

Minutes
Connecticut River Estuary Metropolitan Planning Organization
January 11, 2006

Attendance:

Chester: Tom Marsh
Clinton: Willie Fritz
Deep River: Dick Smith
Essex: Phil Miller
Killingworth:
Lyme:
Old Lyme: Tim Griswold
Old Saybrook: Mike Pace
Westbrook: John Raffa
CRERPA: Bruce Edgerton
Conn DOT: Kasey Faraci

Legislators: Representative James Spallone, Betty Wagner on behalf of Rep.
Rob Simmons

Guests: ERT Director Jim Rode, ERT Chairperson
Doris Sanstrom , ERT Vice Chairman John Forbis, ECS
Executive Director Mitzi Eilts

CRERPA Staff: Linda Krause, Jean Davies, Janice Ehle-Meyer, Wini Olson

- I. The meeting of the Estuary Metropolitan Planning Organization was called to order by Chairman Mike Pace at 8:34 AM in the conference space of the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency at 455 Boston Post Road , Old Saybrook Ct 06475.
- II. Chairman Pace welcomed everyone and called for round table introductions.
- III. The minutes of the November meeting were unanimously approved by those who members at that time and present today.
- IV. **Public Comment Period**
There was no public comment
- V. **New Business**
 - A. Selectman Willie Fritz moved that Clean Air compliance statement be added to the agenda. The addition to the agenda was unanimously approved and immediately considered.

Jean Davies distributed draft copies of a Resolution on Conformity with the Clean Air Act. Jean explained that similar language is incorporated in the previously adopted Regional Transportation Plan. She mentioned that Transportation Plan will be redone this year in tandem with other regions to streamline timelines between regions and CT DOT.

The EPA has requested that a separate resolution be passed specifically for their records. Jean also proposed that the date be changed from that of the sample copy to reflect the correct effective date 2005 -2030. Phil Miller moved that the Resolution on Conformity with the Clean Air Act be approved 2005-2030. The motion was seconded by Willie Fritz and unanimously approved.

B. Schedule of Meetings

Jean Davies distributed maps giving an overview of the MPO and illustrating the overlapping of various formal governmental groups that the Selectmen belong to on behalf of their towns. It was suggest that the Board designate a date to hold a workshop to acquaint members with the structure and responsibilities of a MPO and to explain the importance of having a proxy appointed who can attend meetings if the First Selectman is not available. Chairman Pace suggested February. It was agreed to have the workshop at the time of the regular meeting on February 8,2006. It was agreed that members would plan on being available until noon if the time is needed for the two scheduled meetings.

Linda Krause reviewed the history of the LCVSA stating that the Lower Valley Selectmen have been meeting informally for over thirty years. When the Connecticut River Estuary Region was designated as a Metropolitan Planning Region with increased responsibility for transportation planning, the Selectmen chose to assume that responsibility and appoint themselves to be the Estuary Metropolitan Planning Organization. At that point, the group became a formal organization with strict quorum requirements for action item and formal vote requirements.

C. Legislation

Recognizing the time constraints of Rep. Spallone, Chairman Pace recognized him with the comment that he understands that the state is considering cutting the TAR money from \$28,000,000 to \$8,000,000. Rep. Spallone had not heard that rumor but will give it priority attention. Rep. Spallone reported that the Legislative session will resume on February 8. He urged all Selectmen to alert him to their concerns. He wants to be cautious with the surplus. As a member of the Judiciary Committee and a concerned individual, he is paying strict attention to the Probate Court situation.

D. STEAP

Phil Miller noted that the STEAP applications are due tomorrow. He inquired as to how many towns have applied. There was general agreement that it is an excellent program.

E. Underpass

Chairman Pace commented on the problem of the underpass on Elm Street in Old Saybrook. It has been determined that raising the bridge would involve changing the grade of the railroad for miles back into Westbrook. That is not going to happen. He therefore asked that a “full exchange” with Route 95 not be created.

F. STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program)

There was no STIP and no TIP Amendments.

G. Public Participation Policy

Consideration of a formal Public Participation Policy was postponed until new members had an opportunity to review the policy.

H. Overview of Dial- a- Ride

Jean Davies handed out charts explaining the Apportionment of additional Dial-a-Ride Funding to CT Municipalities. The formula is based on the square miles and the number of residents over sixty. Guidelines have not yet been established for the application process. It is anticipated that the rules will be announced in late January. The applications are due March 1.

The additional funding is seen as an opportunity for the ETD to expand service for the elderly and the handicapped. The funds are strictly for the expansion of services and require a 50% municipal match.

Jim Rode reported that the ETD assumed responsibility for the Dial-a Ride service in the region on January. The ETD has hired three of the ECS drivers and uses one of the former ECS busses. The same drivers are serving the same clients on the same schedule. Some riders are gaining greater flexibility of service by transitioning over to the regular services.

Chairman Pace inquired about the gas supply. Director Rode reported that filling the busses at the Old Saybrook pumps works very smoothly. The bookkeeping is improving.

Mitzi Eilts reported that the transition to the Senior Center went well. The 388-1919 number now rings at the ETD. The public needs to be educated that for EMOTS, one must still use 388-1611. It still rings at the ECS.

John Forbis announced that he will present a preliminary ETD budget for FY 06/07 at the February meeting. The ETD may look to the towns to fill a gap in funding.

Tim Griswold asked if the Apportionment of Dial-a Ride Funds to CT Municipalities refers to new money. It does. He noted that in the case of Emergency Planning money, each town must sign a release of the funds. Is there a similar process for these funds? Chairman Pace read the fine print and agreed that a resolution is requested.

Mitzi Eilts noted that a page is missing from the list of compilations. She also explained that the ECS had received an extra \$6,600 from the towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River and Old Saybrook for the provision of Dial-a – Ride service. She asked if there is any objection to those funds being transferred to the ETD. Chairman Pace noted that the funds are following the intended purpose. He did advise her to have her Board of Directors authorize the transfer and to leave a note for the auditor.

Mitzi reported that the construction for the addition to the Senior Center should be completed by February 24. The rededication will be in May.

Chairman Pace asked if the MPO could meet there in March. The MPO is welcome to meet at the ECS in March. A Continental Breakfast will be provided.

Chairman Pace distributed copies of a letter of thanks to the Estuary Council of Seniors that he had drafted. Tim Griswold suggested that the letter be sent from the MPO instead of from the Town of Old Saybrook. Ms. Eilts suggested one change in the phrasing. The change will be made and the amended letter will be sent on behalf of the MPO.

Phil Miller asked about the progress of educating the residents of Essex Court about the available bus service. He asked for copies of the schedule that he can publish and can distribute at the housing complex.

Jim Rode reviewed the efforts being made at Essex Court and at Kirtland Commons. He mentioned that service has also been extended to the Essex industrial Park where several people commute to work. Service is being provided to the high schools at Region IV and Old Saybrook. In both instances, the pupils are being provided with instruction on how to use public transit to get to work.

Chairman Pace asked if the DOT could get involved in facilitating the removal of the rotting train cars that are sitting on a prime aquifer owned by DEP in the Town of Old Saybrook.

VI. Old Business

A. Incident Management

There has been no progress with CT DOT on discussions concerning incident management on I-95 through the region.

B. North Main Street, Old Saybrook

Jean reported that Old Saybrook has held a public information session and is ready to go with the North Main Street project. She has scheduled a meeting with Tom Marsh to discuss the Main Street project in Chester.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy C. Griswold, Secretary

