

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF July 14, 2016

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Burlington, Ted Shafer
Canaan, Patricia Allyn Mechare	Colebrook, Tom McKeon
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	Harwinton, Mike Criss
Kent, Bruce Adams	Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.
Norfolk, Sue Dyer	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Sharon, Brent Colley
Torrington, Elinor Carbone	Warren, Craig Nelson
Washington, Mark Lyon	Winchester, Bob Geiger

Others in Attendance:

Ellen Graham, Sen. Blumenthal's Community Liaison; Chamae Mejas, Solarize CT; Dan Giung, CCM; Gertrude O'Sullivan, CHF; Brian Savin, Cornwall resident; Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOG Staff; Rick Lynn, NHCOG staff; Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment.

The meeting, held at the NHCOG office, was called to order by Chairman Mark Lyon at 10:05 a.m. Chairman Lyon presented a plaque on behalf of the NHCOG to outgoing Chairman Don Stein in appreciation of his exemplary leadership. Council members then gave a round of applause to Don for his laudable service to the NHCOG.

Chamae Mejas stated that Solarize CT will be recruiting towns for the next funding round and that Doug Humes in North Canaan is interested in coordinating with other NHCOG towns on this. If interested, please contact Doug or Chamae. Ellen Graham introduced herself and stated that she is available to serve as a liaison to Senator Blumenthal's office on any issues of concern.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members.

Craig Nelson stated that with Healthy CT closing, Warren is looking for a new insurer. Bob Geiger stated that Winchester is busy with road and school issues. The town has closed one elementary school and moving school administrative offices into town hall as an efficiency measure. Don Stein stated that a recent bid for culvert replacement came in much higher than anticipated and praised Senator Witkos for his assistance in securing funding to help replace tires ruined by a repaving job on Rte 179 that exposed a sharp-edged road base. Tom McKeon said all is quiet in Colebrook and Sue Dyer informed COG members of the upcoming "Week-end in Norfolk" event. Barbara Henry mentioned that the 3-town Opioid Crisis workshop held in Roxbury went very well, but much more needs to be done to help people with drug addictions as they are not getting the help they need. Curtis Rand indicated that while the intersection improvement in the center of town is going well, the town ran into an unexpected archaeological issue with the Rural Collector project on Twin Lakes Road. Mayor Carbone stated that road improvements to Highland Avenue and Newfield Road are well underway, and that the Courthouse is scheduled for opening in January of 2017. She stated that funding was eliminated by the State for off-site improvements at the Courthouse which is of considerable concern. Also of continued concern is the loss of the Juvenile Court, resulting in the need for people to go to Waterbury or New Britain for service. Torrington is planning a solar array on the old City landfill, and she is very pleased that the State awarded funding for the design and engineering of the proposed new Regional Animal Control Facility. Pat Mechare stated that Falls Village is pursuing the establishment of a Housing Trust and is also busy with road work. She stated that over 850 people attended the recent car show in town and it was a big success. Gordon Ridgway responded to Craig Nelson's

insurance question by stating that Cornwall researched this issue and recently signed up with the State's new Insurance Program as did Norfolk. Ted Shafer stated that the town of Burlington recently agreed to bond for the purchase of a 60 acre farm that was initially proposed for a large scale housing development. Brent Colley commented that residential sales are up in the area and that Tri-County Playhouse is having a good season this year. The town recently rented an excavator for culvert replacement and found that this works much better than a backhoe. Mike Criss stated the town is also busy with road and bridge projects and that final plans are being developed for a library extension. Leo Paul commented that a town facilities committee is addressing school issues and that he is still pursuing a new town hall. Bruce Adams polled COG members on their provisions for emergency response in town halls including badging and panic buttons. Mark Lyon stated that the town replaced a culvert at local expense that was able to be done at about one-third the cost of a state funded job. He also stated that a local Economic Development Commission was recently formed.

Summary of "2016 Connecticut Solid Waste Management Plan" and Implications for Municipalities in the Northwest Hills. Lee Sawyer, CT DEEP, distributed and reviewed a handout highlighting the "Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy" for 2016. An ambitious goal of 60 percent diversion of waste from disposal by the year 2024 has been established. This goal is to be achieved by reducing waste, increasing reuse, recycling, composting, and pursuing the development of waste conversion technologies. DEEP is seeking to improve the performance of municipal recycling programs as part of the Strategy. Mike Criss expressed concern that some changes being made by DEEP are counter-productive, such as the recent increase in municipal permit fees which resulted in a threefold increase in Harwinton's fee. Curtis Rand expressed interest in DEEP assistance in increasing composting at households and at municipal transfer stations.

Overview of UCONN's Crash Data Repository and Update on Technology Transfer Center Activities. Donna Shea, T2 Center Program Director, distributed and reviewed information on the services available from the Center. This included copies of the "Technology Transfer Program Guide" which identifies the professional development programs, technical assistance, and information sharing programs available through the Center. She urged all towns to have at least one person monitoring the Public Works List-Serve. Tony Lorenzetti, PE, Safety Circuit Rider for T2, summarized the new on-line Crash Data Repository that is available for public access. Detailed accident data is available for both local and state roads. He distributed a sample map showing accident locations in the regional area. The repository will be regularly updated and is available at www.ctcrash.uconn.edu.

Place-making Strategies for Communities in the Northwest Hills. Jocelyn Ayer distributed and summarized information presented at a recent workshop on options available for improving town centers and the sense of community. The goal is to create vibrant, multi-use destinations through such techniques as promoting social interaction, encouraging lingering, enhancing walkability, promoting diversity, enhancing aesthetics, and programming activities to bring people together. Research has shown a strong correlation between community attachment and local economic growth. Strengthening community centers through various place-making strategies will be addressed in the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development now under preparation.

Progress in Achieving the NHCOC Goals and Objectives Established for FY 2015-16). Rick Lynn reviewed the COG-endorsed goals and objectives established for FY 2015-16, and stated that 19 of the 22 deliverables were completed with the remaining 3 deliverables currently in progress.

Administrative Items

a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of June 9, 2016. On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.

b. Approval of Financial Statement for 5/2016. On a motion duly made and seconded, the financial statement was unanimously approved.

c. Request by ConnDOT for Amendments to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Pertaining to Funding for Vehicle Replacement at NWTD and Marketing of Intercity Bus Services in the Northwest Hills Region. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion duly made and seconded, the proposed STIP amendments were unanimously endorsed.

d. Approval of NHCOC Title 6 Policy Statement. This item was tabled.

e. Authorization to Enter into Agreement with ConnDOT for Funding to Initiate the Rural Independent Transportation System. Rick Lynn provided a summary of the proposed program to enhance transit services in the area for the elderly and disabled. Craig Nelson expressed concern that the proposed service area was not focused on those towns with the fewest existing transit services. Rick responded that this is a pilot program and that the intent is to expand the program in the future to serve other towns in the region. On a motion duly made and seconded, the requested authorization to enter into the Agreement was unanimously approved with the exception of Craig Nelson who voted against the motion.

Committee Updates

a. Animal Control Facility Committee. Mayor Carbone stated that a meeting of the Committee is scheduled for August 9th to discuss the RFP for the design and engineering of the facility now that the RPIP funding has been awarded to the COG.

b. DEMHS Region 5. Mark Lyon reported that a Region 5 REPT Steering Committee meeting has been scheduled for July 18th to discuss the proposed Spending Plan for the 2016 Homeland Security Grant and that this will be followed by a meeting of the REPT on August 22nd.

c. Northwest CONNect. Brent Colley stated that Northwest CONNect is becoming officially established as a non-profit organization and looks forward to working with the NHCOC in conducting the planning study enabled through the recently announced Regional Performance Incentive Grant.

d. Public Works Equipment Cooperative. Mark Lyon reminded COG members that a Certificate of Insurance needs to be submitted to the COG from their insurance carrier in order to participate in the Public Works Equipment Cooperative.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. Jocelyn Ayer distributed and reviewed a handout on the "Status and Trends of Agriculture in Connecticut" as prepared and presented by Kip Kolesinskas at the NHCOC's 5th Thursday Forum on Agriculture. She also expressed appreciation to Gordon Ridgway for speaking at the Forum. No other business was raised and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.