



WCEDD Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2023 at 1:00 pm | Web Conference

Members in attendance

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| - Rudy Marconi, Chair | Town of Ridgefield |
| - Lynn Vanderslice, Vice Chair | Town of Wilton |
| - Hal Kurfehs | Scalzo Commercial & New Development |
| - Jennifer Orlikoff | Stamford UConn |
| - Janice Chrzescijanek | Town of Bethel |
| - Robert Malozzi | Bankwell |
| - Jason Patliss | Maritime Aquarium |
| - Jennie Ripps | Owl's Brew |
| - Richard Wenning | Be Foundation |
| - Christal Preszler | Town of Newtown |
| - Loren Nadres | City of Stamford |

Francis Pickering, Mike Towle, and Betsy Paynter were in attendance with WestCOG.

Meeting Call to Order

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 1:02pm

Public Participation

There was no public participation

Approval of November 2022 Meeting Minutes

Hal Kurfehs requests to have his affiliation updated.

Motion. Hal Kurfehs made a motion to approve the November 2022 minutes, Cristal Preszler seconded the motion. All in favor.

Introduction of Representative Meskers

Representative Stephen Meskers represents the 150th district in Greenwich and is the Chair of the CT Commerce Committee. Betsy Paynter shared; he was not able to attend but expressed interest in attending future meetings.

COG Legislative Review/discussion

Francis Pickering went over WestCOG's legislative priorities for the 2023 session. WestCOG's legislative representation includes the following committees: Transportation, energy technology, and commerce. A summary of priorities is available here:

<https://westcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WestCOG-Legislative-Priorities-2023.pdf>

One legislative item of interest for the WCEDD includes revisiting the definition of a "Distressed Municipality." The DECD formula currently does not properly correlate distress and prevents WCEDD cities from accessing needed economic funds.

WestCOG encourages WCEDD members with connections to legislatures to advocate for WestCOG's legislative priorities.

Rudy Marconi notes, that WestCOG's Legislative Contacts want to work with the COG and that WestCOG should strengthen these contacts. **ACTION.** WestCOG will be following up with legislative contacts to coordinate partnerships.

Hal speaks on housing as a legislative priority. Currently 8-30g uses state income level which does not make development efforts profitable. Would prefer that local income was used instead to determine the use of 8-30g.

Christal Preszler shares that she would like to have brownfields included as a legislative priority.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Betsy provides update. CEDS is on track for federal approval. The CEDS gained state (DECD & OPM) approval in December. The CEDS has been submitted to EDA for their approval, awaiting feedback.

Grants

Betsy introduced Richard Wenning to talk about the Be Foundation and the repurpose use of the Granite Church based in Georgetown across from the wiremill. The Be Foundation is focused on community work in Georgetown with the Church space being utilized for a performing arts venue.

The Be Foundation is applying for the Good to Great grant and is seeking a WestCOG letter of support. This project would highlight tourism and historic preservation. The WCEDD can provide a recommendation to the COG to provide a letter of support.

Lynn Vanderslice asked if we can support multiple projects under the grant. In Wilton, Ambler Farm will also be applying for this grant application.

We entertain a vote for support of Granite Church and Ambler Farm

Motion. Lynn Vanderslice made a motion to approve the project concept of the Granite Church and Ambler Farm projects for consideration of a letter of support from WestCOG. Jennifer Orlikoff seconds the motion.

Discussion. Jason Patlis and Christal Preszler recommend, in the future rethinking the process of approval such that information regarding the project concept is brought before the WCEDD before voting. All vote in favor.

ACTION. WestCOG will prepare a memo for WestCOG's consideration for the February Meeting.

ACTION. WestCOG will update its process, bringing project concepts to the WCEDD such that to ensure project concepts can be reviewed prior to the meeting.

Broadband Study Update

Mike Towle will provide an update on the broadband projects taking place in WestCOG. Currently on schedule working with pilot communities of Wilton, Ridgefield, and New Fairfield.

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Informational

Betsy provides an update on these two topics.

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is currently being developed
- Regional Affordable Housing Financing study to begin early 2023

Upcoming Meetings

- Quarterly 2023 WCEDD meeting schedule:
 - April 13, 2023 @ 1pm via WestCOG Zoom
 - July 13, 2023 @ 1pm via WestCOG Zoom
 - October 12, 2023 @ 1pm via WestCOG Zoom

Adjournment

Motion: Robert Malozzi made a motion to adjourn, Lynne Vanderslice second, all in favor.

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