

**JANUARY 19, 2007 MINUTES  
HVCEO MEETING**

**HELD AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

Chairman Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield  
Vice Chairman Jerry Murphy of Brookfield; Secretary-Treasurer Andrea O'Connor of Sherman

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE**

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke  
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown  
Brookfield.....First Selectman Jerry Murphy  
Danbury.....Mayor Mark Boughton and Alternate Dennis Elpern  
New Fairfield.....Alternate Selectman Ronald Oliveri  
New Milford.....Mayor Patricia Murphy  
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal  
Redding.....First Selectman Natalie Ketcham  
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Chairman  
Sherman.....Absent

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Dr. Georgina Scholl and Patricia Sesto of the Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance, Danbury Judge of Probate Diane Yamin, Karl Myers of Danbury's Dream Homes Community Center, Phyllis Leopold of the Association of Religious Communities, Danbury Housing Authority Director Carolyn Sistrunk, Anthony Paquette of DEMHS, Gian-Carl Casa of the CT Conference of Municipalities, June Renzulli of the United Way of Northern Fairfield County, Lynn Waller of Danbury, a reporter from WLAD, Eric Hampton of DECD, Danbury Common Council member Lynn Taborsak, and from the HVCEO staff David Hannon, Candy Acquanita and Jon Chew.

**CALL TO ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENT**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rudy Marconi at 12:30 P.M., after which attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Public comment was made by Lynn Waller, who cited the need for affordable private housing for senior citizens. Also, staff will distribute a NY Times housing article provided by Lynn Taborsak.

**MINUTES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

On a motion made by Pat Murphy and seconded by Bob Brown, the minutes of the meetings of 11/17/2006 and 12/1/2006 were unanimously approved. Concerning the financial statements for November 2006 and December 2006, after brief discussion and on a motion made by Pat Murphy and seconded by Jerry Murphy, the two statements were also unanimously approved.

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT**

Dave Hannon reported that CT DOT is ready to place funding for Redding's "Streetscape Enhancement and Pedestrian Access in Georgetown Village Center" project onto the TIP. The total preliminary engineering cost is \$243,000 and the following construction phase is \$778,000. On a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and seconded by Natalie Ketcham, the resolution for the TIP amendment was unanimously approved.

**MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS FOR THE FAIRFIELD  
COUNTY MUNICIPAL DEER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE**

Jon Chew reported that he had been contacted by the Deer Management Alliance, seeking assistance with the volunteers group's financial management. A proposed agreement for such financial management services attached to the agenda was up for discussion.

Dr. Georgina Scholl and Patricia Sesto of the Deer Management Alliance then spoke to the issue. The four members from the HVCEO area are Bethel, Danbury, Ridgefield and Redding, they said. Annual dues are \$200 per town and the group writes about 15 checks per year. They cited a similar arrangement whereby the Fairfield County

Conservation District maintains the checking account for the strictly volunteer Norwalk River Watershed Alliance.

As to the group's activities, they asked if additional HVCEO members would like to consider joining the Alliance. Current activities include a proposal that there should be state funding of venison processing for donation to the hungry, approaches to regional media for public education articles, proposing bills to re-instate automatic lab reporting of Lyme cases, and requesting DEP to make deer culling more effective.

A discussion followed. Herb Rosenthal stated that, outside of the administrative issue involved here, the Alliance had misrepresented itself as far as Newtown is concerned, claiming that Newtown endorsed the group when it did not. He also cited examples where Alliance hunt methods were overly cruel and disturbing to the public.

Natalie Ketcham described a test in Redding whereby an area of underbrush was closed off for some months from random deer grazing, then its vegetation compared to free roaming areas, the result a strong example of how deer destroy underbrush and harm the landscape, thus needing management.

There was then considerable discussion of that part of the draft agreement stating that it is for "assistance with financial management only, and does not include or imply any control by one party over the other as to votes, policies or lobbying activities." There was a perceived risk by members that checks issued for the Alliance in the name of HVCEO could be interpreted as HVCEO endorsement of all of the group's activities, which is not the case.

There was then further discussion, after which a motion was made by Robert Burke and seconded by Natalie Ketcham to approved the financial services agreement for a one year trial period, potentially renewable after that time, all aye.

#### **SUPPORT FOR 168 ACRE DEP OPEN SPACE PURCHASE IN BETHEL**

A letter from Bethel First Selectman Robert Burke requesting a review from HVCEO in this matter was summarized by him. The 168 acres in question would become an addition to Huntington State Park straddling the borders of Bethel, Newtown and Redding.

A draft statement of support by staff including an analysis of the Bogus Farm property in relationship to the HVCEO regional plan map, and to past DEP open space priorities, was then reviewed. The staff report concluded that "the 1997 Plan includes the entirety of the Bogus Farm within the limited Remote Area designated for southeastern Bethel. The Remote Area boundary continues on into Redding and Newtown and is a defining policy to contain sprawl in this part of the Greater Danbury metropolitan area."

"Further, the property under evaluation is adjacent on its north side to a recommended Lower Density Area of more traditional subdivision development. Thus its preservation to limit advancing density is particularly crucial."

The location of the property was then displayed on a mounted map, and its location in the Aspetuck Water Supply Watershed was also highlighted. Then after brief discussion and on a motion made by Pat Murphy and seconded by Herb Rosenthal, the letter of support to DEP for the open space purchase was approved unanimously.

#### **COORDINATION OF HVCEO AND CCM LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS**

A discussion on CCM legislative priorities was then held with Gian-Carl Casa, CCM Director of Legislative Services. He reviewed priorities of CCM for 2007, listed on a handout he distributed.

These included retention of the current level of real estate conveyance tax for municipalities. If sunseted on 6/30/2007 this would be a \$40 million loss statewide, he said. It was decided that as was done some time ago on this issue, the HVCEO chairman would write letters to all other municipal chief executives urging them to contact their legislators on this matter.

Other CCM priorities discussed included property tax relief, improvement to land use decision making by upgrading regional councils such as HVCEO, additional allocations for the Clean Water Fund, more funding for open space and agricultural land preservation, changes to the ECS formula, and other items.

There was then discussion of particular priorities, speaking opportunities at committee hearings and other items, after which Mr. Casa was thanked for his presentation.

### **REGIONAL APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS ISSUES**

There was discussion of this issue, tabled from the 11/17/2006 meeting, when Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton had proposed intermunicipal coordination with the new Danbury Plan to End Homelessness. That Plan had suggested many steps, three of which are regional strategies. Each suggested regional strategy was then discussed by members.

The first regional recommendation in the Danbury Plan to End Homelessness was a goal of formal agreements between Danbury and area town social service departments, these to provide on-going case management to residents of their towns that are seeking shelter and services in Danbury.

After discussion it was agreed that as the most logical first step, Danbury would host a meeting of all the City and suburban staff persons potentially involved, with HVCEO members invited, to discuss details and how a coordinated referral system might operate.

The second regional recommendation in the Danbury Plan calls for joint funding for homeless counseling, finding that area towns could achieve budgetary efficiencies by cooperatively supporting services to persons and families that are or at risk of homelessness.

Counseling as to rental assistance options and first time home ownership would be included. Under this strategy the persons invited to the regional informational meeting noted above would work together and jointly use the housing counseling and referral service provided in Danbury.

Specifically, the Plan's recommendation is for joint support of the existing regional "point of entry" for all referrals that deal with homelessness, which is the Dream Homes Community Center established in Danbury in October of 2006.

In the discussion of how regional funding might theoretically operate, it was determined that funds would not be collected through HVCEO dues, as towns are reluctant to fund a line item in their budgets where the funds designated are then transferred by the recipient to another group. Rather, the merits of each agency seeking funds should be evaluated separately and another town budget line established, such that municipal funds are used only for the specific purposes intended.

In the discussion Bob Burke noted that the burden placed by suburban towns on Danbury housing services should definitely be addressed. After further discussion it was agreed that Mark Boughton would organize a presentation that would be made to budget officials in each municipality on a town by town basis, to explain just what would be received for the expenditure and other details. The regional meeting of social service directors to gain their understanding and support would precede this more formalized outreach.

A third item suggested by the Danbury Plan is that a regional housing market study be undertaken, with the specific request that HVCEO engage a consulting firm to determine affordable housing needs in each community. Also, the goal should be to research model techniques for assisting affordable housing and specific methods of inclusionary zoning.

Mark Boughton noted that the City's legal staff would prepare background on housing trust funds for use in the regional report. June Renzulli noted that the United Way expends about \$500,000 per year on housing, and that the board would like to use the study to make decisions that are more data driven. After further discussion it was agreed that she and Jon Chew would formulate a detailed study proposal and recommend funding sources for such a research effort.

**SELECTION OF CONSULTANT FOR NEW MILFORD  
ROUTES 7 AND 202 DRIVEWAY PLAN UPDATE**

Dave Hannon reviewed the status of driveway management plans in the area, referring to a list of completed plans on an agenda attachment. The 1997 New Milford Route 7 Driveway Management Plan is in need of an update he said, also an expansion of the plan to include New Milford's Route 202, this in response to the New Milford Zoning Commission making a request to HVCEO for this study.

Dave noted that area zoning commissions have significant statutory authority to include driveway and access concerns and such planning maps in permit review activities. And that generally the development community has favored these curb cut plans, as they let them know what the commission is seeking in advance as their site plans are drawn.

Dave noted that the recommended consultant as approved by Town of New Milford officials for the \$40,000 study is Vollmer Associates. There was discussion of this item. Then on a motion made by Robert Brown and a second by Jerry Murphy, the recommendation as to consultant selection was unanimously approved.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The report was made by Pat Murphy regarding officers for 2007, recommending reelection for another year of Rudy Marconi for Chairman, Jerry Murphy as Vice Chairman, and Andrea O'Connor as Secretary-Treasurer. Then on a motion made by Robert Burke and a second by Pat Murphy, the three nominations were unanimously approved.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Dave Hannon then gave a report on emergency management issues. As for the upcoming CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 5- Regional Emergency Operations Plan, he noted that it will be for 43 towns in DEMHS Region 5, which includes the Housatonic Valley Region and three other RPO's.

A draft of the plan, which includes 15 Emergency Support Function Annexes, is nearing completion and will be distributed to chief elected officials, municipal emergency management directors and those who would participate in the implementation of the plan. Also, DEMHS Region 5 is considering holding a conference this spring to provide an orientation session on the elements of the plan, discuss suggestions for improvements and next steps needed to implementation.

As for Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funding, it has been cut by two thirds for FY2007. It also appears likely that DEMHS will require significant changes to the way in which this grant program is accessed and administered.

Dave's best guess at this time is that HSGP funds will be allocated by region rather than by municipality. But it is not clear what regions would be used, DEMHS or regional planning organization like HVCEO. It is also possible that regional funding allocations may be based on an assessment of security needs, rather than on a per capita basis.

And as for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program, currently the City of Danbury and the Towns of New Milford and Redding have active CERT programs. The Town's of Bethel, New Fairfield, Ridgefield and Sherman have expressed interest in starting new CERT's.

Finally, some very good news, he said, in that he has received word from DEMHS that the State will soon be putting-out bids for the equipment needed to link the ten HVCEO municipalities together in a regional video conferencing system.

This system is being funded from FY2004 and 2005 HSGP funds. DEMHS hopes to have the equipment purchased and installed and municipal staff trained in the use of this equipment prior to the start of the 2007 hurricane season.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Then on a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 P.M.