

**MINUTES OF THE 4/16/2009  
HVCEO MEETING  
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES ATTENDING**

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke  
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown  
Brookfield.....First Selectman Robert Silvaggi  
Danbury.....Planning Director Dennis Elpern  
New Fairfield.....First Selectman John Hodge  
New Milford.....Mayor Patricia Murphy, Chairman  
Newtown.....First Selectman Joseph Borst  
Redding.....Absent  
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Secretary-Treasurer  
Sherman.....First Selectman Andrea O'Connor, Vice Chairman

**OTHERS ATTENDING**

Commissioner of the CT Department of Economic and Community Development Joan McDonald, David Fink of the CT Partnership for Strong Communities, HART Service Development Director Richard Schreiner and HART Transportation Planner Ann Katis, Carla Iezzi of Conn DOT, Jennifer Reid of the HVCEO Tick Borne Illness Task Force and Brookfield resident Drew Swanson.

In addition Eric Hampton of CT DECD, Dirk Perrefort of the News Times, Newtown Community Development Director Elizabeth Stocker, HVCEO's Kings Mark appointee Peg Daley of Newtown, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator Robert Kenny, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Charlotte Barrows of Danbury, and from the HVCEO staff Camille Acquanita, David Hannon and Jonathan Chew.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Patricia Murphy at 12:35 PM, after which attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments was made by Peg Daley of Kings Mark, updating members on Still River kayak and canoe access development activities. Remarks were then made by David Fink of the CT Partnership for Strong Communities, inviting area officials to attend "Visualizing Density" half day workshops to be held May 14 in Bridgeport and May 15 in Hartford.

**UPDATE ON DECD ACTIVITIES  
AND DECD STATEWIDE PLAN**

Joan McDonald, the Commissioner of the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), was then introduced. She gave her views on the current economic crisis from the vantage point of DECD. While these are tough times, Connecticut remains first of the fifty states in value of private sector production per person, she said.

She advocated for the municipal workforce housing planning process funded thru OPM and urged area municipalities to develop proposals for use of upcoming regional incentive bond funds. As for the upcoming new statewide economic development plan, she stated that it will include specific regional recommendations for Greater Danbury.

As for this area completing a federally structured and EDA 50% funded "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" (CEDS) economic development policy report, she was in favor of its being undertaken as a planning tool, although due to low unemployment the area is not eligible for EDA capital project grants. There was then a considerable discussion with members on a variety of economic development issues affecting the area. Commissioner McDonald was then thanked by Chairman Murphy for her visit, followed by applause.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS AND REPORTS**

**--- Minutes from 3/19/2009:** On a motion made by Robert Brown and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the minutes of the meeting of 3/19/2009 were unanimously approved except for an abstention by Andrea O'Connor.

**--- Financial Statement for 3/2009:** On a motion made by Andrea O'Connor and seconded by John Hodge, the financial statement for 3/2009 was unanimously approved.

**--- Certifications, Air Quality and Grant Resolutions for FY2010:** Jon Chew reviewed these, which were a) Agreement for Planning Services with the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District, b) Transportation Planning Program Recertification, 3) 2007 Regional Transportation Plan Recertification, d) Conformity with Clean Air Act for Limiting Ozone, e) Conformity with Clean Air Act for Limiting Fine Particulates, and f) Application to CT OPM for FY2010 State Grant. Then on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Robert Burke, the six items reviewed were unanimously approved.

**--- Transportation Improvement Program Amendments:** Dave Hannon reviewed the amendments requested by Conn DOT and HVCEO staff. These were for a) ARRA statewide bus replacement program, b) ARRA upgrade of 106 buses to hybrid operating technology, ARRA epoxy pavement markings for state roadways, and c) ARRA projects for eight Greater Danbury municipalities. A resolution to this effect was presented. Then on a motion made by Robert Brown and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the TIP amendments were unanimously approved.

**--- Applications for CT DOT Wheelchair Accessible Vans:** Richard Schreiner of HART presented this item. He explained that Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 funding for elderly and disabled wheelchair accessible vans had been received in the area since 1975. Under its agreement with Conn DOT, HVCEO annually sets priorities for applications to Conn DOT for 5310 funded vehicles, with HART managing the applications and making recommendations to HVCEO.

The latest grant cycle has just been completed, he said. Two proposals were received, from Ability Beyond Disability based in Bethel and from the Town of New Milford. The proposals scored identically under Conn DOT criteria, and both entities participate in regional human services transit coordination activities.

However, Mr. Schreiner recommended ranking the New Milford proposal first, as the Town is replacing a 1997 model year vehicle and has only three buses in service, while Ability Beyond Disability proposes replacing two vehicles of 1999 vintage and has a relatively large fleet. After brief discussion and a motion made by Dennis Elpern and then seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the HART recommendation was unanimously endorsed for forwarding to Conn DOT.

**--- Update on regional priority list for CT DOT ARRA stimulus projects:** Dave Hannon provided members with an update on the \$6,349,968 in Federal Highway Administration ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) stimulus funding available to HVCEO member municipalities thru Conn DOT.

He reviewed an agenda attachment showing the latest regional priority list of municipal projects tailored to the town by town funding allotments previously set by HVCEO under its "municipal fair share" funding distribution policy. Conn DOT will only accept applications from municipalities after their projects appear on the HVCEO regional list, he said.

Carla Iezzi, Conn DOT coordinator to HVCEO, then addressed the Council. She said that Conn DOT needed the area's municipal ARRA applications submitted by April 24. Conn DOT records indicate only the application from New Fairfield has been received. She reemphasized the previous point that the applications received must reflect HVCEO's regional priority list. There was then considerable discussion of the status of municipal applications.

**--- Update on Alliance for Sensible Airspace Planning:** Alliance Chairman Rudy Marconi stated that the full group would meet on April 28, and that the final reply briefs documenting flaws in the FAA planning process will be orally argued in Washington, D.C. starting on May 11. Leaders of many lower Fairfield County municipalities will be in attendance in Washington.

**--- Communications on draft Shoreline Management Plan:** John Hodge reported on the latest developments. The agreement with First Light is almost complete. A public hearing is to be held in New Fairfield in May to receive public comment. Municipalities are expected to endorse the SMP or withdraw their earlier objections.

There was discussion of the land use agreement, a separate negotiations from the SMP, whereby First Light will agree to use local regulations when approving use of shoreline owned by the company that is exempted from local land use regulation by a CT Supreme Court case. This agreement model will also be used by the Lake Lillinonah towns.

**--- Report on 3/27 transportation meeting held by Congressman Murphy:** Jon Chew gave the report, noting that the Congressman held a meeting with Greater Danbury stakeholders in the upcoming federal transportation funding five year reauthorization (District 5 includes all of HVCEO except Redding and Ridgefield).

Twenty two persons attended included five HVCEO members, State Representative David Scribner, municipal planners and engineers and others. He gave the highlights of the discussion points at the meeting which were:

a) GAS TAX: Due to fuel efficiency the gas tax is becoming increasingly inadequate as a revenue generator for transportation improvements. Alternatives, including some practical method to link to miles driven per registered vehicle, are under discussion.

b) NEPA: Application of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to proposed transportation projects to yield EIS approval documents is very cumbersome and very costly and in need of reform. There is also duplication of effort with the similar Connecticut (CEPA) approval process.

c) SMART GROWTH: Promoting passenger rail "will be a huge part of the next bill," he said, and expect stronger Smart Growth requirements also. Area examples of transportation related Smart Growth cited for the Congressman at the meeting were the "complete streets" plan for Route 202 in Brookfield, transit oriented development plans for Redding and Bethel, and its innovative land use / transportation coordination plan for Route 6 in Bethel.

d) TOLLS: There was a discussion of tolls being placed on I-84, a federal roadway. David Scribner stated that the current federal rule was that in such instances resulting revenues must be dedicated to the needs

of just the roadway so tolled, not diverted to the Connecticut General Fund. He requested that Congressman Murphy retain this rule in place during the upcoming reauthorization.

e) HVCEO as "MPO." Congressman Murphy agreed to resist any effort to reset minimum population thresholds for HVCEO's federal transportation "MPO" designation at a higher level that would thereby reduce the programming powers of the HVCEO board. The Waterbury COG requested the same consideration.

f) PAST EARMARKS. The Congressman raised the fact that past congressional earmarks for I-84 in Greater Danbury totaling \$7.5 million may be facing federal reauthorization deadlines that will lead to the cancellation of these funds. Carla Iezzi of Conn DOT agreed to assist HVCEO by researching this question. She said that the precedent is for expiration of the federal act to not affect the viability of past earmarks.

g) FUTURE EARMARKS: In contrast to past practice, future federal funding earmarks for transportation project in Greater Danbury will be selected in close cooperation with HVCEO, COGCNV, and the other regional planning organization in the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Congressman Murphy said.

Regarding future earmarks, Mr Chew stated that communications had been received from the staffs of both Congressman Murphy and Congressman Himes setting in motion the request to HVCEO to solicit potential earmark projects for inclusion in the transportation bill reauthorization.

There was discussion of the suggested application topics forwarded to members, public works directors and engineer, and municipal planners. He concluded that responses for 4<sup>th</sup> District Ridgefield and Redding are due at HVCEO on Thursday, April 23, and for the other eight municipalities in the 5<sup>th</sup> District Tuesday, April 28.

--- **Emergency preparedness update:** Bob Kenny of DEMHS 5 gave a report, noting the dates for upcoming conferences and training opportunities. The vote by the Regional Emergency Planning Team on the next federal spending plan will be in May.

He noted that there is considerable local influence over the DEMHS 5 funding process, as the 43 chief elected officials within DEMHS Region 5 are themselves the voting members of the Planning Team, approving regional recommendations to DEMHS headquarters as to how federal emergency preparedness grants should be distributed.

The recent test of the regional emergency video conferencing system was also discussed. John Hodge had high praise for Dave Hannon's technical management of the system during the test.

**FEDERAL LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2009, H.R. 1179**

A request for support of this federal legislation was made by Jennifer Reid on behalf of the HVCEO Tick Borne Illness Task Force.

**OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, on a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 P.M.