

# CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2006

<b>Present/Absent:</b>	<b>CHESTER</b>	<b>Margaret Wilson, Vacancy</b>
	<b>DEEP RIVER</b>	<b>Amy Petrone, Nancy Fischbach</b>
	<b>EAST HADDAM</b>	<b>Logan Clarke, Robert Boulware</b>
	<b>ESSEX</b>	<b>Fred Vollono, Ed Marlowe</b>
	<i>FENWICK</i>	<i>Chuck Chadwick</i>
	<b>HADDAM</b>	<i>Scott Thompson, Susan Bement</i>
	<i>LYME</i>	<i>Kevin Mazer, J. Melvin Woody</i>
	<b>OLD LYME</b>	<b>Rudi Besier, Ted Crosby</b>
	<i>OLD SAYBROOK</i>	<i>Madge Fish, David LeMay</i>
	<b>CRERPA</b>	<b>Steve Williams</b>
	<i>MIDSTATE RPA</i>	<i>Raul De Brigard, Stasia DeMichele</i>
	<b>DEP</b>	<b>David Blatt</b>
	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>Linda Krause, Dorothy Papp, Torrance Downes</b>
	<i>TIDEWATER</i>	<i>Judy Preston</i>

### Call to Order

Treasurer, Peggy Wilson, called the regular meeting of the Gateway Commission to order at 7:37 pm in the CRERPA meeting room.

### Approval of Minutes

**Nancy Fischbach** moved to approve the minutes of **October 26, 2006**. Logan Clarke seconded. All were in favor.

### Guests

Centerbrook Architects Charles Mueller and Mary Lynn Radysh were present representing the Terans, to make corrections to last month's proposal for an addition to an existing dwelling at **65 Landing Road in Haddam**. The applicant is seeking a variance of the 100 foot structural setback and 50 foot riparian buffer to construct an addition to an existing house. Mr. Mueller stated that since last month's meeting he met with Linda Krause and Torrance Downes and wanted to improve on the application's rough start with the Commission. He assured the Gateway Commission of the applicant's desire for full transparency of their intentions and after considerable research, discussion and redesign work, presented an application with no increase in the existing height and maintenance of the building's original historic character. A visual rendering of the proposal also indicated a change in paint color from white to a shade of green that blended the structure into the surrounding landscape. Nancy Fischbach stated that though the original height was not being altered, concerns about the increase in mass along the water remained. Logan Clarke noted that the building was still only 29 feet from the water. Mr. Mueller explained that the current structure is closer to 24 feet from the river and that the applicant was hoping the Commission would see the increase in mass as a sort of reapportionment of the existing dwelling. He also

explained that existing ledge precluded adding on behind the existing house without blasting; and that the septic system, minimized to save existing trees, is located in the only feasible location. Further discussion was deferred to later in the meeting.

### Staff Report

- Campbell Hudson sent an electronic copy of the updated scenic easement on the airport property in East Haddam that he promised last month at 4:00 this afternoon. Linda told him that there was not enough time to read it before this evening's meeting and that she would distribute it to the Gateway members for their consideration next month.
- The Commission received a thank you note from Rupe Wilcox for the Commission's retirement gift of a photograph of the river.
- Linda met with the new director of "1000 Friends of Connecticut" and noted the "perfect storm" conditions in the state seeming to come together to protect the environment citing the new Office of Responsible Growth and the Landscape Stewardship Committee.
- The LeFave Estate on the 8 Mile Watershed has been acquired for open space.
- A brochure from the Housatonic River was presented as an interesting format.
- The conclusion from the 8 Mile River Study was received and noted, as well as the Trust of Public Land Newsletter.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Peggy Wilson reported that a new Merrill Lynch account is up and running with a balance of approximately \$600,000. She noted that the Commission moved \$1,000,000 to Merrill Lynch in the period from 2000 to 2004 and now, after expenses has over \$1.5 million, an average increase of about 8% per year. The Gateway's funds are currently distributed about 55% in fixed income instruments, 40% in equities, and 2% cash.

**Nancy Fischbach moved to accept the Treasurers Report and pay the following bills for October and November: \$\$2240 to Tidewater; \$5462.51 to CRERPA; and \$1862 to Chubb Insurance.** Logan Clarke seconded. All were in favor.

### Referrals

**Old Lyme Town Hall** wants to expand. Linda noted that though it is in the Gateway, the intervening topography makes it practically invisible from the river. **Nancy Fischbach moved to send a letter of non-opposition.** Steve Williams seconded. Ted Crosby reiterated the importance that the lack of visibility from the water remain. All were in favor.

Two referrals came in from **Essex**. Neither was visible from the river.

At Logan's request, discussion of **Haddam's Landing Road application** was moved to the last item before adjournment.

### Tidewater

A report from Judy Preston about Tidewater activities was distributed. Peggy Wilson asked that a time sheet be presented at the next meeting.

### Status of New Standards

Linda reported no new progress in Essex and Old Lyme. Ted Crosby thought that it might be possible to push the standards through Old Lyme with 3 votes.

Linda reported that Fenwick Borough has placed most of the Gateway Standards throughout the zoning regulations without using the term "Gateway." Sally Boody found through some research that Fenwick had in fact voted to join Gateway in the 1970's.

### Development Issues

Linda will testify in court on Tuesday, December 12, at 10:00 am to stipulate that Gateway is an aggrieved party in the Chester ZBA appeal.

Photos of clear cutting along the River in Deep River were passed around. The ZEO has a stop work order in place based on the general zoning regulations and is seeking input from the Gateway Commission. After some discussion, **Ted Crosby moved to send a letter of strong support to the Deep River ZEO with copies to the property owners and town selectman citing the tree clearing and the 16' plus wall of boulders.** Logan Clarke seconded. All were in favor. Nancy Fischbach excused herself as having a potential conflict. Ed Marlowe noted the continued urgency of producing an educational brochure for all Gateway Zone land owners. Peggy Wilson noted that the situation illustrates the importance of passing specific tree cutting standards. Susan Bement said Haddam has such standards though she's not sure if they are enforced. Linda noted that Lyme also has some that were enforced.

### Other Business

**Revision of Gateway Bylaws:** *"For purposes of a quorum, members representing the regional planning agencies may represent their town of residence in the absence of both the member and alternate from that town."* **Logan Clarke moved to accept the new bylaws as presented.** Susan Bement seconded. Nancy Fischbach requested that the member town Selectmen be informed of the change. All were in favor.

**Logan Clarke moved to maintain the regular schedule of meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month, excepting one combined November/December meeting on the first Thursday of December, for the 2007 calendar year.** Ed Marlowe seconded. All were in favor.

Ted Crosby mentioned that the State Plan of Conservation of Development has requested an updated digital map of the Gateway. Linda said she would look into it.

#### **65 Landing Road, Haddam**

The first letter sent by the Gateway Commission last month in opposition to the application was read aloud.

Peggy Wilson listed the Commission's options as either continuing to oppose the revised application or not to oppose. The Commission does not, as a matter of course, send letters in favor of applications as the actual granting of a variance is the authority of the local ZBAs.

Ed Marlowe said that he was impressed with the work the applicant had done and was impressed that the property has been in the current owner's family for fifty years. He felt that the Commission should have some respect for the tradition of ownership as opposed to applications brought by developers.

Nancy Fischbach said she did not see much difference from the original application and had trouble with the additional mass being proposed along the riverfront.

Ted Crosby said that his interpretation of the "natural river scene" is no expansion at all and though he appreciates the attempt to balance the addition with a neutral color, there is no regulation mandating the color stay muted and the addition itself does hide the hillside area behind it.

The discussion continued to expound upon the work put into trying to balance the site and save the existing trees as well as concern for the mass facing the river and the precedent of increasing frontage only 29 feet from the river. Rudi Besier wondered if the Commission might express their concerns with no mention of opposition one way or another. David Blatt suggested opposing the variance because of visual mass with recognition of the countervailing factors of site constraint and notation of the improvement of the application since last month. Linda noted that she was surprised that the Commission has not received the application itself from the town of Haddam as of this meeting and Nancy Fischbach said it is important to be sure the Gateway variances are the ones requested and that the variance request is specifically tied to the site plan. **Nancy Fischbach moved that the Gateway Commission send a letter voicing continued opposition to the plan but recognizing the hard work, and improvements to the application as well as the limitations inherent in the site itself.** David Blatt seconded. Four (David Blatt, Nancy Fischbach, Peggy Wilson, and Susan Bement) were in favor. Two (Rudi Besier and Logan Clarke) were opposed, and one (Ed Marlowe) abstained.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dorothy Papp

**The next meeting of the Gateway Commission is January 25, 2007.**