog.org

MINUTES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

November 15, 2007

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

Lamont Aheart
Horace Brown
Sue Errickson
John Larensen
Mark Drake
Thomas Manning
Karl Profe
Janet Ramsay
Daniel Velcofsky

Town

Vernon
Manchester
Tolland
Marlborough
Simsbury
Bolton
Windsor
Windsor Locks
East Granby

Others Present

Christina Rubenstein	Partnership for Strong Communities
Shelby Mertes	Partnership for Strong Communities
Brenda Watson	CRCOG
Mary Ellen Kowalewski	CRCOG
Rebecca Augur	CRCOG

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Adoption of Minutes

Errickson moved to adopt the minutes from the October 18, 2007 meeting. Profe seconded. The motion passed.

HOME CT Campaign

Ms. Rubenstein and Mr. Mertes talked about recently adopted legislation establishing a Housing Program for Economic Growth. This statute resulted from the HOME CT campaign's efforts last year. Through the program, which is administered by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), towns can adopt overlay Incentive Housing Zones (IHZ) that allow higher density (there is a required minimum density), mixed-income housing (minimum 20% affordable) in exchange for technical assistance and planning money, \$2000 per possible housing unit in the new zone, and an additional \$2000 per unit upon issuance of building permits. The State set aside \$4 million for the first year of the program, and most of that money is expected to go towards technical and planning assistance for towns to consider establishing an IHZ. Ms. Rubenstein and Mr. Mertes strongly encouraged members to consider applying for technical assistance funding. Any interested town or regional planning agency should write to the Secretaries of OPM and DECD expressing an interest in technical assistance funding.

There was some discussion on the type of assistance that might be helpful on a regional level. This could include developing materials on visualizing density along with the types of incentive payments that might accompany actual developments under this program, or retaining legal services for towns to

be able to consult when beginning to write regulations adopting IHZs. The Simsbury representative asked about the possibility of incorporating the overlay zone into Planned Design Development, or Planned Unit Development, regulations. Because of the flexibility of the program, a town would likely be able to incorporate the required provisions for an IHZ into PDD regulations.

CRCOG's Active Transportation Initiative

Ms. Watson discussed CRCOG's Active Transportation Initiative to develop a plan to make the region more bike and pedestrian friendly. She explained that active transportation involves any human-powered transportation. Active transportation depends on a safe network of sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, multi-use trails and other amenities. The goal of the Active Transportation Plan is to create a vision of a more bike and pedestrian friendly region and to identify the steps that could move that vision closer to reality through engineering measures, education, enforcement and encouragement programs. CRCOG anticipates finishing the Plan in February in order to enable the region to potentially obtain federal funding to help implement components of the Plan. Ms. Watson asked members to complete the survey available at <http://www.crcog.org/atisurvey.html> and to encourage others to take the survey.

Discussion followed on the need for more sidewalks, especially around schools and along state roads in town centers and other congested areas, like Rt. 75 in Windsor Locks. In addition, several members expressed the need for better cooperation from DOT on incorporating bike and pedestrian-friendly amenities along state routes.

Report on Zoning, Subdivision, and Plan of Development Referrals:

Rebecca Augur reported on 9 zoning, 1 subdivision and 2 Plan of Development referrals. There was little discussion. Errickson moved and Aheart seconded adoption of the referral comments. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Mary Ellen Kowalewski reminded everyone that she would need to get appointment or re-appointment letters from their local commissions in the coming weeks.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.