

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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MINUTES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

April 17, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

Monty Aheart
Sandra Bobowski
Patrick Kennedy
Rudolph Kissman
John Larensen
Julie Meyer
Earl Munroe
Karl Profe

Town

Vernon
Hartford
South Windsor
Manchester
Marlborough
Simsbury
Wethersfield
Windsor

Others Present

Emily Moos
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Rebecca Augur
Greg Hyme

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West Hartford News

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Adoption of Minutes

Kissman moved to adopt the minutes from the March 20, 2008 meeting. Profe seconded. The motion passed.

CRCOG Regional Roundtables

Mary Ellen Kowalewski spoke about CRCOG's plans for its first regional roundtable. Under the Governor's Executive Order No. 15 from 2006, OPM was directed to organize regional roundtables in the State's 15 regions to "invite the ongoing participation of city and town officials and foster the development of planning agendas tailored to the specific needs of different parts of our state." Each region is expected to hold four roundtables per year. In addition, state staff is supposed to be available to attend and speak about any topics the region requests.

CRCOG is planning its first roundtable for June, and hopes to start off with a facilitated discussion amongst a wide variety of stakeholders about the strengths and weaknesses of the region. The invitation list will include municipal officials and staff, as well as representatives of regional economic development and social agencies, utilities, environmental groups and others. This assessment can provide a springboard for future roundtable topics and establishing a strategic vision for the region.

CRCOG would like to have Regional Planning Commission input in these sessions. All members will be invited; however, a commitment by one or two members to try to attend all roundtables and serve as a liaison to the Commission would be welcome. Please contact Mary Ellen, if you are interested.

CRCOG Community Design Resource Project

Mary Ellen Kowalewski and Emily Moos discussed the community design project that the University of Hartford and CRCOG have been working on for the past several months. The purpose of the project is to assess current resources available to and used by communities in the region to achieve better community design, and make recommendations on improving those resources and their use. The first phase of the project presented commonly accepted concepts of smart growth and livable communities to numerous participants through a series of workshops, and then solicited feedback on how those concepts relate to participants' individual communities. They were asked what they think makes a place livable, and what is needed to make their towns more livable. Emily Moos discussed community design concepts, such as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks, and their relation to smart growth and livable communities. Good design fosters livable communities and reinforces smart growth principles. Phase two of the project is underway now and involves further refining the region's priorities for enhancing community design support. This phase involves researching how other regions in the country support their municipalities, continuing to gather information from municipal officials and design professionals in the region on their needs and making recommendations. The project should wrap up in the fall. Commission members then completed a survey for the project.

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

Rebecca Augur reported on this month's referrals, and some issues that may be cropping up in other towns, including regulating changeable electronic message boards, reducing the percentage of units required for older residents only in age-restricted housing regulations, and revising flood zone regulations to meet new FEMA requirements. There was little discussion. Bobowski moved adoption of the comments and Kennedy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.