

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE
H V C E O
MEETING OF JUNE 21, 2002
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

Chairman Herbert Rosenthal of Newtown
Vice Chairman Martin Foncello of Brookfield; Secretary-Treasurer Natalie Ketcham of Redding

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Bethel.....Alternate Robert Legnard
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown
Brookfield.....First Selectman Martin Foncello
Danbury.....Mayor Mark Boughton
New Fairfield.....First Selectman Peggy Katkocin
New Milford.....Mayor Robert Gambino
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal
Redding.....Absent
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi and Alternate Peter Yanity
Sherman.....First Selectman Arthur von Plachecki

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

State Representative Andy Roraback, State Representative David Scribner, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Jack Deering of Bethel, Darrell Smith of the CT Department of Public Health, and John Deering, Special Consultant for Land Use and Development.

Then representing Housatonic Habitat for Humanity were Don Winkley, Paul Scalzo, Edward Allen, Chris Brown and Bernie Fitzpatrick. Also, Mary Kimball of New Milford, Richard Corona of Conn DOT, a police officer, Jim Bellano and Peg Daley of HVEDP, Ruth Malins of HVA, Catherine Brashich of HVTD, Larry Marsicano of CLA, Camille Acquanita, Andrew Carrier and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herbert Rosenthal at 12:35 P.M. Public comment was offered by:

— New Milford resident Mary Kimball in opposition to Route 7 Bypass Alternative alignment 4C in Brookfield as having too many negative impacts upon the human environment.

— Ruth Malins of New Milford in support of active participation by HVCEO on the Housatonic River Natural Resources Restoration Citizen's Advisory Group. After discussion, it was agreed that J. Chew will contact the current HVCEO appointment, David Hubbard of New Milford, to inquire if he is able to continue as the HVCEO representative given personal health issues. If not, J. Chew is authorized by the Council to make another appointment in consultation with Mayor Bob Gambino of New Milford.

— Herbert Rosenthal invited members to a Friday, June 28, 9 AM interview of the firm Medical Priority Dispatch, to determine the company's suitability for emergency response training of local dispatchers. The invitation is extended as other towns will need to examine the merits of the few firms providing this specialty in this area in order to meet state training mandates.

MINUTES FROM MEETING OF 4/19/2002

On a motion made by Marty Foncello and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the minutes of the meeting of 4/19/2002 were unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 4/2002 AND 5/2002

On a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Art von Plachecki, the financial statements for 4/2002 and 5/2002 were unanimously approved.

2002 TRANSPORTATION - AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY STATEMENT

Staff then reviewed how HVCEO transportation projects are evaluated for air quality impact, and the significance of the federal conformity statement required annually. Rudy Marconi requested a data comparison from the conformity technical report as to how the pending Route 7 widening from two to four lanes in Danbury and Ridgefield would improve air quality. Staff will contact Conn DOT to obtain this information. Then on a motion made by Bob Legnard and a second by Bob Gambino, the 2002 transportation - air quality conformity statement was unanimously approved.

LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND ITS BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Staff reviewed this item, stating that upon advice of attorneys at Perkins Coie, a letter from HVCEO describing the negative impacts upon the Region and Connecticut of current federal Indian policy regarding casinos was recommended. The model letter, used by groups represented by Perkins Coie, was modified by staff to fit conditions and issues particular to Greater Danbury. Then on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Robert Brown and approved unanimously, Chairman Rosenthal was authorized to sign the letter.

STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO ROUTE 7 BYPASS ALTERNATIVE 4C IN BROOKFIELD

Members reviewed the proposed statement attached to the agenda. Brookfield First Selectman Marty Foncello provided an overview of the issue, explaining that due to pressure from environmental resource agency staffs, Conn DOT has created a new alignment option. However, to assist salamander and frog migrations, the human environment, including Brookfield's only elderly housing complex, would be severely impacted by this new routing. Conn DOT has not endorsed the new alignment, and is instead presenting it for public review, he stated.

Herb Rosenthal then reviewed and quoted from the draft HVCEO statement to Conn DOT which urged that Alternative 4C not be considered a practical alternative due to its high impacts upon the human environment; "Overall, the balance of impacts to wildlife, businesses and residents from constructing the Route 7 Bypass on the Alternative 4 alignment, as long planned, is the preferred alternative and best solution for the overall needs of Western Connecticut."

After further discussion, and on a motion made by Marty Foncello and seconded by Rudy Marconi, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Chairman to sign the letter on alignment alternatives to Conn DOT.

State Representative David Scribner of Brookfield was then invited to speak on this issue, and stated that at a meeting on 6/20 with Conn DOT it was hoped that a compromise could be worked out. If not, he recommended a regional summit on the matter, with top state and federal elected officials, as was pursued successfully two years ago during an earlier alignment planning crisis for this same section of proposed roadway.

STATUS OF CONN DOT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Andy Carrier reviewed this topic. He noted that Conn DOT has released the grant applications for the fourth round of this very important program. He distributed a listing of past Enhancement projects in the region included the restoration of the Danbury Railroad Station, creation of the Clifford Chapin Railroad Plaza in New Milford, Downtown Bethel beautification, etc.

The administrative process for the grant application was then reviewed. A due date for applications to reach HVCEO is Friday, 11/1/2002. HVCEO can then set funding priorities for applications at its 11/15/2002 meeting. Mr. Carrier suggested that at either the 9/20/2002 or 10/18/2002 meetings, the Council could discuss possible "fair share" funding guidelines for use at the 11/15 meeting, and that he will be available to attend municipal strategy sessions concerning development of applications.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JON CHEW

Upgrading of Interlocal Agreements for Terrorism Response: A letter was mailed 6/3/2002 to the chief elected officials of the nine communities around Danbury, requesting a response to an attached short questionnaire on the status of municipal planning for terrorism and interest in regional discussion of that topic. The completed Danbury questionnaire was also mailed out to the surrounding towns. It was reported that Brookfield, Newtown and Sherman had responded thus far.

Casino Traffic Study: Staff reported that the Casino Traffic Technical Committee (Danbury, Ridgefield, HVEDP, GDCC, HVCEO AND HVTD) met with the consultant, Georges Jacquemart of BF&J, Inc., on May 31. The Committee reviewed the structure of the effort, traffic data gathering thus far, and generally offered input to this \$28,000 effort, jointly funded by HVCEO, HVEDP, HVTC and the Greater Danbury Chamber.

Transportation Investment Area (TIA) Board Meetings: Attendance has continued on the two groups to which HVCEO was assigned by the Legislature, Coastal TIA and I-84 TIA. As Coastal is more focused on just the immediate coast, HVCEO policies concerning rail service to southern Fairfield County are pursued there. The Council's I-84 improvement plan is given priority at the I-84 TIA group. A bus tour of major regional projects along I-84 including in our area for Oz Griebel and other TSB officials is planned for 7/1/2002. HVCEO staff will narrate the tour once in the HVCEO area.

Detailed Census Data Received: The population totals already received have been supplemented by economic and social data for each municipality. These materials will soon be posted to the HVCEO web site. A hard copy of the data for each community was then distributed.

HVCEO to Sponsor Presentation by Roundabout Expert in Ridgefield on 7/16/2002: As requested by the Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission, nationally noted traffic engineer Georges Jacquemart will make a computer animated presentation in Ridgefield for the Routes 7 and 102 intersection, as a part of the Town's new Branchville Village Plan. This presentation is funded by HVCEO.

Implementation of 11/2002 Georgetown Beautification Plan: It was noted that a presentation was made by HVCEO Consultant Jane Didona on the Georgetown improvement plan at the February meeting. This plan was funded by HVCEO in anticipation of helping qualify Redding for receipt of federal Enhancement Program or other funds, and this has now happened, with \$500,000 to be received by Redding from CT OPM for Georgetown.

Web Development: The staff will now serve as webmaster for the River Trail site at www.hvpaddle.org. The update of the Council's own site at www.hvceo.org by consultant Levent Kolukisa is now about one third complete.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR ANDY CARRIER

Ridgefield Route 35 Traffic Improvement Plan: The Consultant selection committee has ranked the firm of Fitzgerald Halliday, Inc. as the first to negotiate with. The HVCEO staff has requested Conn DOT approval of the selection process and authorization to proceed. After the contract is fully executed, the study is expected to take approximately 9 months to complete.

Regionwide Traffic Signal Coordination Study: This project is currently underway with Wilbur Smith Associates. Approximately 50% of the requested traffic signal plans for the Region have been received from Conn DOT. The downtown New Milford area was the first subarea studied. WSA and HVCEO staff met with Danbury officials on their section of the plan earlier this week. A regionwide technical meeting is expected to be scheduled later in the year.

Danbury Traffic Study: The City of Danbury has requested that HVCEO seek authorization of \$200,000 (\$160,000 federal, \$40,000 local match) for a citywide Danbury Traffic Study. HVCEO and Danbury officials are awaiting a "window of funding opportunity" within the FHWA's STP-O funding category before making an official request to ConnDOT.

Newtown Queen Street Pedestrian Safety Study: It is anticipated that the study should be complete within the next 6 months.

Route 7 widening in Danbury and Ridgefield: It was reported by Mr. Carrier that State Representative John Frey has initiated efforts to rescue this project from a DEP stalemate. A public Informational meeting has been scheduled for late June. A listing prepared by staff of all active projects and their costs in the Route 7 corridor was then distributed.

ADOPTION OF BUDGET FOR FY2003

Jon Chew then presented the draft budget for FY2003. He noted that it was based upon proposed dues levels approved in December, upon the transportation planning program approved in April, and the Personnel Committee recommendations of May. The position of GIS Manager is to be upgraded from part time to full time. A discussion followed. Then on a motion made by Marty Foncello and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the FY2003 HVCEO budget was unanimously approved.

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

SOURCES BY THREATS TO QUALITY

A presentation on this topic was then made by Darrell Smith of the CT Department of Public Health. the "Source Water Assessment Program" or SWAP is part of the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The final report is due at US EPA by May 2003. Color maps of water resources in the Region were distributed.

The goal of Connecticut's SWAP is to evaluate the susceptibility of all public drinking water supply sources, including surface water reservoirs and ground water supply wells, to potential contamination. While full text reports for each resource will be available, detailed maps of well head areas are being deleted due to terrorism concerns. The reports will be very useful for local and regional planning. A question and answer session followed.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION AND OUR WATERCOURSES AND RESERVOIRS

A slide presentation on this topic was made by John W. Deering, Special Consultant for Land Use and Development, a long time Bethel resident and volunteer to many water resource protection efforts. A handout was also distributed.

A key point was that no landscaping debris should be blown, raked or placed in any town, city or state right of way that would then be collected by a rain event and transported into a drainage system for a point source discharge, a common practice today with motorized blowers. A discussion followed, including comments regarding compliance with new stormwater discharge regulations.

UPDATE ON SITE SEARCHES BY HOUSATONIC HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Discussion of this topic was led by Don Winkley with Paul Scalzo, Edward Allen, Bernie Fitzpatrick and Chris Brown. Mr. Winkley reviewed the progress made by this group, which has a Christian base and has built nine homes in the area thus far. For all activities, local building and zoning codes are met and Habitat retains the deed to the property.

Habitat is seeking assistance from municipalities in identifying vacant homes to repair and vacant lots to build upon. It was noted that the activities of this group will assist each municipality in meeting state imposed affordable housing requirements. A handout was also distributed, followed by questions and answers. Herb Rosenthal reported that Habitat activities in Newtown had been successful and well received.

UPDATE ON HVEDP ACTIVITIES:

HVEDP Director Jim Bellano reviewed recent activities, distributing a series of national magazine articles favorably describing the recent 5/19/2002 Housatonic Valley Classic bicycle race. A video was then shown of the race as it appeared on Connecticut news stations and elsewhere.

HVTD Director Catherine Brashich then distributed a fact sheet calculating the positive local economic impacts of the race, with visitor spending at \$564,000 and a total net multiplier to the regional economy of \$2.26 million. Options for management of the race next year were then discussed.

UPDATE ON RIVER TRAIL:

River Trail development Director Peg Daley reviewed activities, noting that her service contract ends this month. She was thanked by the members for her fine service in bringing this project to reality.

MEMBERS FORUM: Members then held an informal discussion on a variety of municipal management issues. New Fairfield First Selectman Peggy Katkocin thanked Danbury and Sherman for their help with a local disaster drill held on 6/8. Brookfield First Selectman Marty Foncello thanked Bethel, Danbury, New Milford and WCSU for assistance with making classroom space available during the school building asbestos crisis.

ADJOURNMENT

Then on a motion made by Marty Foncello and seconded by Bob Legnard, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 P.M.