

Minutes
Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials
Cherrystones Restaurant Old Lyme, CT
June 23rd, 2010

Attendance:

Members Present: **Tom Marsh, Chair**, Chester; **Mark Walter, Vice Chair**, East Haddam; **John Flanders**, Cromwell; **Dick Smith**, Deep River; **Laura Francis**, Durham; **Jeff O'Keefe**, East Hampton; **Phil Miller**, Essex; **Paul DeStefano**, Haddam; **Catherine Iino**, Killingworth; **Jon Brayshaw**, Middlefield; **Tim Griswold**, Old Lyme; **Noel Bishop**, Westbrook

Members Not Present: **Ralph Eno**, Lyme; **Sebastian Giuliano**, Middletown; **Willie Fritz**, Clinton; **Michael Pace**, Old Saybrook; **Susan Bransfield**, Portland

Legislators Present: Eileen Daily

Legislators Not Present: Andrea Stillman; Ed Meyer; Gail Hamm; Jim O'Rourke; Joseph Serra; Marilyn Giuliano; Paul Doyle; Thomas Gaffey; James Spallone; Linda Orange; Brian O'Connor; Mathew Lesser, and Jenny Contois

Staff: Linda Krause, Janice Ehle/Meyer, CRERPA

Others: Bill Villano, Work Force Alliance

1. Call to Order:

The CRVCEO meeting was called to order by Chairman Marsh at 12:21 a.m. at Cherrystones Restaurant, Old Lyme CT.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Jon Brayshaw moved and Phil Miller seconded a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. All members were in favor.

3. Business:

Chairman Marsh opened the meeting by stating that all of the region's town budgets had passed. He asked towns if they could respond to how they were structuring to position selves for next year.

- Mark Walter spoke about East Haddam's approach to drugs and alcohol abuse. Local towns are taking a regional approach to work with State, local police, and Youth and Family Services to address underage drinking. He had also been contacted by the media to do a story about the problems and will keep everyone posted on what happens.
- Laura Francis announced that they along with local towns have formed a group to hire a Regional Energy Manager. The Manager will suggest energy saving solutions and a devise a plan for future projects.

- Linda Krause spoke about letter to Floyd Lapp from DECD Commissioner Joan McDonald about the regional economic development districts and discussed the funding for distressed communities and an economic development strategy group or area. New guidelines would require all towns to belong to an economic strategy group, with a minimum of 20 towns in the group. Peter Simmons of DECD will be asked to come to the next meeting in July. This topic should be followed, as it pertains to all of the CRVCEO towns.

Eileen Daily talked about the possibility of forcing regions to combine and what a nightmare it would be. She suggested inviting the Commissioner to the next meeting in July.

Bill Villano from the Work Force Alliance spoke about community economic development strategies.

- Phil Miller talked about the meeting with Valley railroad that he went to. The discussion involved using the railroad lines for freight and the application that was submitted. He said that it has developed into a difficult situation. Any grants that the rail road will be submitting in the future will first involve meetings with local towns to discuss their opinions.

FEMA money may be used to upgrade the rail lines up to Haddam Meadows State Park, and lower towns need to do a Transportation Plan and a Rail Plan.

Paul DeStafano talked about "Friends of the CT River" group, how strong it is, and that they are mounting a challenge. They want to keep DEP away from the railroad tracks and not have anyone own it.

- A discussion followed about standing together as a group. It was brought up that there is a difference of opinion on the need for freight lines. Middletown is for the freight and lower area towns are not in favor of the freight lines. Tilcon would use the freight lines to save money. Valley Railroad may want the upgraded freight lines to have better tracks for tourism.

- Bill Villano spoke of vacancies on his board. Appointments will be made on July 15th. The board does not have anyone from the CRVCEO area and would like to have someone from this area on it.

- Tim Griswold talked about a meeting that he had with home based businesses in town and the importance of them networking.

- Bill Villano is doing a film about a de-construction project (saving and reusing building materials) in New Haven and hopes that this type of work will generate jobs in the future.

- Jon Brayshaw talked about an existing freight rail line that runs from Middletown to New Haven making two trips a day that seems to be productive. He supports the idea of using trains for freight.

- Linda Krause talked about the letter to the state concerning the 17 towns forming a region. It is now waiting one signature and will be completed soon.
- A discussion about zoning regulations occurred, and having uniformity in them.

Chairman Marsh announced that the next meeting of the CRVCEO would be on July 28th at Plattwood Park in Deep River, details to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m. by Chairman Marsh after a motion made by Tim Griswold, seconded by Dick Smith, and approved unanimously.

Janice Ehle/Meyer, Clerk