

**MINUTES OF THE
HVCEO
MEETING OF APRIL 16,1999
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE

Bethel. First Selectman Charles Steck
Bridgewater. . . . First Selectman William Stuart, Chair
Brookfield. First Selectman Bonnie Smith
Danbury. Mayor Gene Eriquez
New Fairfield. . . First Selectman Patricia Gay
New Milford. . . . Mayor Arthur Peitler
Newtown. First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal
Redding. First Selectman Henry Bielawa
Ridgefield. First Selectman Abraham Morelli and Alternate Peter Yanity
Sherman. First Selectman Donna Tuck

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

State Representatives Jeanne Garvey and Mary Ann Carson, Kathryn Husband of CT DOT, Cheryl Reedy of Congressman Maloney's office, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Harold Mayer of the Candlewood Lake Authority, Ruth Malins of the Housatonic Valley Association, Richard Schreiner and Robert Yastremski of HART, John Chesto of the News Times, George Breitweiser of CL&P, Fred Benedikt of Southbury, J. Ward, various citizens, HVEDP Director Peg Daley, Camille Acquanita, David Hannon and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Chair William Stuart at 12:35 P.M. Citizens F. Benedikt and J. Ward offered public input. Patty Gay and Gene Eriquez thanked members for their support that led to recent CT DOT Enhancement Grant awards to New Fairfield and Danbury. Chairman Stuart noted that yesterday marked the tenth anniversary of Senior Planner David Hannon's employment with the Council. On behalf of the Council he then expressed thanks to Dave for ten years of dedication, technical leadership, and excellent service. Dave received a round of applause.

**MINUTES FROM MEETINGS OF 2/19/1999,
2/26/1999, 3/8/1999, 3/12/1999, 3/19/1999 and 3/26/1999**

On a motion made by Bonnie Smith and seconded by Donna Tuck, the minutes of the HVCEO meetings of 2/19/1999, 2/26/1999, 3/8/1999, 3/12/1999, 3/19/1999 and 3/26/1999 were unanimously approved, with appropriate abstentions by members not present at the workshop meetings relating to the Candlewood Lake conservation restriction.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2/1999 AND 3/1999

On a motion made by Abraham Morelli and seconded by Charles Steck, the financial statements and transfers for 2/1999 and 3/1999 were unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION AND CT OPM

GRANT APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS:

Staff reviewed agenda items in this category which included:

--- Transportation Planning Work Program for FY2000, a detailed work task statement of the \$388,162 in transportation planning activities to be performed in the upcoming year.

---Agreement for Annual Planning Program with CT DOT for FY2000, implementing the above program.

--- Agreement for 1-84 planning with CT DOT for FY2000, which allows HVCEO to receive \$12,500 to assist with public participation for the ongoing 1-84 corridor traffic study.

---Agreement with HART for FY2000, for \$18,500 in transit planning work including completion of GIS trip generation layers, an update of the 1994 operation analysis for the SweetHART system, management of van grants and welfare to work planning.

--- Application to CT OPM for an FY2000 Grant to assist with HVCEO operations.

---Agreement for Route 7 Corridor Transportation Demand Planning with CT DOT, with \$35,000 to be contracted to consultant VHB, Inc. Then on a motion made by Bonnie Smith and a second by Donna Tuck, the above mentioned grant related resolutions and work programs were unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

As explained by Dave Hannon, CT DOT was requesting various amendments and administrative changes to the transportation capital program for this area, which by federal law calls for HVCEO review and approval.

Project changes included widening of Route 7 in Danbury, widening of Mill Plain Road in Danbury, widening of Route 7 in New Milford, replacing the railroad bridge on Route 6 in Newtown, improvements at the Routes 7 and 202 intersection in Ridgefield, and improvements on Route 37 in Sherman.

The discussion focused upon the widening of Route 7 in southern New Milford. New Milford Mayor Arthur Peitler opposed any extension of the time table for completion of this project, citing the continual slippage of the completion date due to lack of right of way activity at CT DOT, an issue of internal scheduling at the Department that is creating a self-imposed delay.

Proposed motions were then made and amended that would approve the entire package of projects, subject to further communication on the new Milford project or resolution of the delay. Bonnie Smith cited her concern that qualification of the approval of projects today could slow the Route 7 construction work scheduled for Brookfield.

After further discussion, on a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and a second by Bonnie Smith, it was voted to approve the list of project amendments and administrative changes as presented by CT DOT, with the understanding that a high level meeting would be arranged immediately to address the causes for the delay to New Milford's Route 7widening, but without any formal qualification upon the approval. The motion was approved with all in favor except Art Peitler, who remained opposed to express his disapproval over the self-imposed delay by CT DOT.

A motion was then made by Art Peitler and seconded by Donna Tuck to prepare a letter for the chairman's signature to CT DOT requesting a meeting of the parties on this Route 7 scheduling issue, all aye.

Dave Hannon then reported that in response to written complaints to CT DOT Commissioner Sullivan from HVCEO and Senator Adela Eads, CT DOT had reactivated the project that would upgrade the Danbury Branch Line's computerized central control system, allowing more efficient operation on that rail line. A invitation to HVCEO members to participate in an April 21 inspection tour of the line was also issued.

INTERVENOR STATUS FOR HVCEO IN FERC'S HOUSATONIC HYDROPOWER RELICENSING

As recommended by members at the 3/26/1999 meeting, a request for intervenor status to FERC for HVCEO involvement in CL&P's Housatonic Hydropower Projects relicensing had been prepared for approval and the Chairman's signature. Involved are Lake Candlewood, Lake Lillinonah, Lake Zoar and the Bulls Bridge project. On a motion made by Gene Eriquez and seconded by Herb Rosenthal, it was voted unanimously to apply for the intervenor status.

Patty Gay then invited members to a May 4th evening meeting at the New Fairfield Senior Center where a community wide discussion of Candlewood lake issues would be held.

UPCOMING HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING Members were reminded that the next regional sexual harassment prevention training class will be held on Wednesday, May 12, 1999 at 9 A.M. in Brookfield Town Hall. Mandated by state law for supervisory personnel, the regional program replaces the need for the use by municipalities of paid private trainers.

MUNICIPAL USE OF THE CT DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES' NEW ON-LINE COOPERATIVE PURCHASING SYSTEM

A slide presentation was then made by Mr. Vincent McMahon of DAS concerning the opportunity for municipal governments presented by this group purchasing program. Municipal staff can now browse an electronic catalog of 2500 items posted on the Internet, enter their password and join the state bid. Even if they do not join in on an item, municipalities can use the low state prices obtained as leverage in bargaining with traditional supply sources, he said.

The state motive to make this service available to local governments is the larger quantity purchases that will result, lowering the price for all. Sixty municipal governments have signed up to date. The DAS will train local staffs. Orders by municipal departments can also be routed to one key municipal staff person who authorizes the placing of the final order with DAS, he said.

A state credit card system for payment is being designed. The web site address is WWW.STATE.CT.US/DAS. A question and answer period follow the presentation, after which Mr. McMahon was thanked for his visit to HVCEO.

CORRESPONDENCE TO CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM THE CT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION

Bonnie Smith reviewed a letter of request for assistance from the Commission, citing many new duties which appear onerous. However, it has been clarified to her that the local input will follow the old JPTA arrangement whereby the Mayors of Danbury and New Milford take the lead, a known arrangement which remains acceptable to her.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES UPDATE

Housatonic Valley Economic Development Partnership Director Peg Daley informed members that the recent land use training session attracted 90 persons and was a big success. The next session will be April 29, again at the WCSU west side campus, where nationally known Attorney Dwight Merriam will speak on the issues inherent in Connecticut's new village zone legislation. Sessions for next year will focus on how to run a successful meeting and proper use of Roberts Rules of Order.

A major new HVEDP initiative will be a brownfields remediation grant now being filed by HVEDP with EPA. The other big initiative will be a request for economic development district status to be filed with the federal Economic Development Administration. The 1994 strategic economic development plan for the region is to be updated in house as part of the EDA application, Mrs. Daley said.

Newtown First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal then stated that at the most recent HVEDP meeting, it was reported that the Housatonic Valley Tourism District is exploring a name change for their organization, coupled with a change of logo on its letterhead.

He noted that to better promote an identity for the area, during the past two years variations on Tourism's current logo design have been adopted for use by other regional organizations. These include HVEDP, HVCEO and HEAT. The regional bus system, HART, has also just joined this group.

The purpose of this coordination was to give the state defined Housatonic Region a more cohesive image, both externally as a destination for travelers and internally in its coordination of governmental services. Mr. Rosenthal noted that as we have now completed this process, it would be unfortunate to see the Tourism Commission lead the fragmentation of this. Mr. Rosenthal also reported that Tourism may be considering a name change for this area in its organizational title, using instead the term "Northern Fairfield County."

Gene Eriquez stated that as the name Housatonic is not well known outside of the area, some change for the tourism agency may be warranted while keeping the internal organizations such as HVCEO and HART identified as Housatonic. Herb Rosenthal stated that it was just this type of split that is to be avoided, that HVCEO since 1968 has promoted the Housatonic identity as have later regional organizations, and that all should remain united to raise the awareness of the name Housatonic.

It was agreed that staff will prepare a letter of concern about the issue to the tourism commission for HVCEO review at the June meeting. Patty Gay then brought down the house by noting the difficulty of certain new agency acronyms if, for example, there was a name change from the current "Housatonic Area Regional Transit" to "Upper Fairfield Area Regional Transit."

REMARKS BY RUTH MALINS OF THE HVA CONCERNING RELICENSING OF HOUSATONIC RIVER HYDRO PROJECTS

Ruth Malins of the Housatonic Valley Association then addressed the HVCEO. It was noted that some years ago she was an Alternate Member of the HVCEO board as a representative of New Milford.

CL&P's FERC relicensing is now entering its critical phase, she said. She praised CL&P for conducting an open and participatory process. Municipalities and HVCEO must make their main comments now, in the draft stage, to be most effective. Consensus from the area is important to FERC, and HVA will assist with this consensus.

She recommended that HVCEO proceed to make recommendations for aesthetic conservation easements outside of the FERC project boundaries, include issues relating to Candlewood Lake as a future water supply, fight for inclusion of lake authority funding in the application, and other enhancements and clarifications. Considerable discussion followed these remarks.

It was agreed that the May 21, 1999 HVCEO meeting would be dedicated to a review of draft HVCEO comments to CL&P regarding the application, that continued leadership and technical participation by HVA would be most welcomed, and that final HVCEO comments will be approved by HVCEO at its June 18, 1999 meeting. Ms. Malins was thanked for the courtesy of her visit.

CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF CANDLEWOOD LAKE CONSERVATION RESTRICTION AND RELATED ISSUES

Art Peitler reported that the conservation restriction had been signed by all five municipal leaders and that they are now awaiting receipt of the appraisals that will determine the cost of the easement.

Patty Gay reported that New Fairfield had decided against a purchase of CL&P beach land as her attorneys have determined that they would be paying for more limited rights than the Town

currently enjoys. Gene Eriquez reported the opposite situation in Danbury, where the beach purchase will proceed as municipal rights will be increased by the arrangement.

Representative Mary Ann Carson reported that area legislators met yesterday and are contacting CT OPM for funding of municipal costs regarding the easement and its development. However, that on the effort by legislators to have DPUC rule that our approximately \$100,000 cost to date could be ruled to be a stranded cost, a favorable ruling did not appear to be forthcoming.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.