



# NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

#### Regional Planning Commission

Virtual Video Conference Meeting – [YouTube Link](#)

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 6, 2023

**RPC Representatives:** David White, Bristol; Lori Rotella, Naugatuck; Kim McNeill, Southbury; Gino DiGiovanni, Jr., Derby; Stacey Sefcik, Thomaston; Bob Nerney, Waterbury; Curtis Bosco, Middlebury; Daniel Divito, Watertown.

**Staff:** Josh Lecar, Joanna Rogalski, Christine O’Neill, Richard Crowther, Jr., Cole Burnham, Savannah-Nicole Villalba.

#### 1. Commencement of Meeting

Chairman David White called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll was called. There was no public comment.

#### 2. Administrative Items

- a. *Adoption of April 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes* – On a motion by Lori Rotella, seconded by Kim McNeill, with Bob Nerney abstaining, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 4, 2023 RPC meeting.

- b. *Referrals Report* – Ms. Rogalski reported there were nine (9) referrals received since March 31, which is about half the amount normally received in a 2-month timeframe. Five referrals were from within the region and four from outside. Cheshire has proposed a temporary moratorium on all development in the commercial zones of C1, C2, and C3, planned residential and Special Development Districts, and has proposed adding cannabis uses per PA21-1.

- c. *Correspondence* – Among NVCOG staff and the Executive Committee members regarding the Executive Committee officer elections for the 2023-2024 term.

#### 3. Regional Planning Commission Executive Board Elections

Mr. White, in his capacity as the Nominating Committee, presented a slate consisting of all current officers, all to be re-nominated to their current positions for an additional term, noting that there were no other candidates for nomination brought forward for consideration by the Nominating Committee, and absent any nominations made from the floor and properly seconded to the Chair by any members of the RPC present and eligible to vote:

Acting as the Nominating Committee, *Mr. White made the following motion:*

To direct the Secretary to cast one ballot in favor of the following slate:

- RPC Vice-Chairperson: Lori Rotella, Naugatuck,
- RPC Secretary, Stacey Sefcik, Thomaston,
- At-Large Representatives: Curtis Bosco, Middlebury; Margus Laan, Plymouth, to serve for the 2023-2024 term.

The motion was Seconded by Lori Rotella

Mr. White asked if there were any objections. None were stated.

A quorum being present, the Chair declared that, without objection, the motion passed by unanimous ballot of those members present and voting.

#### 4. Annual Meeting Discussion

##### a. Remarks from RPC Chair

- Mr. White stated that the April 2023 guest presentation by Becky Bradley from the Lehigh Valley Regional Planning Commission about distribution facilities and warehouses was very informative and useful.
- Mr. White personally thanked NVCOG staff person Christine O’Neill for her hard work and assistance with environmental planning issues.
- Mr. White stated that he finds more is accomplished during in-person meetings and is considering the possibility of resuming in-person option for the NVCOG RPC meetings.

##### b. Remarks from Director of Planning – Mr. Lecar stated that the NVCOG staff would like to continue RPC programming that features presentations about projects and topics relevant to the region’s land use planning activities. Please reach out to Mr. Lecar with suggestions.

#### 5. Roundtable – Discussion of local activities and municipal land use processes

Middlebury – Curt Bosco discussed the proposed State Biennial Budget, CGS House Bill no. 6941, Section 182, which concerns the conditions for approving warehouse and distribution facility projects in municipalities with populations between 6,000 and less than 8,000 persons. This legislation would affect 11 municipalities across CT including NVCOG member municipalities Beacon Falls, Middlebury and Thomaston. He stated concern that section 182 of this bill did not have public hearings for input from a variety of persons and organizations and is encroaching on municipal planning and zoning authority. He called for towns concerned about Section 182 to voice their concern to legislators. Ms. Sefcik discussed her concern regarding CGS 2023 Raised Senate Bill no. 998 – An Act Establishing a Tax Abatement for Certain Conservation Easements, and a proposal to ask the CT Office of Policy and Management to conduct a study to determine a methodology for figuring out how many units of affordable housing constitute each town’s fair.

Derby – Gino DiGiovanni reported the development of a water tower on the west side of Derby. Otherwise, slow time of year for land use work.

Naugatuck – Lori Rotella reported that it was a slow time of year for land use work.

Southbury – Kim McNeill reported that Southbury continues its 350<sup>th</sup> year celebration with parades and a historic open house. NVCOG has assisted with Sustainable CT application for silver certification. The Southbury Economic Development director is hosting a local radio show with an hour devoted to Southbury topics.

Thomaston – Stacey Sefcik reported that proposals are being reviewed for the Opera House renovations. The town is considering re-applying for Sustainable CT certification. Accessory apartment applications have been submitted. On June 1, 2023 the CT Main Street Center recognized and awarded Thomaston’s Economic Development Commission for creating an incremental plan to revitalize its downtown.

Waterbury – Bob Nerney reported that funding is being pursued for remediation on South Main Street and Freight Street. The city is working with NVCOG on a project to lengthen the platform at the Metro North station. The City Planning Department is expanding – civil service applications are under review.

Watertown – Daniel Divito reported that the former Sealy Mattress factor site has been remediated, purchased and the new owners are proposing to rezone the property. The old Subaru dealership is proposed to be redeveloped with the following uses: Child Day Care Center, car modification. Townhouses are being built with 30% of units designated affordable housing. The Main Street Makeover plan has been approved. Town will purchase two parcels for public parking. A small parcel to be donated to the Town for park uses. There is an ongoing water dispute with Waterbury.

Bristol – David White reported that as part of the rewrite of the city’s zoning regulations the elderly housing standards are being discussed. Application for elderly housing, at a land use density of 12 units per acre, has been approved for a parcel on the eastern Town Line. Construction is nearly complete for elderly housing on Main Street. Construction on the Wheeler Clinic has begun. Route 72 will be re-aligned.

**6. NVCOG Updates**

- a. *Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD)* – Joanna Rogalski and Josh Lecar reported on the status of the RPCOD Existing Conditions report and the timeline for work over the next few months. A presentation was made regarding initial findings from the Existing Conditions research.
- b. *Environmental Update* - Christine O’Neill reported:
  - NVCOG Household Hazardous Waste event scheduled for July 22,2023 from 8am – 2pm at Quaker Farms School, 30 Great Oak Road, Oxford. Residents from all 15 towns in the program are eligible to attend. This is the last collection of the year. Flyers will be sent out to towns in the coming month.
  - The Department of Energy & Environmental Protection has opened two annual grant programs for applications: the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant (OSWA) and the Urban Green and Community Garden Grant (UCGC). The USGC is only open to targeted investment communities or distressed municipalities. These competitive programs are designed to help municipalities and land trusts acquire land that must be open to public access and cannot be used to intensify development. More details are available in the memo sent via email May 16
- c. *Sustainable CT* – Christine O’Neill introduced Cole Burnham, the Sustainable CT fellow who will be working at NVCOG until August 15, 2023. The fellow will be available to help towns with their applications for Sustainable CT certification or recertification and may support a town’s sustainability projects.

**7. Adjournment**

At 7:30 p.m., on a motion by KimMcNeill, seconded by Bob Nerney, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by  
Joanna Rogalski  
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments