

ROUTE 6 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: 9:00am by Joyce Stille

PLACE: Columbia Town Hall Meeting Room

ROLL CALL: Joyce Stille (Administrative Officer - Town of Bolton); Eric M. Trott (Planner – Town of Coventry); Terri-Ann Hahn (LADA, Land Planners); Leigh Ann Hutchinson (PZC – Town of Andover); Carol Polsky (EDC – Town of Coventry; Elaine Buchardt (Selectman/EDC – Town of Andover); Jonathan Luiz (Town Administrator – Town of Columbia); Carmen Vance (Selectman– Town of Columbia); Michael Galante (FP Clark Associates); Lia Huang (CRCOG); Mark Waterhouse (Garnet Consulting Services, Inc); Jennifer Carrier (CRCOG); Cathy Teller (Bolton – EDC); Don Cianci (Columbia – delegate)

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: No Comment.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Polsky and seconded by Trott to adopt the minutes of the November 16, 2009 meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CRCOG TRANSPORTATION STUDY:

Jennifer Carrier reported that the agreement with the consultant on the transportation study should be finalized in December. The new consultant is looking to attend the December public workshops to gain background. Other workshops will be held as well. More traffic counting will occur with the new consultant.

Lia Huang provided an overview of the corridor study process. It is anticipated that the consultant will start in January and complete the project in 2011 with close coordination with LADA during their active period. The project will incorporate a multi-modal planning process to prepare a master plan to improve the efficiency of the public infrastructure and accommodate growth within specific guidelines by incorporating a context sensitive design.

The consultant will analyze the existing conditions, consider where development is desirable and gain public input through the process to make recommendations in harmony with the Council's goals. Next, they will analyze future conditions, traffic patterns and potential growth. The following step is to evaluate alternatives and develop a plan of recommendations.

Input will be provided by the Council, communities, other stakeholders and public outreach will occur through the web, local cable access and newspapers.

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#### DISCUSSION ON STEAP GRANT WITH CONSULTANT

The updated mapping was reviewed by the Council. Photos were compiled along the corridor. Tax map parcel data was incorporated. The existing land use details are in progress with more details to come. Commercial land use parcels have been identified. State and Town parcels have also been identified. The accuracy of the zoning designations need to be checked. Significant views were included in the mapping as well.

Wetlands and soils mapping data needs to be expanded to better determine the viability of development at certain locations. Significant slope areas and 'topo differential' has been identified. Vegetative cover and species are included with fairly consistent varieties being noted.

The site analysis combines all the environment data layers to better determine development viability.

Mark Waterhouse provided some details on the status of his report. He indicated that the status of the economy makes it challenging to promote economic development but it is a good time to plan. It was noted that there is slower investment east of Hartford and that there is significant vacant space available in larger markets which makes it hard for our region to compete.

It has been noted that the overall desired economic development is small scale, high quality, visually attractive and non-obtrusive projects. The larger markets in Manchester, South Windsor and East Hartford are the larger destination markets. Lots with existing buildings appears more desirable to the market.

There is some potential for a business park project in corridor. The new tax sharing legislation was discussed but seems impractical due the fact that no federally recognized economic development district has been identified, which is a requirement for the legislation.

A virtual building tour can assist with marketing efforts and advertising. Home based business support which can lead to brick and mortar economic development is important.

The clustering of recreation oriented business near trail access areas is a possible idea. Nodal development with access management is preferred.

There appears to be a conflict with the State's POCD between rural conservation areas and areas identified for possible economic development. This will need to be addressed. Regional Plans may assist with the situation.

It was recommended that specific zoning regulations and design guidelines be created for the corridor. The branding of the corridor is important. Connections with higher education facilities are worth

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pursuing. A grocery store (Aldis) may be a good match as well. Big box stores are a concern. Agri-tourism/business is a good focus. A tech corridor concept is a possibility as well.

Mike Galante gave a report on the status of his findings. His firm is in the process of data collection. A meeting was held with DOT to discuss a variety of issues including: roundabouts, traffic calming, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, signage, major intersections and infrastructure improvements.

Traffic calming is very important in the corridor and a variety of techniques can be implemented to accomplish that. Bike lanes did not seem prudent at first glance. Supplemental signs for the Towns, such as gateway signs, are desirable. The removal of the headlight requirement sign was discussed. Landscaping at gateway locations and other aesthetic improvements are desirable

No improvements to the corridor are planned by DOT at the moment.

The identification of nodes for future development is helpful to determine traffic needs. The input from the workshops will assist in this as well. The key site identification is an important next step in preparing the final report

NEXT MEETING DATE/AGENDA: The next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2010 at 9:00am in the Columbia Town Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric M. Trott

Secretary