



NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor, Waterbury, CT 06702 • 203-757-0535 • 203-735-8688

MEETING MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Regional Planning Commission (RPC)
of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
49 Leavenworth Street – 3rd floor, Waterbury, CT
Virtual Meeting on ZOOM
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Attendance: Gary Giordano, Bethlehem; David White, Bristol; Nicole Cignoli, Derby; Lori Rotella, Naugatuck; Gil Graveline, Prospect; Jim Baldwin, Seymour; Ginny Harger, Shelton; Stacy Sefcik, Thomaston; Robert Clarke, Woodbury.

Staff: Richard Crowther, GIS Analyst; Joanna Rogalski, Senior Regional Planner; Keith Rosenfeld, Shared Municipal Planner.

Guests: None

Members of the Public: 0

The meeting opened at 6:33 PM.

1. Commencement of Meeting
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance - The pledge of allegiance was recited.
 - b. Roll Call – A quorum was obtained for this meeting.
 - c. Public Comment – No public comment was submitted before the meeting, no public comment at this time.
2. Administrative Items
 - a. Adoption of February 2, 2021 Meeting minutes as presented (motion) - Motion made by Bob Clarke, seconded by David White. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed.
 - b. Referrals – Keith Rosenfeld reported about the fourteen (14) referrals received by the NVCOG from its members and the eleven (11) referrals received from non-NVCPG members since February 2, 2021. One interesting referrals from Meriden described a proposed zoning text change to allow for worship use in Industrial zone.
 - c. Correspondence – Joanna Rogalski reported no formal correspondence other than inquiries regarding how proposed Senate Bill 888, which would legalize recreational marijuana use, would change the municipal land uses.
3. Discussion regarding various State bills pertaining to Zoning and Land Use proposed during the CGA 2021 Legislative Session

Discussion ensued on the topic of Senate Bill 1024 - An act concerning zoning authority, certain design guidelines, qualifications of certain land use officials and certain sewage disposal systems. Stacey Sefcik, Thomaston RPC rep, described the testimony she presented at the Committee public hearing. This testimony was done on the request of Thomaston First Selectman Ed Mone. Most concerning was the provision that the Zoning Commission would hear appeals, not the Zoning Board of Appeals; this was seen as against procedural fairness. The proposed annual Commissioner training provision may result in Thomaston Commissioners resigning their Commissions.

Next Ginny Harger, Shelton PZC chair, described parts of her testimony at the public hearing for SB 1024, suggesting that revoking or lowering the 40-year deed restriction to 10 years would be more effective at increasing affordable housing units as it would give developers more incentive to do so in their proposals. She felt a better strategy for increasing home ownership would be to improve an individual's means to buy a home by not burdening employers with taxes which can limit business expansion and the ability to hire more workers. Ms. Harger also commented on SB 87, HB 6611, HB 6612, HB 6613 and SB 1068. She added that it seemed that the same provisions were introduced in multiple bills.

Next, Bob Clarke, Woodbury RPC rep, stated that he viewed the Commissioner training provision of SB 1024 to be good in theory but a bit much as presented in the bill. He agreed with requiring CAZEO certification for ZEO's.



Regarding land use commission training, the CT Bar Association land use law sessions were cited as the best for Commissioners, and particularly the one conducted virtually this year.

Discussion ensued regarding SB 888 - An act responsibly and equitably regulating adult-use cannabis. Joanna Rogalski described a recent request from Prospect for model reg's pertaining to recreational marijuana uses, and the call received from a representative of the Cannabis Retailers. Other than Prospect and Naugatuck, the RPC reps did not know of similar calls to their municipalities. Gil Graveline, Prospect RPC rep, stated that he could not find the word "retail" in SB 888 which was concerning.

4. Roundtable – Discussion of Local Activities and municipal land use processes

Seymour – Jim Baldwin, Building Inspector

Land Use department has been busy. The real estate market is red hot and Seymour has new construction. There is concern over the higher costs for building materials.

Bristol – Dave White, Planning Commission

Regarding the Depot Square development, there is a commitment from the Carrier company to build a mix use residential and ground floor business. Apartments and condos have been proposed for the Sessions Building and the former Webster Office Building on 10 Main St. He has not seen any proposals for affordable housing.

Naugatuck – Lori Rotella, Town Planner

The real estate market is hot – there are twelve (12) houses for sale. A Popeye's restaurant has been approved. The Dunkin Donuts restaurant is moving across the street from its current location. There is hope that festivals will soon return.

Woodbury – Bob Clarke, Zoning Commission

Nothing new to report since last RPC meeting.

Prospect – Gil Graveline

Lots of applications for home occupations, including many online distributors. Site plans have been submitted for industrial developments. A question was posed for the RPC: one resident wants to build a bathroom inside his detached garage – would other Towns allow this use? Shelton rep Ginny Harger stated that a similar application was made in Shelton, and the P&Z Commission allowed heating to be installed but not a bathroom.

Shelton – Ginny Harger, Planning and Zoning Commission

A thirty (30) unit apartment development has been approved behind Howe Avenue. On Bridgeport Avenue, a Ruby Tuesday has moved out and a Marketplace has been approved to move into that space. A six lot subdivision has been approved. A 170,000 square foot industrial space has been approved. A forty-seven (47) unit apartment building which includes 6 units of affordable housing has been approved. Need to verify state affordable housing guidelines with corporation counsel – can a landlord determine only one-bedroom units as affordable housing?

Derby – Nicole Cignoli, Elected

Restaurants asking for expansion of COVID era land uses. Development on South side of Main Street is on hold.

Bethlehem – Gary Giordano - Elected

Quiet.

Thomaston – Stacey Sefcik, Land Use Administrator

Many text amendments have been submitted. The new brewery has submitted an outdoor entertainment application. The real estate market is buzzing. Many residential additions being made, such as pools.



Waterbury – Gil Graveline (not the official RPC rep however he works in the Waterbury Land Use Department)

New homes are being built – first time in many years. There were four (4) permits issued for duplexes. More activity in downtown development converting offices to apartments. Major demolitions of industrial buildings between West Main Street and Freight Street.

5. Update regarding the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development

Joanna Rogalski reported there has been no new work on the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The NVCOG has hired an Assistant Planning Director and is in the process of interviewing candidates for NVCOG planning staff positions which may help with this project.

6. Update regarding Long-Term Recovery Committees

Joanna Rogalski reported that there is a lot of focus on vaccinations. Case numbers of COVID positive persons are increasing. The greatest need in Region 5 of persons with COVID is food security, as reported by the Community Resource Coordinators who assist them. Recent unmet needs submitted to the Long-Term Recovery Committee via the online unmet needs form centered on the need for funding and guidance for the Arts, Culture, Tourism and Recreation sectors as they alter programming and fund-raising to outdoor venues in response to the need for COVID safety practices. The Philanthropy and Finance sectors are asking for a one stop website listing all the types of funding available to non-profits.

7. Other

Question from Lori Rotella regarding the continuation of the RPC virtual meeting format. She recommends the virtual meeting format continue even when in-person meetings are resumed. She finds that more people attend and a quorum has been easier to attain. Joanna Rogalski stated that the NVCOG offices have been following the State guidelines for in-person office attendance, and currently the office is limited to ten persons present at one time. Current NVCOG Board is operating under a hybrid meeting structure. Jim Baldwin and Ginny Harger like the virtual meeting format. Jim Baldwin commented that the virtual meeting format might encourage more people to attend during future meetings.

Joanna Rogalski suggested that for the June meeting new structures for the RPC be formally recommended by the RPC for adoption by the NVCOG Board. To that end, an Executive Committee meeting may be called to discuss the recommendations in more detail.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Bob Clarke, seconded by Gil Graveline. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Joanna Rogalski, Senior Regional Planner
NVCOG