

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

April 16, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

John Larensen, Chairman
Mark S. Drake
Sandra Bobowski
Bruce Mortimer
Sal Mancini
Alan Gootkin (alternate)
Linda Keith
Brad Pellisier
Lamont Aheart

Town

Marlborough
Simsbury
Hartford
Canton
Manchester
Manchester
Avon
Somers
Vernon

Others Present

Emily Moos	CRCOG
Mary Ellen Kowalewski	CRCOG

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Action items were deferred until a quorum was present.

REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Mary Ellen Kowalewski reviewed the revised schedule for adoption of the Regional Plan Update. The RPC would complete its review and acceptance of the narrative chapters at the April 16 and May 21st meetings. CRCOG staff would make a presentation on the Proposed Regional Plan Update to the CRCOG Policy Board at its April 22nd meeting. The Policy Board would conduct its final discussion on May 27th and then refer the plan to public hearing. In June, CRCOG would issue a formal notice of public hearing and open a 65-day public comment period. A public hearing on the plan update would be held in late August/early September 2009. The RPC would review and incorporate, as necessary, any public comment at its September 17th meeting. The plan would then be referred to the Policy Board, for its action on September 23rd. This schedule seemed reasonable to RPC members.

Lamont Aheart joined the meeting during this agenda item, providing the quorum for the meeting.

RPC members had no further comments on the Regional Plan chapters discussed in February: Chapter 4, Watersheds and Water Quality; and Chapter 8, Public Sewer and Water Service. It was the consensus of those present to accept the chapters as presented.

Emily Moos, Senior Community Development Planner, gave a presentation on the text changes to four chapters of the Regional Plan Document: Chapter 3, Natural Resource Conservation; Chapter 5, Open Space and Farmland Preservation; Chapter 6, Food System; and Chapter 7, Land Use and Zoning. The only comments made by members related to acknowledging the need to improve and maintain the water quality of man-made ponds, not just natural ponds. Sometimes such water bodies become degraded and

require restoration. Staff would check to see if there was some place to incorporate this concept in Chapter 3.

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

Emily Moos reported on this month's referrals. After some discussion, Linda Keith made and Brad Pellisier seconded a motion to accept the report on zoning and subdivision referrals as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes

Sandra Bobowski made and Lamont Aheart seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 19, 2009 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Results of Second Capitol Region Roundtable

Mary Ellen Kowalewski reviewed the summary of discussion at the Regional Roundtable, which was held on February 26th.

The results of Roundtable #1 were used to establish "ideal states" for each of the four areas discussed at the first meeting. These formed the structure for a force field analysis. They were:

- **Ideal state for the economy:** A prosperous region with a diverse economy that retains current businesses, and attracts emerging next generation businesses.
- **Ideal state for the built environment:** A sustainable region with a mix of attractive places which are more compact, connected and people-friendly.
- **Ideal state for the natural environment:** Natural resources that are preserved and conserved; new development requires sustainability.
- **Ideal state for transportation:** More and better transportation choices (transit—auto—bike/ped) connecting places and activities.

The participants were then divided into four groups. Each group had 17 minutes to conduct a force field analysis for each of the ideal states (12 minutes for discussion and 5 minutes for picking top three driving forces/restraining forces). The groups were asked to brainstorm:

- **What are the driving forces that will help us achieve this ideal state?**
- **What are the restraining forces that will keep us from achieving our ideal state?**

In the final 2 minutes each person received three dots, and was asked to place these dots next to:

- **The driving forces that if strengthened, would have the greatest impact on achieving the ideal state.**
- **The restraining forces that if weakened, would have the greatest impact on achieving the ideal state.**

People could place their dots on either side—driving or restraining. They were also asked to focus on those things that the state or towns could do something about. The group results were combined, and the top three driving/restraining forces that the region and state need to work on to achieve each of the ideal states were recorded. The results of the force field analysis were reviewed.

In the next roundtable, we will begin to discuss potential strategies to enhance those positive drivers that lead us to the "ideal states", and strategies to overcome the restraining forces that keep us from

what we would like to see for our built environment, the natural environment, the economy and transportation. We will also start to establish priorities for action—including ways to coordinate action at the municipal, regional and state level to achieve our desired goals.

Ms. Kowalewski stated that the ultimate goal of our combined actions is to achieve an improved quality of life in the Capitol Region.

Other Business

Mary Ellen Kowalewski and Emily Moos reported on several workshop training opportunities to be held in the Capitol Region in May:

- EPA/CRCOG Smart Growth Implementation Workshops on the evening of May 14 and May 16, a.m. and p.m.;
- Edgeless Cities Course—May 28 and 29;
- Julie Campoli, Visualizing Density, May 15, 2009.

They encouraged RPC members to attend one or more of these events.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.