

**NOVEMBER 18, 2005 MINUTES  
HVCEO MEETING  
HELD AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

Chairman Natalie Ketcham of Redding  
Vice Chairman Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield – Secretary-Treasurer Peggy Katkocin of New Fairfield

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE**

Bethel.....First Selectman Alice Hutchinson  
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown  
Brookfield.....First Selectman Jerry Murphy, Alternate Judy Heise  
Danbury.....Alternate Michael McLachlan  
New Fairfield.....First Selectman Peggy Katkocin  
New Milford.....Mayor Patricia Murphy  
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal  
Redding.....First Selectman Natalie Ketcham, Chairman  
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Alternate Peter Yanity  
Sherman.....First Selectman Andrea O'Connor

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

State Representative Mary Ann Carson, Raymond O'Brien of the New Milford Town Council, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Andrea Rynn of Danbury Hospital, Larry Marsicano and Harold Mayer of the Candlewood Lake Authority, Elaine Mintz of Redding and Carl Epple of Bethel representing the Greater Danbury Non-Profit Resource Center, Linda Wellman of The Spectrum, David Hannon, Candy Acquanita and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

**CALL TO ORDER/ PUBLIC COMMENT**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Natalie Ketcham at 12:35 P.M. She congratulated members who won reelection, then stated the difficulty of losing two members who had served diligently and not won reelection, Alice Hutchinson and Peggy Katkocin.

Mrs. Ketcham then presented plaques of appreciation to the two retiring members. She also thanked retiring alternates Judy Heise of Brookfield and Peter Yanity of Ridgefield for their frequent attendance and numerous contributions.

For public comment, Ray O'Brien suggested adding the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of meetings. Then Lynn Waller thanked the two retiring members and two alternates for their good work and courtesy to her. As for the purchase of hydro projects, local taxpayers have enough burdens already.

**U.S. EPA SMART GROWTH  
AWARD TO TOWN OF REDDING**

On behalf of the Council Rudy Marconi offered congratulations to Natalie Ketcham for her receipt in Washington, D.C. of a "Smart Growth" award for the Georgetown redevelopment project on the 55 acres of the old Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill. It was noted that the award was one of only five given nationwide. Mrs. Ketcham thanked the members and noted that as with any big success numerous persons contributed. She especially praised the Georgetown Land Development Company and that company's representative Steve Soler.

**MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 2005**

On a motion made by Alice Hutchinson and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2005 were unanimously approved.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR OCTOBER 2005**

On a motion made by Alice Hutchinson and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the financial statement for October 2005 was also unanimously approved.

**CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR \$49,000 TRAFFIC STUDY OF NEWTOWN'S QUEEN STREET AREA**

Dave Hannon addressed this topic, noting that \$25,000 in federal funding is to be used in conjunction with \$24,000 in local funding from the Town of Newtown. Approved as an upcoming study by the Council in April of 2005, a text attached to the agenda packet described the interviewing and selection process, with Vollmer Associates receiving the highest ranking and recommended by the interview committee.

A request for approval of the committee recommendation was then made. Then on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, it was unanimously voted to select Vollmer.

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

There was then an amendment proposed by Conn DOT concerning safety on Route 133 in Bridgewater, the upgrading of guide rails along Route 133 between the Housatonic River and Wewaka Brook Road. The length of roadway is 1.1 miles and the cost for preliminary engineering services is \$350,000.

Dave Hannon stated that Bridgewater First Selectman Bill Stuart had been briefed by state staff and expressed his support for the expenditure. After a short discussion and on a motion made by Robert Brown and seconded by Pat Murphy, a resolution endorsing the Bridgewater Route 133 safety project TIP amendment was unanimously approved.

**DISTRIBUTION OF NEW DANBURY TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Mike McLachlan distributed the new citywide plan, which will now be a guide for all transportation investments pursued by the City. The author is Danbury Planning Director Dennis Elpern.

**SALE OF NORTHEAST GENERATING COMPANY BY NU IN 2006**

Patricia Murphy started off the discussion by noting that NU had provided no advance warning to local leaders as to the hydro project sale announcement. In reaction to a proposal in the newspaper by Danbury Public Works Director William Buckley, suggesting municipal purchase of the hydro facilities, she stated that the projects would be very costly for municipalities to purchase and that government could likely not manage them as well as the private sector, observations with which the other members agreed.

Andrea O'Connor suggested that conditions may be right for shifting some shoreline management and other FERC permit related NGC responsibilities to CLA and thereby increasing local control. Concerns were also raised that informal arrangements that are working well may now be lost if a new owner is not as cooperative as NGC has been. Mike McLachlan noted that his review of energy industry periodicals indicated that NGC's Housatonic hydro facilities are seen as desirable in the industry as sources of non-fossil fuel consuming "green energy."

A summary of the 1999 Conservation Restriction owned by the five Candlewood Lake communities was then distributed, as well as the full document. During the discussion questions focused on such issues as 1) a need for clarification of the definition of right of first refusal for purchase of the Lake; is it only available when there is no private sector purchaser, 2) concerning the geographic extent of the right of first refusal, does it include the power generating portion of the project on the Housatonic River or just Candlewood Lake itself, 3) outside of the Restriction, what will be the extend of DPUC and FERC regulatory involvement in the upcoming sale, if any, and 4) there is a need for attorney's advice as to guidance to elected officials as they approach the upcoming sale, including changes in law or other vulnerabilities not foreseen in 1999.

The idea was raised of the affected municipalities meeting with NU to gather facts, but it was decided to defer such a step until after the meeting with legislators on December 2, to coordinate with their suggested approach first. It was agreed to retain the author of the Candlewood Lake Conservation Restriction, Attorney Ted Backer, for the preparation of a summary of the Restriction and for him to attend the December 2 meeting to distribute and provide a verbal summary. Representative Mary Ann Carson of New Fairfield participated in the discussion.

**INTRODUCING THE GREATER  
DANBURY NONPROFIT RESOURCE CENTER**

Comments on this item were made by Elaine Mintz of Redding and Carl Epple of Bethel. They explained that the goal of this new group is to increase communications among non-profit groups in the ten municipalities of the Housatonic Valley Region, thereby improving performance and impact. Also, to provide self-assessments so that non-profits can do a better job. Financial supporters include Boehringer Ingleheim, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Newtown Savings Bank, and the United Way of Northern Fairfield County, among others.

The web address is [gdnrc.org](http://gdnrc.org) and includes a link to the [hvceo.org](http://hvceo.org) demographic data base. Questions were raised and responded to after which the presenters were thanked for their visit to HVCEO.

**PHASE OUT OF LEVER VOTING MACHINES**

There was then a discussion of the fact that the federal Election Assistance Commission recently issued an advisory opinion stating that lever voting systems have significant barriers, which make compliance with the Help America Vote Act difficult and unlikely. This in turn puts the municipalities in the position of possibly replacing all lever voting machines by the November 2006 elections. Herb Rosenthal, President of CCM and very knowledgeable on this issue, then gave a full report, followed by discussion.

**SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

There was a discussion of the progress of the NGC shoreline management plan for Candlewood Lake and specifically the requirement for new buffers on NGC land. Jerry Murphy stressed that the public at a regional meeting on 10/21 on this topic was very agitated about potential irrational changes to their property. The consensus of the discussion that followed was that grandfathering of existing rights should be encouraged.

An agenda attachment on this issue from NGC, their summary and comment upon the 10/21 meeting on this issue, was cited. It stated that "NGC will pursue protection and, where feasible, reestablishment of vegetated buffers in a manner that is practical and reasonable. NGC acknowledges that there are many existing uses of the shoreline, including established structures and will not require that these be removed or modified for the purpose of establishing vegetated buffers unless such uses represent a violation of current policies and procedures."

**REVIEW OF 2006 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

The draft was reviewed and the staff is to incorporate the comments made, then distribute for use at the legislative breakfast scheduled for 12/2/2005.

**STUDY OF THE CT TAX SYSTEM**

Herb Rosenthal urged members to attend the November 29 public hearing in Danbury City Hall on this issue, being held by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee.

**INQUIRY INTO ENHANCEMENT GRANT DISTRIBUTION**

Natalie Ketcham raised the issue of recent federal transportation Enhancement awards in the region involving Brookfield and Redding. She noted that the Council members were under the impression that the total of dollar awards per region would be generally scaled to the relative population sizes of the regions. However, that the total of \$960,000 received in this region is similar to or less than the state's planning regions with the very smallest populations.

In addition, that the application for the second priority project, Redding's Georgetown Streetscape and Pedestrian Access Plan, requested \$622,400 in federal funding, yet only \$560,000 was awarded. Staff will write to the DOT to inquire as to the reasoning for these actions.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 P.M.