

Record of Meeting

Regional Planning Commission (RPC)
of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
49 Leavenworth Street – 3rd floor, Waterbury, CT
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Attendance: Nancy Clark, Southbury; Margus Laan, Plymouth; James Sequin, Waterbury; Bob Clarke, Woodbury (by phone); Michael Opuszynski, Beacon Falls (by phone); Ruth Parkins, Shelton (by phone), Gary Giordano, Bethlehem (by phone), Jeremy Leifert, Thomaston.

Staff: Aaron Budris, Senior Regional Planner; Glenda Prentiss, GIS Coordinator; Joanna Rogalski, Regional Planner

Members of the Public: 4

The meeting opened at 6:36pm.

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions, Public Participation

The pledge of allegiance was recited. All those present introduced themselves. At roll call six (6) RPC members were in attendance. Mike Opuszynski joined via phone at 6:53 PM. Bob Clarke joined via phone at 7:30 PM. A quorum was not obtained for this meeting. No public comment.

2. Presentation and Discussion: Open Space Inventory – Aaron Budris, NVCOG

Aaron Budris presented the work that has been done to date in CT to categorize and preserve Open Space and described why there is a need for a Statewide open space standard. This lack of open space standard was the impetus to create an open space classification system for the Sustainable CT program, a voluntary program that encourages sustainable actions at the municipal level for certification as a Sustainable CT town.

Open Space Classification System and Template

The open space classification system was presented as a template with attribute variables to characterize different types of open space properties. The template is agnostic as to a definition for Open Space; this template is only describing attributes of a property. Complex queries and analysis by function are possible with this template, so that users may discover different ways open space may be classified. Template versions have been created for Excel and ArcGIS database. DEEP and OPM have not accepted the template as the new state standard, but seem comfortable with it. Other COGs are on board with this template.

Questions and Points raised and discussed:

- NVCOG updated committed open space maps last summer; available online.
- Public Act 490 designated farmland not included.
- If POCD or other town plan identifies a town park, then park could be considered committed open space – municipal intent.
- Conservation easements will be difficult to research.
- All land in CT that is not legally protected may be developed.
- What are you trying to accomplish with open space? One data collection to replace duplicate efforts. Best for regions to collect the data from municipalities. NVCOG would eventually like to have a comprehensive open space plan and identify the regional needs of different types of open space, e.g., conservation and parks, and opportunities for connectivity and prioritize funding.
- Characterization of properties with transmission lines? NVCOG will revisit topic.

- Suggest Easements for Town use be considered a type of Open Space.
- Deed restrictions – some towns require it.
- Thomaston has updated all properties identified as “open space” as being “in perpetuity”.
- As per CGS, Conservation Commission keeps a record of open space.
- Memo regarding grant opportunities for open spaces was sent to CEO’s.
- NVCOG suggest an RPC working group regarding open space – NVCOG want to find out who is the person who knows the open space inventory. Non RPC members welcome to be part of working group.
- How to characterize developed and undeveloped land that is open space?
- Need to reach out to property owners of open space.
- Undevelopable land could benefit from a gap analysis to identify natural habitat.
- Consider State’s natural diversity database.
- Each Town needs to consider their own open space needs and priorities, EG Woods or Greenway trails?
- Some Towns do not consider private lands open space, these may be characterized as uncommitted open space.

3. Update: 2020 Census Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA) – Glenda Prentiss, NVCOG

Glenda Prentiss discussed the importance of appointing a LUCA liaison and accurate counts for 2020 Census.

- Only ten NVCOG towns have registered to date.
- NVCOG may be appointed municipal liaison and do the address list work for the municipality.
- Deadline to send in paperwork is December 15, 2017.
- Another email will be sent regarding the need to appoint a LUCA liaison for the municipality

4. Discussion: RPC Operating Guidelines – Joanna Rogalski, NVCOG

Joanna Rogalski discussed options to consider for the future of the RPC:

- Change quorum to less than 10 – would require revising Operating Procedures
- Change nature of RPC to Planning staff – change in NVCOG By-laws
- Dissolve RPC – change in RPC by-laws, replace with planners’ lunches, meeting on fifth Saturdays
- RPC representatives present did not want the RPC dissolved. Many stated value of meeting in-person.
- Following suggestions made by RPC representatives regarding Quorum attainment:
 - A – Quorum would consist of simple majority of municipalities with RPC representatives (currently 15)
 - B – Quorum would consist of RPC representatives present at a regular meeting
- Straw poll taken regarding suggestions A & B. Suggestion A – 6 votes. Suggestion B – 2 votes.
- NVCOG staff to review RPC Operating Guidelines, draft revisions regarding quorum, and present draft at next regular meeting.

5. Update: Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)–working group formation–Joanna Rogalski, NVCOG

Joanna Rogalski discussed POCD timeline and role of an RPC POCD Working Group:

- Timeline for completion: Draft ready by October 2, 2018, Adoption by December 7, 2018
- Assist with setting regional planning priorities
- Assist with public input sessions – Jan through May 2018
- Review POCD drafts
- Meetings begin January 9, 2018 – meet monthly Jan to May, meeting times could vary
- NVCOG staff to send email asking for volunteers for working group

6. Administrative Items

- a. Review of October, 2017 Record of Meeting – Southbury edits received.
- b. Meeting Dates 2018 – Meet first Tuesday of the month, every other month: February 6, April 3, June 5, August 7, October 2, December 4, Executive Committee meets as needed in months when whole RPC doesn't meet – Suggestion to check for Hanukkah holiday conflict in December 2018.
- c. Referrals – Since Oct 2017 mtg, NVCOG received 13 referrals, 3 regionally significant. Copies of full proposed changes described in the referrals may be sent upon request.
- d. Correspondence – submitted NVCOG comments regarding State POCD update to OPM on October 16, 2017, March 3, 2018 Basic training for local Land Use has been arranged with UCONN CLEAR; info email to be sent.

7. Roundtable - Points of Interest/Local Activities

Plymouth – Margus Laan, Town Planner

- Mayor Merchant was re-elected.
- Town received a \$750,000 grant for brownfields clean-up, old Sunoco station property
- Town zoning regulations need to be updated.

Thomaston – Jeremy Leifert, Land Use Administrator

- Town Center Plan has been drafted and open to public comment.
- Zoning regarding accessory apartments is being revised to incorporate some of the State's language regarding temporary healthcare structures. Provisions regarding the need for relationship to owner are being removed. Affordable housing aspect being added to it.
- Redefining second story in Down Town as mixed use residential.

Beacon Falls – Michael Opuszynski, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission

- The Town has hired a new Economic Development consultant: Sadie Colcord, Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC).

Bethlehem – Tom Giordano – elector

- No news.

Waterbury – James Sequin, City Planner

- Proposal to rezone 93 acres of city-owned property abutting Naugatuck, zone change Commercial to Industrial
- Ray's Automotive nearing resolution

Shelton – Ruth Parkins, elector

- Old United Illuminating (UI) site up for sale
- New hotel being built
- Public hearing on proposed revisions to Planned Development District (PDD)
- Proposed changes to in-law apartment zoning – timeframe to be increased to 5 years in order for apartment to be considered "in-law"

Woodbury – Bob Clarke, Town Planner

- New restaurant about ready to open.
- Micro-brewery to open on Friday, December 8, 2017

Southbury – Nancy Clark, Planning Commission

- Movie theaters opening December 15, 2017 with Star Wars film release
- There are 3 new contracts for the former Kmart property
- Southbury Training School study completed
- Streetscape lighting being replaced
- Strategic Plan work ongoing
- Two petitions in Town: Impeach President of the USA, Gun control
- Need for planning secretary

8. Other – none

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Joanna Rogalski, Regional Planner
NVCOG