

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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MINUTES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

September 18, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates

Sandra Bobowski	<u>Town</u> Hartford
Jeff Carboneau	Suffield
Thomas Manning	Bolton
Linda Keith	Avon
Karl Profe	Windsor
John Larensen	Marlborough
Julie Meyer	Simsbury
Bradley Pellissier	Somers

Others Present

Mary Ellen Kowalewski	CRCOG
Emily Moos	CRCOG

Chairman Larensen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The adoption of minutes was deferred until a quorum was present.

Regional Plan Update

CRCOG Community Development Planner, Emily Moos presented the methodology behind the Draft Land Use Policy Map for the 2008 update of the CRCOG Regional Plan. As previously mentioned, Governor Rell's Executive Order 15 has called for an update of the Regional Plan in the year 2008 to insure consistency with the six growth management principles of the State Plan of Conservation and Development. The draft map is based upon two main layers. The first is the Priority Lands for Conservation layer which represents those forested or wetland areas, located at least 500' from development, that are not currently protected, and that contain at least one of the following five features: potential rare or threatened species, potential habitat area, aquifer protection area, prime farmland soil, or that abut protected lands. The second is a development layer created at the CRCOG Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) scale which portrays a development intensity gradient showing lower intensity development areas through higher intensity development areas. The four shades indicate a particular TAZ's population, employment, zoning and proximity to sewer, water and transit station areas. Also displayed on the draft map are 100 & 500 Year FEMA flood zones as well as Federal, State and Municipal open space.

Over the past few months CRCOG has worked to develop this methodology and consult with all municipal planners in the Capitol Region to ensure compatibility with municipal plans of conservation and development. CRCOG is still in the process of looking to municipal planners to provide feedback on the accuracy of this draft map and on areas of municipal focus.

Regional Planning Commission members present were asked to comment on what the most pressing issues regarding conservation and development are in their respective municipalities at the moment.

The following summarizes their comments:

Marlborough:

The town is working toward a Town Center Plan.

Simsbury:

The town is working toward holding a charrette focusing on Route 10, the town center and the northern and southern gateways.

Somers:

The town has been focused on efforts to revitalize the Somersville Mill area by producing a separate plan for that area within the town plan of conservation and development

Suffield:

The town's Heritage & Planning Commission is working toward opening a public discussion about the vision for the town's future, particularly a vision for the town center. There is also discussion about Fyler place and what to do with this center – mixed use has been discussed as an option. The town's cell tower has been moved. Also a proposal for bio-diesel has been voted down and cogeneration may take its place.

Avon:

There has been a recent change in environmental protection regulations. Also, there is a proposal for an assisted living facility near Route 10 and the Simsbury border in which a large percentage of land is preserved.

Windsor:

The town has moved forward with adding a chapter on the Day Hill Area to its plan of conservation and development. This chapter encourage a mix of uses, traditional neighborhood development and methods to mitigate future traffic impacts on surrounding areas. ING has moved to the Day Hill Road area. International Drive has become a boulevard. In the town center, the condominiums near the rail line are fully occupied and are a promising sign for further redevelopment at other properties nearby.

Hartford:

Hartford is working on its new plan of conservation and development, a process which gives each neighborhood NRZ a chance to do visioning for their neighborhood. Through this process the city is also thinking about connecting greenways, promoting cohesive development in downtown which includes lots of housing and an effort to bolster the existing young professional population that has been attracted to downtown. The city would like to promote student housing in the downtown area as there are many schools such as Trinity, UConn and Capitol Community College located inside city limits. Also related to education, the city has found that its magnet and charter schools are doing very well and that they have attracted younger families from outside of the city. The city has also seen some businesses move back from the suburbs and wants to continue this trend, particularly by moving forward with the plans coming out of the Hartford 2010 study. The city is also very proud of its efforts on Riverfront Recapture and the Riverwalk.

One concern is the changing over of residential housing stock to non-profit establishments which causes housing stock to dwindle and takes properties off the tax records.

A question was asked about the Equestrian Center in Keney Park. Thus far the project has not had adequate support to come to fruition. The Friends of Keney Park have not been in favor of commercial

development in this park.

Report on September 11, 2008 Capitol Region Roundtable

Mary Ellen Kowalewski reported on the September 11, 2008 Capitol Region Roundtable. There were 76 people in attendance with a range of municipal officials, outside agencies and CRCOG staff. Mary Ellen summarized the first half of the workshop which featured a presentation by Carol Atkinson Palombo on the importance of thinking regionally and comments made by Glenn Chalder, roundtable facilitator in his presentation on survey results gathered in the month prior to the event. There were 98 respondents to the survey which posed the following three questions: What do you like most about living and working in the Capitol Region? What do you like least about living and working the Capitol Region? What do you feel will most affect your life in the Capitol Region in the next ten years? The top responses to the first question were proximity both to services and resources within the Capitol Region and to major cities and amenities outside the region; culture, arts and recreational opportunities and transportation, or mobility. The top responses to the second question were crime, and concerns about safety; lack of transit options and auto dependency and traffic congestion. The top responses to the third question were the economy and the availability of jobs; property and income taxes and lack of transportation alternatives.

Mary Ellen explained that the second half of the workshop was an interactive session asking participants to expand upon what they felt they would like the future of the region to look like in five different areas, transportation, the economy, the natural environment, the built environment and the quality of life. The outcome of these discussions and also the survey results have been transcribed and will be posted on CRCOG's website.

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

Emily Moos reported on this month's referrals. The majority of the zoning referrals had to do with changes that FEMA required of municipalities to insure continued eligibility for the National Flood Insurance Program.

One proposed regulation that sparked interest was New Hartford's windmill regulation – a company called Optiwind is proposing this regulation to allow for, and regulate the construction of Windmills, Towers and Energy Producing Wind devices for the farming of wind energy.

The only POCD referral received was from Windsor regarding the new Day Hill Area chapter of their plan. CRCOG commended the town on its effort to encourage a mix of uses including a variety of housing opportunities as well as its effort to manage and mitigate traffic impacts of continued development in the area by recommending Traffic Demand Management Strategies, multi-modal transportation options and traditional neighborhood development. These are initiatives that are not only consistent with the CRCOG Regional Plan, but also with our Regional Transportation Plan.

As a quorum had been reached at this point, Sandra Bobowski made a motion to approve the Zoning and Subdivision Referrals. Bradley Pellissier seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to accept the referrals as reported was cast.

Adoption of Minutes

Now having the necessary quorum, Bradley Pellessier made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 19th meeting. Sandra Bobowski seconded the motion and a vote to accept the minutes was cast with one abstention from Thomas Manning who was not present at the June 19th meeting.

Other Business

Jeff Carboneau noted that the Town of Suffield is looking for a consultant to help with their Plan of Conservation and Development update.

Linda Keith of Avon asked whether anyone on the commission had information on placing housing in industrial zones. There is a proposal to construct an active adult housing development on an industrial piece of property in the Town of Avon.

There being no other business, Sandra Bobowski made a motion and Karle Profe seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm.