

ROUTE 6 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, July 27, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: 9:12 AM by Joyce Stille

PLACE: Columbia Town Hall Meeting Room, 323 Route 87, Columbia

ROLL CALL: Joyce Stille (Administrator – Town of Bolton); Elaine Buchardt (EDC – Town of Andover); Leigh Ann Hutchinson (PZC – Town of Andover); Carmen Vance (1<sup>st</sup> Selectman, Columbia); Vera Englert (PZC / EDC – Town of Columbia); Jana Butts, AICP, Senior Planner, WINCOG and Columbia Town Planner; Eric Trott, AICP (Town Planner, Town of Coventry) (arrived at 9:15 AM) John D. Pagini, AICP (Community Development Director – Town of Bolton); Terri-Ann Hahn (LADA, Land Planners); Chris Korbel (LADA); Lia Huang (CRCOG); Mark Waterhouse, Garnet Consulting.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: No Comment.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Approval of the minutes was deferred until the next meeting.

CRCOG CORRIDOR STUDY

Lia Huang reported on the progress of the CRCOG. She noted that additional speed data was being gathered along Route 6 both from DOT and by installing additional measuring devices. She stated that the next meeting with a full report by the consultant would be on August 23.

DESIGN ISSUES

Terri Hahn presented revised plans showing streetscape improvements. John Pagini stated that the sidewalks appeared to be unchanged from the prior plans, and thought that brick or pavers were agreed to at the last meeting. Ms. Hahn noted that LADA had added a brick course to the sidewalk plan. She stated that if the sidewalks were shown as brick on the plan, they would not be discernable. It was finally decided that the plans would show the sidewalks for illustrative purposes, but include a note that the sidewalks are to be brick or pavers.

A question was raised concerning who will be responsible for placing utilities underground. Terri Hahn explained that this is the ultimate goal under the plan, and that a strategy needs to be devised for the funding of all improvements .

The sight line at the Columbia intersection of Cards Mill and Commerce Street was also questioned. Terri Hahn stated that this issue would need to be addressed at such time as the reconfiguration of the intersection is addressed in the Transportation Study.

## CORRIDOR PLAN DISCUSSION

Terri Hahn asked for any edits to the overall Corridor Plan. Joyce Stille asked that the note concerning the intersection realignment be revised to suggest that the specific design would be prepared in connection with the CROG Corridor Study.

John Pagini noted that the designation for the Post Farm may change after consultation with Mrs. Post. He noted that the possibility of a Commercial Agricultural designation was possible. No response had yet been received from Mrs. Post after a letter had been sent to her.

Terri Hahn also noted that the Plan does not address zoning between nodes. John Pagini suggested that at least some mention should be made concerning the preferred type of land use regulation for these areas, such as cluster subdivision regulations.

Terri Hahn then passed out the first draft of proposed Corridor Regulations for informational purposes.

Jana Butts asked that a note be added to the State of Connecticut property at Route 6 and 66 which says "Improve Parking Area".

Jana Butts also suggested that the name of the node at Routes 6 and 66 be changed from Katzman's Corner to another name, since the name is not well known and reflects a prior owner no longer present. It was agreed to rename the node "Lighthouse Corner".

Jana Butts also felt that the acronym "WWTP" should be spelled out as "Wastewater Treatment Plant" on all notes.

There was also brief discussion about the Pario Bikaya property.

Jana Butts also asked about the status of the property at the Andover and Columbia Town line that was the subject of a rezoning. She felt that the high density residential designation may not be appropriate. She noted that the recent rezoning included commercial property. The members of the Committee from other towns noted that they were unaware of the rezoning. Elaine Buchardt explained that the zone change included two commercial properties, and that the rezoning request had been "in the works" for about a year. John Pagini expressed concern that the rezoning was not in compliance with the evolving Corridor Plan, and felt that having commercial property not encompassed by the Corridor Regulations and Guidelines could have an adverse impact on the character of the corridor as a whole.

Carmen Vance expressed a concern that the Planning and Zoning Commissions need to be on board with respect to the Plan and Regulations. She advocated for a joint meeting of all the Commissions, and Leigh Ann Hutchinson agreed. Although there was some skepticism about the ability to get all the Commission members from all Towns together at one time, it was finally agreed that this was the preferred goal.

Jana noted that the materials are routinely sent to the Columbia PZC, with a meeting pending in a few days. John Pagini noted that workshop with the Bolton PZC in several weeks would also bring them up to date.

#### DRAFT ZONING REGULATIONS / DESIGN GUIDELINES

Terri Hahn presented the outline of the proposed Regulations and the proposed Chapter 14, which is the basis and background to the Regulations. She noted that it is a considerable challenge to create Regulations for the 4 Towns. There are differences in terminology that need to be resolved (i.e., Special Permit vs. Special Exception). What needs to be resolved are the submission requirements, signage, and definition of uses, noting that the Regulations will differ somewhat from node to node due to character differences between the nodes.

Terri Hahn explained that the future role of the Route 6 EDC needs to be decided relative to regulation of land uses in the Corridor. Will it become a Development Agency? Will it have an advisory role in zoning decisions?

Eric Trott felt that the role of the Route 6 EDC may be limited if the Regulations and in particular the Design Guidelines are implemented uniformly and taken seriously.

John Pagini suggested that perhaps the Route 6 EDC may issue Certificates of Compliance after initial review.

Leigh Ann Hutchinson expressed concern too many regulatory or review layers may make the process too complicated and burdensome. John Pagini felt that concurrent reviews can be designed into the process, but agreed that the process needed to be streamlined. Carmen Vance felt that the Regulations and the Towns needed to give clear direction to future applicants.

John Pagini felt that the diverse parking standards and signage regulations needed to be standardized for the Corridor. He mentioned the efforts of the Town to redraft its signage Regulations through a Committee that included the local EDC and business community.

John Pagini also felt that the State needed to step up to the plate with respect to changes in the State Plan of Conservation and Development, which designates much of the Corridor as Rural Conservation.

Terri Hahn added that the two regional plans need to be taken seriously by OPM.

John Pagini suggested that the Route 6 EDC should seek awards for the plan from various groups, such as CTASLA and CCAPA in order to elevate the plan in the eyes of OPM and the legislature. He agreed to look into the CCAPA awards which are made in the fall of each year.

Mark Waterhouse noted that there was some encouraging news coming from the legislature. He noted that PA 9-231 already authorized 2 or more communities to enter into cooperative agreements. He stated at newly passed PA 10-168 approved a process for creating Economic

Development Districts. He described the process as “bureaucratic” but it now opens the door for the creation of locally determined regional economic development districts, based upon approved economic development strategies. The process would require federal approval of the district and strategy. He felt that John Shemo (MetroHartford Alliance), Mark Paquette (WINCOG), Lyle Wray (CRCOG), and DECD officials should be sought out to help determine and drive the process. The Governor must take action to declare the creation of the District (there can be no more than 8 districts statewide under the legislation). After gubernatorial action, the district goes to the Federal EDA for district approval. The districts can include areas with multiple Social & Economic Development Strategies (SEDS).

#### PLAN OUTLINE AND ORGANIZATION / NEXT STEPS

Terri Hahn explained further that the Plan will include 70 page Executive Summary – essential, since the document is expected to be quite voluminous. This will be available for all towns.

The next task would be to refine the zoning, and additional materials will be forwarded the week leading to the next meeting.

Given the volume of materials that comprise the Plan, Jana Butts suggested that a great deal of energy be put into making the website the principal source of information on the Plan. She felt that maintaining the site was a very cost-effective way to disseminate this information.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE

The next scheduled meetings are August 9 and August 23.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Leigh Ann Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jana Butts, and motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 AM.