

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHTCOG MEETING OF October 8, 2015

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Burlington, Theodore Shafer	Warren, Craig Nelson
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	Goshen, Robert Valentine
Hartland, Wade Cole	Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.
New Hartford, Daniel Jerram	Norfolk, Susan Dyer
North Canaan, Doug Humes	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Sharon, Jessica Fowler	Kent, Bruce Adams
Torrington, Elinor Carbone	Washington, Mark Lyon
Harwinton, Mike Criss	Morris, Barbara Bongiolatti
Winchester, Candace Bouchard	Winchester, Dale Martin

Others in Attendance:

Ruth Fitzgerald, FHI	Carol Gould, FHI
Richard Lynn, NHTCOG Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHTCOG Staff
Mike Muszynski, CCM	Amy Wynn, NW CT Arts Council
Joanna Wozniak-Brown, NHTCOG Staff	Christina Emery, United Way
Tim Sullivan, DECD	Owen Quinn, United Way
Media Representatives	Jean Cronauer, NCD
Other members of public	Jay Case, State Representative
Karen Nelson, NCD	Erin Wilson, Torrington EDD
Keppy West, NW CT Arts Council	Bernie Harrington, LWV
Steve Silver, Eversource	
Gertrude O'Sullivan, Foundation for Community Health	

Call to Order, Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting, held at the NHTCOG office, was called to order at 10:06 am. Don Stein mentioned that Tom McKeon's mother passed away and a sympathy card will be sent on behalf of the COG. There was no public comment.

Kick-off Meeting for Preparation of "Northwest Hills Regional Transportation Plan" Including Scope, Schedule, and Visioning Session. Ruth Fitzgerald and Carol Gould, both of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI) presented on the project. Ruth discussed the need for a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), especially with a changing region and for federal funding requirements. The work plan includes research & analysis, discerning a vision, community engagement, transportation priorities and alternative scenarios, draft plan, and a final plan. Ruth asked the COG members to distribute the flyers prepared for the project throughout the region. NHTCOG is hosting a website and survey link for the project, and FHI will be interviewing the member municipalities. Three stakeholder forums are planned on specific topics: rail, transit, bike/pedestrian travel. FHI will use previous plans to start their research. The RTP is expected to take 10-12 months and FHI expects to meet 4 or 5

times with the COG over the course of the project. After Ruth presented the project, she requested questions or comments. Candace Bouchard asked how successful their previous transportation plans have been. Rick responded that previous plans, such as former RTPs and elderly/disabled transportation plans have been very helpful in defining and promoting regional transportation priorities and focusing grant applications. He mentioned the improvement of Laurence Square in Torrington as one example of a project that was implemented by ConnDOT in response to a priority recommendation in a previous RTP. . Carol noted that FHI did parking plans and that the model parking regulations have been used throughout the state. Dan Jerram suggested that a summary of the prior plan be prepared to see what was proposed before and to lay a foundation for the new plan. Barbara Henry asked how much they will need to meet with her throughout the project. Ruth said just one meeting but will ask municipal leaders to distribute information throughout their community such as flyers, surveys, etc. FHI then conducted a visioning exercise to better define the opportunities and challenges facing the region. “Leo Paul asked if there will be town public informational meetings on the plan. Ruth stated there will be three forums with specific invitations but they will also be open to the public. Jessica Fowler suggested that live web hosting be used at the forums for those who do not wish to travel. Ruth stated that she hopes that it can be in place to enhance participation. Sue Dyer asked if the plan will focus on state and federal roads. If so, that should be stated otherwise most responses to the survey will be about local roads. Dan Jerram stated he’d be interested to see if speed management is a common concern across the region. Additional discussion followed.

Introduction of Tim Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, and Overview of Municipal Services Available from DECD.

Tim Sullivan stated that he joined DECD in early 2014 and that he leads the brownfield remediation and development program, TOD development, ports/waterfront, and tourism department at DECD. He also helps coordinate the STEAP and Urban Act program as DECD is the administrator. Tim stated that brownfield funding will soon be available. He explained that brownfields are properties that are underutilized due to contamination or perceived contamination. Funding hopes to restore them to full use. Brownfields are present in a lot of communities, not only urban. The State has many tools to revitalize brownfields. DECD and DEEP agencies are the primary agencies that have grant and loan programs. Grants are for communities. Loans are for the private sector. Applications are due November 16 and they have about 2 rounds per year. Decisions are based on a 100-point grid, as evaluated by DECD, Department of Housing, and OPM. If there is a developer interested in property but it has environmental gap, DECD has a low-interest loan program. Elinor Carbone commented that Torrington has really benefited from Tim’s assistance, and is grateful for brownfield redevelopment assistance and tourism promotion. Jessica Fowler asked for DECD’s comments on telecommunications such as mobile coverage and connections in the home. Tim stated it’s not his area of expertise but that it is a private sector lead issue, as is the case for most communications challenges. Mayor Carbone noted that Torrington is applying for Brownfield Area-wide Revitalization funds which will focus on 2 sites. She asked that the COG support the application by way of a letter and possible planning funds since one of the sites is proposed for the Regional Transit Center.. The Executive Board will meet October 21 and review the matter.. Leo Paul made a motion for a letter of support from the COG, and Dan Jerram seconded.

Mayor Carbone stated that she will offer more information at the Executive Committee meeting on the proposed scope of work. All voted in favor of the motion to prepare a letter of support. Don Stein stated that he will call a special meeting of the Executive Board to vote on the proposed financial contribution by the COG. Torrington is requesting \$200,000 from the grant and the city will provide 10%. Torrington is also looking for partnership. The city plans to inventory their assets and develop a plan for the re-use of the brownfields with a 2 year turn-around time from contracting.

Request for NHCOG Support of Proposed Economic Impact Study by the NW CT Arts Council to Better Document the Economic Impact of the Region's Arts, Culture, and Tourism Industry Amy Wynn, Executive Director of the Northwest CT Arts Council, introduced the NW CT Arts Council and provided a handout that lists the types of activities that they undertake. The council will be partnering with the State to do an economic impact study for the region in 2016. She hopes that the data will inform cultural constituents and the whole region for economic development planning that includes culture/tourism as an economic driver. The council is asking for \$5,000 from the COG to contribute to the cost of the study but will accept any funding. They are also looking into other funding sources and holding roundtable meeting in December to introduce the project. Amy also mentioned that the Culture Max awards are coming up in November, asking for nominations for heritage professionals, volunteers, supporting business, etc. that help the cultural community. Add nominations at culturemax.org. The deadline is tomorrow at 5 pm,.

Update on the 2015 United Way of NW CT Campaign. Christina Emery, United Way Public Sector Campaign (and LARC Director of Development), and Owen Quinn, United Way Executive Director. Owen stated that the United Way is focusing on health, education, and financial stability. They developed a handout describing objectives in particular towns. The United Way supports 211, the FISH shelter, McCall Foundation, and mental health organizations. There is an on-going heroin epidemic in NW CT and the problem is multi-pronged (mental health, alcohol, stability issues). The United Way offers resources for this severe problem. The United Way also supports education and has scholarships for daycare and offers information on nutrition, education, and reading and sponsors family events (movie nights). Owen asks that every chief elected official and selectperson promote the United Way in their community and make a contribution to the United Way. Christina Emery described what United Way does for LARC, ARC of Litchfield County. United Way supports those at LARC with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In particular, United Way supports their social enrichment programs and LARC's Camp Moe. Mayor Carbone stated the City had a United Way kickoff breakfast just this morning in Torrington. Barbara Bongiolatti praised the work of LARC. .

Request by Northwest Conservation District for COG Participation in a Grant Application for Preparation of Model Low Impact Development Regulations Barbara Bongiolatti introduced the LID regulations project and encouraged partnership with NCD on this project. Karen Nelson stated that this grant is similar to the DEEP grant previously provided in the Farmington River area. She stated that LID is an up and coming regulatory process that "needs to be in everyone's regulations". This grant expands on previous grant

explorations and uses Tom McGowan's expertise. It will allow land use commissions to look at their regulations in a comprehensive fashion. This grant will enable the NCD to provide a detailed stormwater manual for Morris that will also be helpful for the region. Mike Criss made a motion to provide a letter of endorsement and for COG staff to submit the application for the grant. Don Stein seconded the motion. Barbara Henry asked how the regulations and manual will be replicated for the towns. Karen stated that the manual will be structured such that every town could adopt it. Following additional discussion, all voted in favor of the motion.

Administrative Items.

- a. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Mike Criss, the NHCOC minutes from the September 10, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved.
- b. On a motion by Mike Criss, and seconded by Ted Shafer, the NHCOC financial statement for August 2015 was unanimously approved.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members

Bruce reported Kent is doing their 2 year review of job descriptions and requested a job description for the 1st selectmen. He also requested the names of companies for diesel fuel/heating oil. Leo Paul reported that Litchfield is losing their public works director. Wade Cole reported good reviews on the new restaurant in town and stated that Hartland received a STEAP grant for a bridge improvement. Mayor Carbone stated that Torrington is celebrating its 275th anniversary on October 17 and welcomes participation. Ted Shafer reported that Burlington's ZEO officer is resigning and noted the shortage of such expertise in the workforce. He offered to participate in working group to maybe create regional positions to alleviate this issue. Barbara Bongiolatti reported that Morris is applying for a Small Cities grant for deteriorating septic systems for seniors and for deteriorating sidewalks. Mike Criss reported that he will be attending an award ceremony for Harwinton's LED lighting and the town has some bridge and road projects underway. Dan Jerram reported that New Hartford lost their ZEO to Winsted. The town had their 1st commercial subdivision approval for their first new commercial building since 2007 and they are excited about the first of 4 new buildings in upcoming years. Candace Bouchard stated that Winchester also has had difficulty in staffing the building official position. They have a new land use administrator and economic development consultant. Dale reported on the new Tort museum and American Mural project Jessica Fowler reported that Sharon did not get STEAP grant for the Salisbury-Sharon Transfer station. Curtis Rand and Jessica are working with the USDA wastewater department for grants/loans.. They are also having a lot of heroin/prescription drug overdoses, especially in a particular area of Sharon. They will have community presentations in October. Barbara Henry stated they are also having such problems in Roxbury. Mayor Carbone stated that there is a heroin/opiod regional taskforce supported by grant funding that offers services and assistance. The taskforce has a liaison at Charlotte Hungerford. Elinor recommends that interested parties reach out to this task force for assistance. Bob Valentine reported that Goshen just finished their audit with a positive balance. He then inquired as to the best time for contingency or line-item transfer issues. Craig reported that Warren also didn't get a STEAP grant and lost an employee to the town of Sharon. They have their fall festival this weekend. Sue Dyer stated they also did not receive a STEAP grant and the Norfolk-Colebrook school regionalization project failed. She doesn't think they will pursue it further. Don Stein

stated that Barkhamsted is starting a housing trust as just like other small towns there is not enough housing for seniors or those just starting out. Barkhamsted hired a UCONN intern to work on the Plan of Conservation and Development for 15-20 hours/week. She works in town hall and the process is working well.

Don Stein then offered a toast to congratulate Dale on his new position. Dale expressed thanks to the group, and for the opportunity to work with the new COG and the former LHCEO.

Jocelyn reminded NHCOG members that she had sent everyone an email about an NHCOG sponsored proposal for Connecticut Main Street Preservation of Place grant funding. She is looking for eligible project ideas that would serve multiple NHCOG towns and is looking for feedback on the suggestion made in the email of Lakeville Railroad Station reuse plan or alternatives.

Committee Updates. Updates were postponed due to timing.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.