

MINUTES OF THE 1/12/09 SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
AT SCCOG OFFICE, 5 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NORWICH, CT

PRESENT: Council Representatives: William Ballinger, Bozrah; Linda Hodge, Colchester; Paul Formica, East Lyme; Richard Matters, Franklin; Phillip Anthony, Griswold; Dennis Popp, City of Groton; Harry Watson, Town of Groton; Fred Allyn, Ledyard; Thomas Sparkman, Lisbon; Joseph Jaskiewicz, Montville; Nicholas Mullane, North Stonington; Robert Congdon, Preston; Robert Ross, Salem; Cathy Osten, Sprague; Edward Haberek, Town of Stonington; Gilbert Grimm, Voluntown; Daniel Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: Mark Oefinger, Town of Groton; Martin Berliner, New London; Alan Bergren, Norwich. Staff: Richard Guggenheim, Jane Dauphinais. Other: Congressman Joseph Courtney, Jenny Contois, Congressman Courtney's Office; Kevin Cavanagh, Merrill Gerber.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and introduced Congressman Joseph Courtney.

Congressman Courtney presented a broad overview of the background for the Federal Economic Stimulus Package. He noted that the economy is in serious decline and action is critical. The Congressman noted that the level of criticality is such that the President-elect's transition team has been working with Congress to develop a package that will be ready for a House vote by the end of January, with a Senate vote targeted for February 13, 2009.

The Congressman noted that the primary emphasis of the effort is to replace the more than 500,00 jobs that have been lost. Unless concerted effective action is taken, unemployment projections could reach 10%. The total value of the Stimulus Package is targeted at \$800 billion. This amount will be divided up into three sub-sections:

- \$300 billion for infrastructure;
- \$300 billion for tax relief, renewable energy; and
- \$200 billion for other, including medical relief, special education funding, weatherization, COBRA, Pell Grants, school construction, military installation construction.

In addressing those focus areas, the Congressman clearly indicated that no special earmarks are being considered that would benefit one district over another. The Congressman also noted that states will receive funding for infrastructure, and that the Governor's office will ultimately determine how the funds are distributed.

The Congressman distributed a proposed time line for the economic stimulus process prepared by Congressman Oberstar. The time line requires a maximum of 90 days to obligate funding.

In discussion, Mr. Anthony raised a question about projects for which alternative funding has already been identified. Congressman Courtney was very clear that the funds under Economic Stimulus were not intended to replace existing funding and that this question was part of the transparency and full disclosure requirements that Congress will impose on grant recipients after

the AIG fiasco.

Mr. Guggenheim made reference to Mr. Keazer's recent letter which noted that the inability of certain states to commit to using all of their allocation in the allotted time frame could result in the loss of those funds to other states.

Mrs. Dauphinais then noted that the nation's present financial condition started with the mortgage market and wondered how the housing problem was going to be addressed. Congressman Courtney referred to the need for TARP reform and noted that \$40 billion is projected to be made available to refinance mortgages.

The status of Route 11 was then addressed by the Congressman. He briefly reviewed the terms of the \$10 million earmark for the Route 11 Greenway noting that the region had little choice other than to proceed to design and construct a bike-pedestrian trail. He encouraged the region to get on with this task. He then noted that the remainder of the \$4.4 million earmark will be made available to the State to complete the environmental mitigation.

There being no further questions, Congressman Courtney thanked the members of the Council of Governments and committed himself to conferring with the SCCOG as the process continued to unfold.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Daniel Steward, Secretary