

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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MINUTES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

November 20, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

Lamont Aheart
Sue Errickson
Patrick Kennedy
Salvatore Mancini
John Larensen
Julie Meyer
Bradley Pellisier
Sandra Bobowski
Karl Robert Profe
Thomas Manning

Town

Vernon
Tolland
South Windsor
Manchester
Marlborough
Simsbury
Somers
Hartford
Windsor
Bolton

Others Present

David Fink Partnership for Strong Communities
Emily Moos CRCOG
Mary Ellen Kowalewski CRCOG

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Sandra Bobowski made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 18, 2008 meeting as recorded. Bradley Pellisier seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON HOME CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

David Fink gave an overview of the HOMEConnecticut Technical Assistance Grant program. Mr. Fink noted that 26 communities have now applied for grants to accomplish a range of activities that the grant money covers. He mentioned these grants range from 35,000 to 50,000 a piece and can fund activities such as planning studies on how to incorporate this type of housing in a particular community. Mr. Fink briefly described the application process and stated that applications already received have been processed and money already awarded. A question was raised about the differences between the HOMEConnecticut housing incentive zone and the 8-30g affordable housing statute that also exists. Mr. Fink described the differences in the regulatory structures of the two programs.

The RPC thanked Mr. Fink for his presentation.

COORDINATING LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANS OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT – WORKING TOWARDS GREATER CONSISTENCY

Mary Ellen Kowalewski gave a brief overview of the focus of today's meeting, which is about local and regional plans of conservation and development, and updates to the Regional Plan. Emily Moos discussed a Municipal Plan Review CRCOG worked on using a graduate student intern, Walter Ramsey. Mr. Ramsey read through all the Capitol Region municipal plans of conservation and development, and summarized the plans while identifying recurring themes. The recurring themes identified were Demographics, Open Space, Housing, Transportation, Agricultural Preservation, Economic Development, Restoring Town Centers, Utilities and Infrastructure, and Land Use. There was a great deal of consistency in issues considered important in local and regional plans. Regional initiatives or projects that were regional in nature were often part of these themes in

the local plans. Ms. Moos then gave a presentation on the Regional Plan Update, which is the result of talking to nearly all the Capitol Region town planners. Ms. Moos distributed a packet of information that included a Conservation and Development Matrix, which is to be used in conjunction with the Plan's land use policy map, and a Municipal Focus Areas chart. Those present felt that the approach we are taking with regard to the land use policy map, the development matrix and summary information regarding municipal focus areas made sense, and that these items would be beneficial additions to the plan. Ms. Moos is still receiving comments and changes submitted by town planners, after which the final draft plan will be issued. Ms. Moos expects the plan to be presented to the CRCOG Policy Board in early 2009.

REPORT ON RESULTS OF FIRST CRCOG REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE AND DISCUSSION OF NEXT SESSION

Mary Ellen Kowalewski distributed a first draft of the summary report of the Regional Roundtable that was held in September. For those present who did not attend, Ms. Kowalewski explained that CRCOG invited a large cross section of people to participate in the event. Prior to the meeting, invitees were encouraged to respond to an online survey, which asked for input on what people liked best about the region, liked least about the region, and the factors that would most affect life in the region in 10 years. The first part of the meeting included a presentation on why it is important to think regionally, and a discussion of the on-line survey results. The second part of the meeting was an hour long facilitated discussion of the question: "In what kind of region do you want to live in 10 years?" Participants were asked to focus on five different aspects of the region's future: the economy, the natural environment, the built environment, transportation, and quality of life issues. It was an invigorating discussion. The draft report summarizes the results of the on-line survey and the facilitated discussion. When complete, the summary will be posted to the CRCOG website.

The next Regional Roundtable is tentatively scheduled for January 2009. This meeting will delve more deeply into the issues raised at the first session. Several areas will be explored:

1. **Perceptions vs. Reality.** The second roundtable will begin with an examination of factors identified as what we like best or least in the Capitol Region, and compare our perceptions regarding these factors to empirical data. We will test how accurate our perceptions are, for a subset of the factors that are measurable.
2. After a review of the results of Roundtable #1's visioning exercise, participants will engage in a facilitated discussion that will explore the **obstacles and opportunities** to achieving the vision identified for each of the major issue areas: the economy, the natural environment, the built environment, transportation, and quality of life.
3. Information will be provided on **what is being done now** by CRCOG and other public and private entities to make these vision statements a reality.

After that meeting, CRCOG will have a better idea of what the priorities are and what the barriers are.

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

Emily Moos reported on this month's referrals. There was little discussion. Sue Errickson made a motion to accept the report on zoning and subdivision referrals as presented. Patrick Kennedy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Other Business

Mary Ellen Kowalewski announced two meetings that might be of interest to commission members. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.