

MINUTES OF THE
HVCEO
MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2000
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Bethel.....First Selectman Judy Novachek
Brookfield.....First Selectman Martin Foncello
New Fairfield.....First Selectman Patricia Gay, Vice Chairman
New Milford.....Mayor Arthur Peitler
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal, Secretary-Treasurer
Redding.....Alternate Tina Miller
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Alternate Peter Yanity

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Representative Robert Godfrey, Scott Radway and Martin Schneider of the News Times, Attorney Roseann Padula of Sullivan, Schoen, Campane & Connon, Thomas Devine and Catherine Brashich of the Housatonic Valley Tourism Commission, Kathryn Husband and James Andrini of CT DOT, Ruth Bonsignore of VHB, John Deering of Bethel, Peg Daley and James Bellano of the Housatonic Valley Economic Development Partnership, Josephine Harvey, Camille Acquanita, David Hannon and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Patty Gay at 12:45 P.M. There was no public comment offered at this session.

MINUTES FROM MEETINGS OF 3/17/2000, 4/14/2000 AND 5/19/2000

On a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and seconded by Judy Novachek , the minutes of the HVCEO meetings of 3/17/2000, 4/14/2000 and 5/19/2000 were unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 3/2000 4/2000 AND 5/2000

On a motion made by Art Peitler and seconded by Marty Foncello, the financial statements for 3/2000 4/2000 and 2/2000 were unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Dave Hannon reviewed two TIP amendments requested by CT DOT, concerning a New Haven Line Rail Station Governance Study, to include Danbury Branch Line stations, and to be managed by CT DOT. After a motion by Art Peitler and a second by Herb Rosenthal, it was voted unanimously to approve the amendment authorizing the \$730,000 study in the FY1999 and FY2000 STIP..

**RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING ASSISTANCE
TO HVCEO BY KATHRYN HUSBAND OF CT DOT**

Vice Chairman Patty Gay then addressed the Council concerning the work of Kathryn Husband, the primary contact person between HVCEO and the Connecticut Department of Transportation, who she said has been of assistance to HVCEO and the area since 1992. She noted that over the years Kasey has solved more administrative problems and bureaucratic snafus for us than can be counted. Traffic and transit investments in the area move forward because of her good work behind the scenes at DOT, she said.

The Vice Chair then noted for the record that Kathryn had previously been publically commended by HVCEO in 1996 with the statement that "her high quality of professional

response to requests for coordination and overall helpful attitude are much appreciated.” Vice Chair Patty Gay then stated that after completing eight years as our DOT coordinator, it is again appropriate to thank Kathryn for her hard work and diplomacy. “Kathryn is a model state employee”, she said. The Vice Chairman then presented a plaque of recognition from the Council to Kathryn, followed by applause.

CT DOT-HVCEO AGREEMENT FOR A REGIONAL TRAFFIC SIGNAL SYSTEM COORDINATION STUDY

Jon Chew reviewed this proposed contract, which would coordinate and advance signal system planning in the Region. CMAQ federal funding in the amount of \$100,000 is to be used, in a cooperative planning study with CT DOT to set policy for signal coordination on all state roadways in the area. After further explanation, and then on a motion made by Art Peitler and seconded by Judy Novachek, the resolution of approval was unanimously passed.

HVEDP STATUS REPORTS

New HVEDP Director James Bellano and retiring Director Peg Daley then gave their reports. They noted that the brownfields study application had not been funded by EPA, but that HVEDP and its consultant would try again. Status reports were given as to the land use permits on the Internet project, land use training, I-84 welcome signs, local purchasing and other projects.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT UPON THE RETIREMENT OF HVEDP DIRECTOR PEG DALEY

Vice Chairman Patty Gay then recognized that this was the last meeting for Peg Daley as Director of HVEDP. She noted that in regard to Peg, “Economic development is never easy. That’s why it takes a person with guts and enthusiasm to succeed, as well as brains.” She further stated that it had been this Region’s privilege to have her directing regional economic development for the past six years.

The Vice Chairman then noted that thanks to Peg we now have regular training for land use commission members, a high quality business resource directory, industrial supplies obtained locally under the H Vision program, a commitment for I-84 welcoming signs, Internet marketing of our area, excellent public access to I-84 planning, and much, much more.

Peg was then thanked for giving of herself and going beyond the call of duty. She was then presented with a gift from the Council. Herb Rosenthal then presented Peg with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Town of Newtown, both items followed by applause.

DANBURY BRANCH LINE ACTION PLAN

Progress with the Danbury Branch Rail Line improvement plan, a joint effort with SWRPA, the regional planning agency to the south, was reviewed by Dave Hannon. He noted that the “roll out” of the plan’s conclusion can be expected over the summer, with final approval in September.

Patty Gay commented that more thru trains to NYC, without the transfer in Norwalk, would draw riders away from the Harlem Line. Rudy Marconi noted that the chief elected official of Katonah, N.Y. was anxious to see rail improvements on the Danbury Branch as a way to reduce overuse of parking in her community by Connecticut residents.

UPDATE BY CT DOT ON THE PROGRESS OF ITS I-84 NEEDS STUDY

Jim Andrini of CT DOT and CT DOT consultant Ruth Bonsignore of VHB were then introduced. They reviewed the status of the \$750,000 study of I-84 now underway in the

Region. By federal law HVCEO must eventually approve the plan for any implementation to take place, they said.

Two public meetings are upcoming, along with separate meetings with HVCEO members from Danbury, Bethel and Newtown. A PowerPoint presentation was then made, showing improvements proposed at each exit, followed by a question and answer period. Vice Chair Patty Gay then thanked the presenters for their attendance.

As member Judy Novachek of Bethel and Alternate Tina Miller of Redding left the meeting at this point, a quorum was no longer present.

HOUSATONIC VALLEY TOURISM COMMISSION'S UPDATE ON ITS STUDY OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

Housatonic Valley Tourism Commission (HVTC) Member Thomas Devine and Executive Director Catherine Brashich then made a presentation to the Council, an update of their earlier presentation of October 1999, reporting on progress with a study of regional identity. The October presentation had resulted in reluctance on behalf of HVCEO members to support a name change for the Region in HVTC marketing.

But HVTC representatives noted then that while "Housatonic Valley" has for several decades been the official name for the area as used by state agencies and regional organizations, it is not widely used or recognized by businesses or citizens inside the area. The HVTC goal remains, they said, to promote the area with a geographic name that will be more widely recognized. Those using hotels and recreational resources will be increasingly drawn to the area if it has a more recognized name and resultant sense of place, Mr. Devine said.

As noted at the October meeting, the HVTC has a committee to explore regional identity issues, with the goal of obtaining the best possible name recognition to help draw out of area tourists by effective use of the HVTC's almost \$1,000,000 annual budget.

The HVTC remains anxious to coordinate with the mayors and first selectmen of the area they said, as all share in use of the regional name, and uncoordinated action by HVTC to add a second regional identifier to supplement the current "Housatonic Valley" could cause confusion, etc.

Presented at the meeting to replace the current name "Housatonic Valley Tourism Commission" were three possible options; 1) Connecticut's Historic Western Tourism Region, 2) Connecticut Western Tourism District, and 3) CT Greater Danbury Tourism Council. The sunrise and valley logo used with the current name will be retained.

There was then a discussion of the merits of these names. However, the five HVCEO members stated that the current Housatonic Valley identifier remained preferable to them. To this view the HVTC representatives restated an optional course, first expressed by them at the October HVCEO meeting, that retaining the primacy of the title Housatonic Valley might in one case be workable for HVTC.

This would be if the municipalities adopted policies advising all their relevant local governmental and economic development bodies to make increased use of this geographic identifying term, as a supplement to the town name and logo, this a major expansion from the use of Housatonic Valley by just regional agencies, the state and a few businesses as at present.

The HVTC goal here would be to have tourists arriving in the "Housatonic Valley" observing on arrival that name generally in use here, much more so than its limited usage as at

present. This clear sense of identifiable place is critical to the success of our tourism, they stated.

After further discussion it was agreed by the five HVCEO members present that HVTC representatives be invited to make a presentation to each municipality on this issue, the goal being the adoption by town councils, boards of selectmen, etc. of use of the identifier "Housatonic Valley" in their locally generated literature, web sites, etc.

To start the process, Jon Chew will send an explanatory letter to each HVCEO members on this issue. HVTC representatives were then thanked for their presentation.

Ridgefield member Rudy Marconi left the meeting at this point, with Ridgefield Alternate Peter Yanity taking his place.

STILL RIVER-HOUSATONIC RIVER CANOE AND KAYAK "RIVER RUN" FEASIBILITY STUDY

Peg Daley presented this issue. She will be serving as a part time consultant to HVEDP on this project, she said. The HVTC is funding the planning for the development of this facility as a "cornerstone attraction" for the Region. The proposed canoe route was then outlined on a series of maps and development steps explained. Peg Daley noted that municipal endorsements of the concept were needed before the project proceeded in order to insure its success.

After further discussion, the members had the following positive comments; Marty Foncello for Brookfield: this will be a major attraction and an asset for Brookfield. Patty Gay for New Fairfield: Supports this project as an asset for the Region. Art Peitler for New Milford: Supports this project and would like to coordinate it with his Town's greenway plans. Herb Rosenthal for Newtown: Supports this project and will ask the Lake Lillinonah Authority and the Lake Zoar Authority to also support it. Peter Yanity for Ridgefield: Supports this project as an amenity for Ridgefield residents and the Region.

APPROVAL OF HVCEO BUDGET FOR FY2001

As a quorum was not present this agenda item was deferred to a special meeting to be held on 6/23/2000.

MODEL POLICY FOR EMPLOYEE USE OF INTERNET

A presentation was then made by Attorney Roseann Padula of Sullivan, Schoen, Campana & Connon, LLC. Her remarks were an extension of the 3/2000 labor negotiation presentation to HVCEO by Attorney Catherine Thompson of that firm. A question and answer period followed. It was agreed that the handout distributed will be forwarded by staff to personnel directors and directors of finance.

OLD BUSINESS, NEW BUSINESS

Herb Rosenthal stated that the CL&P response to power outages arising from the wind and rain storms of early June was inadequate. The other members agreed with this. It was requested that CL&P representatives would be invited to an upcoming meeting and asked to address how the response to power outages will be improved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed at 3:10 P.M.