

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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MINUTES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

May 17, 2007

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

Horace Brown
Sue Errickson
Chip Houlihan
Pat Kennedy
Rudy Kissman
John Larensen
Brad Pellissier
Karl Profe
Kevin Saunders
Dan Velcofsky

Town

Manchester
Tolland
Simsbury
South Windsor
Manchester
Marlborough
Somers
Windsor
East Windsor
East Granby

Others Present

Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Rebecca Augur
Steve Kushner

CRCOG
CRCOG
Town of Avon

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

Adoption of Minutes

Errickson moved to adopt the minutes from the April 19, 2007 meeting. Kennedy seconded. The motion passed. Saunders abstained.

Avon Transfer of Development Rights

Steve Kushner, Avon Town Planner, discussed Avon's recently adopted Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. He explained that TDR is allowed under Connecticut General Statutes § 8-2, but that few towns have even considered implementing such a program. He went on to explain the concept of TDR, in which developers can purchase the rights to develop land in an area designated for conservation, and then transfer those rights to an area designated for more intense development. In Avon's case, the town planning commission identified parcels within its Village Center that were suitable for higher than currently allowed residential density through a Village Center study process completed in 2005. In 2006, the Commission revised its Plan of Conservation and Development, and identified 32 parcels throughout town suitable for preservation. The TDR regulations establish floating zones of "sending" and "receiving" areas, based on the parcels identified in those two planning projects. The commission struggled with creating a formula for the number of units that could be transferred to achieve

their desires, and provide economic incentive for developers to take advantage of the program. The maximum density that the regulations allow in the receiving areas is 8 units per acre (normally 4 units). And, the regulations specify that the development rights for single-family units can be transferred only to multi-family units. Once a parcel has had its development rights sold, it has a permanent deed restriction placed on it, limiting its use to agriculture; however, the parcel owner maintains fee simple ownership. The regulation will not allow "banking" of development rights, so that a developer must have a completely packaged deal with an exact transfer of credits.

The regulations were only recently adopted, but an interested individual has expressed concern that the formula will only allow a developer to break even, and not realize a profit. The commission is going to wait to see whether a proposal can demonstrate that the formula needs adjusting, or whether they receive no applications before attempting to amend it. Mr. Kushner said that the political process of adopting the TDR regulations was fairly easy. He said that he thought because it's an optional tool, rather than a requirement, interested parties did not feel threatened by it, and therefore, there was very limited public participation in the public hearings and adoption process.

CRCOG Agriculture Viability Project

Rebecca Augur discussed the draft recommendations of CRCOG's model farm friendly zoning regulations project. The recommendations present a framework for regulations specific to agricultural uses, and aim to bolster the economic viability of farm businesses while still allowing commissions to maintain authority over interests of public safety and welfare. The specific recommendations include definitions of agriculture and different types of farms, standards for farm stands and agricultural signs and buildings, among other things. They are available on CRCOG's website.

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

Rebecca Augur reported on 13 zoning, 3 subdivision and 3 Plan of Development referrals. There was little discussion. Errickson moved and Profe seconded adoption of the referral comments. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Mary Ellen Kowalewski announced that Linda Osten, Principal Community Development Planner for CRCOG, has accepted a position with Mutual Housing of Greater Hartford. She commended Ms. Osten for her 9 years of dedicated service to CRCOG. Ms. Kowalewski also handed out flyers for CRCOG's upcoming Community Design workshops. And, she discussed possible upcoming meeting topics, including a discussion by DEP and OPM on how Clean Water funds are allocated to towns, and an American Planning Association presentation on "complete streets."

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.