

MINUTES OF 5/19/21 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Peter Nystrom, Norwich; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cheryl Blanchard, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Rob Brule, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich; Jim Rivers, Windham. Tribal Liaison: Robert Hayward, Mashantucket-Pequot Tribal Nation. Military Liaison: Dawn Works-Dennis, U.S. Naval SUBASE. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Wendy Leclair. Other: Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Mike Carroll, Cherise Simpson, SEAT; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Henry Resnikoff; Roger Kuhns; Dominick Celtruda; Wes Pulver.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.

The Chairman noted that the Legislative Committee had decided to cancel its consideration of a draft letter it was considering concerning the internet gaming bill and a request regarding the Mashantucket-Pequot/Mohegan Fund grant distribution.

3. Public Hearing: Requests to Amend SCCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The Chairman called the public hearing to order and asked the Executive Director to explain the purpose of the hearing. The Executive Director stated that as the region's MPO, the SCCOG was responsible for adopting a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) every four years. He said that SCCOG recently received two requests to amend the MTP to include new projects, one from the City of Norwich which would modify Exit 18 on I-395 and construct an arterial road into a new business park, and one from the National Coast Guard Museum Association to include the planned pedestrian bridge which will provide access to the planned Museum in New London. He said that in his 22 years as Executive Director, he could not recall any request to amend the region's Transportation Plan to add projects outside of the regularly scheduled required updates to the Plan. He said that both requests are the result of a solicitation by Congressman Courtney for projects that could be funded under earmarks that will be made available in the next federal transportation act. He said that Congress is giving preference to projects that are in State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP). To be in a STIP, a project must first be in the MPO's MTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He said that projects in SCCOG's MTP Project List (Table 5) must have been subject to a CTDOT air quality conformity analysis and that this list must be fiscally constrained. So until the air quality analysis is performed and funding identified and made available, the projects being proposed could only be included in Appendix B of the MTP, which contains locally submitted projects not included in the conformity analysis. He concluded by stating that the SCCOG's public participation process for transportation planning requires that amendments to the MTP

be the subject of a public hearing and a 30-day public comment period. He said the schedule for this process included this public hearing and the public comment period which would run from May 10th through June 9th, allowing possible action by the SCCOG at the June 16th meeting.

Mayor Nystrom and Mr. Resnikoff summarized the Norwich request to amend the MTP to add to that document a project that would revise Exit 18 on I-395 and construct a new arterial road into a proposed business park. Mr. Resnikoff stated that without its inclusion in the MTP, their project cannot get started and would not receive any potential federal funding that might become available, describing this a “chicken and egg” issue.

Mr. Pulver summarized the National Coast Guard Museum Association project that they have asked be included in the MTP, calling that the pedestrian bridge/public access project’s absence from the Plan “an oversight”. He said that their amendment request is not for the planned Museum, but solely for the pedestrian bridge and public access which is a transportation project.

The Chairman asked for any public comment and there was none.

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 8:47 a.m. (Lyden, Urgo). So voted unanimously.

4. Act on Minutes of 4/21/21:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 4/21/21 (Sparkman, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer’s Report:

MOTION: To approve the May Treasurer’s Report (McDaniel, Callahan). So voted unanimously.

6. Communications: The Executive Director noted the Communications section of the agenda packet contained a letter from Chairman Allyn to CTDOT regarding the feasibility study for a multi-use path on the NB span of the Gold Star Memorial Bridge and a letter from Chairman Allyn to Governor Lamont supporting increased funding for local health departments and health districts.

7. Public Comment:

Mr. Kuhns thanked the SCCOG for considering adoption of a climate emergency resolution.

8. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1) Draft Resolution No. 21-3, Relating to a Climate Emergency

The Executive Director stated that at the March meeting, Dr. Roger Kuhns had offered to draft a resolution which the SCCOG could consider adopting. The climate emergency

resolution that Dr. Kuhns had written was provided to the Executive Committee, along with a shorter one-page resolution drafted by staff which was more typical of SCCOG adopted resolutions. The Executive Director said he attempted to include Dr. Kuhns' most salient points in his one-page draft which he read out loud. He said that the Executive Committee recommends the adoption of the staff drafted resolution.

The Chairman stated that Town of Stonington First Selectman Chesebrough had staff forward a letter to all members in support of this resolution.

MOTION: To adopt Draft Resolution No. 21-3, Relating to a Climate Emergency (Burt, Callahan). So voted unanimously.

2) Draft Resolution No. 21-4, SEAT Performance Targets

The Executive Director explained the reason for this resolution endorsing transit safety performance measures.

MOTION: To adopt Draft Resolution No. 21-4, SEAT Performance Targets Sparkman, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

3) Draft Resolution No. 21-5, Arrow Line Performance Targets

The Executive Director explained the reason for this resolution endorsing transit safety performance measures.

MOTION: To adopt Draft Resolution No. 21-5, Arrow Line Performance Targets Sparkman, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

4) LOTCIP Funding Status

The Executive Director stated there was a memorandum about the SCCOG's LOTCIP funding status prepared by SCCOG Transportation Program Manager Rattan in the Agenda Packet, which had been presented to the Executive Committee, and which he urged SCCOG members to review.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Agenda Discussion

Mr. Urgo stated that the Legislative Committee is still reviewing bills pending in the legislature that SCCOG and its members were interested in.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

Mr. Hayward referred to the draft letter that Chairman Allyn noted was no longer being considered. He provided updates on the Tribe's opening of Foxwoods and the Tribal Museum.

D. Military Command Representatives

No report.

E. Congressional Office Report

No report.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported on seCTer activities including an EDA project; CARES Act funding; and loan activity.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported on a new route to Foxwoods to support their vaccination clinic, saying SEAT hoped to continue this route if funding becomes available; stated that SEAT was participating in a vaccination clinic at the Norwich Intermodal Center which will operate through the end of May.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

No report.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported that a lot of RHSCC members were working on vaccination outreach.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury provided a reminder of the letters the Cultural Coalition had sent to all towns requesting 1% of ARPA funding for arts and culture.

9. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director reported that the SCCOG will house two Sustainable CT Fellows this summer, Reese Berman from Virginia Tech and Rachel Flanagan from WPI. He also noted that the Executive Committee authorized staff to submit the annual EMPG Hazmat grant which funds the region's CERRIT team. He stated that EPA had denied the SCCOG's brownfield assessment grant application. He stated that Ms. Bury's request for ARPA funding from towns

reminded him to report that the State still has not come up with a way to fund the state's nine COGs' work on COVID response and recovery.

10. Old Business:

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Chairman Allyn said that the Executive Committee decided that for now these discussions would take place once a month at the monthly SCCOG meeting.

Mr. McCormack discussed the changes in mask-wearing requirements, noting there are still a lot of questions.

Mr. Sparkman asked a question about social distancing. Mr. McCormack responded that additional guidance from the State Epidemiologist was expected later today.

Discussion of the Governor's recent Executive Orders took place.

11. New Business:

None.

12. Next Meeting:

The Chairman stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on June 16th.

13. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:34 a.m. (Nickerson, Uργο). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle Chesebrough, Secretary