



APPROVED Minutes

for the 1/9/2020 Regular Meeting
Comstock Community Center, 180 School Road, Wilton, CT 06897
Chairman Rudy Marconi - Vice Chairman Jim Marpe

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Rudy Marconi	Town of Ridgefield
Jim Marpe	Town of Westport
PJ Prunty	Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce
Brian Griffin	Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce - Absent
Robert E. Mallozzi	Bankwell Financial Group, Inc - Absent
Jackie Lightfield	Norwalk 2.0
Tracey Alston	Eversource
Sean Loughran	Western CT University - Absent
Terrence Cheng	UConn- Stamford - Absent
Andrea Rynn	Western CT Health Network
Tom Long	The WorkPlace - Absent
Hal Kurfehs	Coldwell Banker Commercial
Lisa Scails	Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut
Betsy Paynter	CityCenter Danbury - Absent
Mendi Blue-Paca	Fairfield County Community Foundation
Lisa Mercurio	Business Council of Fairfield County - Absent

OTHERS ATTENDING

WestCOG staff members in attendance were Francis Pickering, Mike Towle and Kristin Floberg.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:14pm by Chairman Jim Marpe. On a motion made by Hal Kurfehs and seconded by Jackie Lightfield from Norwalk 2.0, the agenda was amended to add an Action Item to include approval of the September 12th meeting minutes.

FEATURED PRESENTATION:

WestCOG Planner Kristin Floberg gave a presentation on the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development with an emphasis on Economic Development and the POCD recommendations provided by the WCEDD. Following the presentation, additional recommendations were made by WCEDD members.

POCD Comment: Lisa Scails requested that the arts are explicitly identified within the POCD, to help better align it with the CEDS.

POCD Comment: Andrea Rynn requested that Healthcare be explicitly identified as a key economic sector within the POCD.

POCD Comment: Andrea Rynn requested that the POCD references the Community Health Needs Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans, which are updated every three years and represent, in two plans, the southern 8 and 10 northern communities of WestCOG, be linked electronically to the CEDS..

POCD Comment: Rudy Marconi requested that the POCD includes a table of the actions outlined in the POCD, and a list of the recommended entities to carry them out.

Francis Pickering added that the POCD, while “toothless” can be used to provide guidance, and that these contacts could be alerted of their identified role.

POCD Comment: Mendi Blue-Paca requested the POCD considers available data provided by Data Haven and ALICE data from United way.

The WCEDD congratulates WestCOG for their immense effort in putting the POCD together.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of September 12, 2019 Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Jackie Lightfield from Norwalk 2.0 and seconded by PJ Prunty of Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce, with Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield and Andrea Rynn from Western CT Health Network abstaining from the vote, the minutes of the 9/12/2019 meeting were unanimously approved.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Federal Designation of EDD Status Update: WestCOG Deputy Director Mike Towle gave an update on the application for the *Economic Development District designation*. EDD designation is critical for continued WestCOG efforts in economic development planning. The EDA is still reviewing WestCOG’s application. Francis Pickering noted the process can take up to 18 months.

Action: WestCOG will continue to seek EDD designation, and if successful begin the process for EDA funding.

RPIP Economic Grant WestCOG Deputy Director Mike Towle gave an update on the 3000,000 in grant funds requested from OPM to perform economic studies on Agriculture Viability, Tourism/Marketing, and the Education to Industry pipeline. These projects are explicitly recommended from the CEDS and are in direct agreement with the Governor’s Administrations Themes as listed within the grant application. WestCOG has until the end of February to complete additional components of the RPIP grant application, which includes getting letters of approval from participating communities. Andrea Rynn shared that members of the POCD would be able to provide letters of support if it would help.

Action: WestCOG will speak with OPM to see if they will consider letters of support within the grant application process.

5G Taskforce: WestCOG Deputy Director Kristin Floberg gave an update on the 5G Task Force. The Task Force is preparing for its first meeting where they will establish their priorities and mission. The 5G task force aims to provide research backed guidance on municipal powers and options regarding 5G.

Action: WestCOG will create a 5G Task Force webpage. The page will include meeting dates, mission statement, 5G Research and Findings, and contact information.

Request: Jacky Lightfield recommends the 5G Taskforce considers the implementation and deployment to be performed equitably. The concern that populations with without fiber optic will be in a difficult position for future economic development.

Request: Rudy Marconi request 5G Taskforce learn more about the costs of implementing fiber optic networks and 5G. There is discussion about who would be investing in deployment.

State Policy Priorities: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering gave an update on WestCOG's legislative priorities. These priorities are being finalized in January. The WCEDD discussed CT matters that make doing business difficult.

Action: WestCOG will share its Legislative Priorities with the WCEDD for feedback one the list is developed. The WCEDD is encouraged to provide comments and recommendations for legislative priorities.

Transportation Updates: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering gave an update on WestCOG transportation activity including the Governor's TOD Task Force and CT 2030. Currently the Governor's Task Force, which Francis Pickering sits on, is attempting to prioritize its efforts. No clear mission defined yet.

Member Updates:

Lisa Scails shared that the Cultural District Designation Program is up and running. Communities which have established Cultural Districts have observed economic benefits, and typically have been tied to greater access to grant funds. Currently the program does not provide grant funds for existing districts, but it is anticipated this will become available in the future. Lisa Encourages communities to become involved in this program.

Andrea Rynn shared that the Western CT Health District is happy to be a connection to hospitals and to support economic efforts in the future.

Tracey Alston shared that the 2020 Census spoke with her. They encourage agencies to go get the word out about the importance of performing the 2020 Census. Also of note, Census staffing is only at 20% of its target.

PJ Prunty shared the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce has relocated its offices. They also have put together their legislative agenda.

Jackie Lightfield shared that Norwalk has completed their POCD. Growth continues in Norwalk. The ne Mall has opened.

Hal Kurfehs mentioned that he would like to see the WCEDD investigate State Government issues that are make business difficult in CT.

Upcoming Opportunities None were shared during this time.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held April 9th 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2:41pm.