

**ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RT. 81 COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

APRIL 7, 2014

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT
ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT MEETING**

The Estuary Transit District Route 81 Committee held a Public Meeting on April 7, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clinton Town Hall, Auditorium, Clinton, Connecticut.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Virginia Zawoy called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

INTRODUCTION/WELCOME

Chairman Virginia Zawoy thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She stated the purpose of the meeting is to present information and receive public input on the District's proposed Shuttle Route from Madison to Middletown along the Rt. 81 corridor. She introduced the members of the Committee, as well invited guests, including Rep. Phil Miller, 36th District; Senator Art Linares, 33rd District; and First Selectwoman Cathy Iino, Town of Killingworth.

Rep. Miller believes the proposed route is a great opportunity. Sen. Linares thanked Rep. Vicino for hosting the event and complemented ETD for its work. Ms. Iino stated that the Town of Killingworth currently makes use of DAR services and strongly believes that the proposed route would be a tremendous boom to Killingworth. Rep. Vicino feels the route is a "great project" that will benefit everyone.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Joseph Comerford, ETD Executive Director, thanked everyone for attending. He reported that this project has been in the planning stages for 5-6 years. He noted that the proposed route would be beneficial to all residents in the District, especially those in the western part, by reducing travel time. He stated that the proposed route will connect Middletown to New Haven and has the potential to link New Haven and Hartford. Mr. Comerford noted that there are over 125 "trip generators" along the corridor, including retail, schools, state offices and medical facilities. He believes the proposed route will offer a tremendous boost to the economy. Mr. Comerford anticipates that the route will be as successful as the Old Saybrook to Middletown route.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE AND IMPORTANCE TO PROSPECTIVE RIDERS OF PROJECT

Rep. Tom Vicino thanked the Committee and his legislative intern, Mary Willis, for their work.

Rep. Vicino stated that he met with Rep. Phil Miller and DOT last year to discuss the project. He strongly believes that the proposed route will “get people back to work.” 25% of the ridership uses the service to get to work. Rep. Vicino estimates that the average rider will save 18% of their income by taking public transportation and will put half of that amount back into the economy. He also indicated that the proposed route will also help in cutting down the congestion on I-95 and greatly assist the homebound.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT

To date, 24 letters of support were received, 20 Killingworth seniors signed a letter of support and 42 letters were received from the Higganum Vision Group.

Chairman Zawoy opened the floor to the public.

Betty Jones, Program Manager, VISTA Vocational, stated that although her organization does offer transportation to its clients, this not cost effective while ETD services are. She also indicated that the proposed route would open up many more employment opportunities for VISTA clients, as well as greater access to medical support, CT Social Services, Middlesex Hospital and Middlesex Community College. Several VISTA clients stood and spoke in support of the project, citing greater employment opportunities and greater access to physicians.

Jean Mathon, a student at Middlesex Community College, stated that the proposed route would help many more students go to school.

A senior citizen with limited vision from Killingworth stated that the route would give her greater independence. A resident from Haddam also indicated that the proposed route would give him a greater sense of independence.

A Clinton resident who works in Farmington indicated that the route would save her commuting dollars. Another Clinton resident stated that proposed route would help a family she knows with only one car get to work. She would also like to use the route to get to Middlesex Community College and stated that the service would be “a nice back-up” if she encounters car problems.

Wendy Larson, Social Services Director from Madison, stated that the route would be extremely beneficial the 250 clients she serves, many who need to get to Middletown and Old Saybrook.

Tim Griswold, former First Selectman from Old Lyme, spoke about the convenience of the service for those who are not mobile.

Wendy Goncalves, Kennedy Center, stated that the proposed route would greatly improve the quality of life of many residents by saving commuting time.

Paul Doyle, Executive Director, Estuary Council of Seniors, believes the route would be extremely beneficial to residents in the western region gain valuable services. Mark Lundgren, Manager, Haddam Senior Center, also stood and spoke in support.

Ralph Eno, First Selectman, Town of Lyme, indicated that the project is consistent with the State's plan of conservation and development with service to both rural and urban areas.

Liz Glidden, Town Planner, Town of Haddam, and ETD Rt. 81 Committee member, supports the project citing smart growth and community growth.

Victoria Lanier, a family attorney, believes the proposed route would be cost effective for many clients who obtain social services in Middletown.

Killingworth First Selectwoman, Cathy lino, stated the route would be very beneficial to all segments of the community in her town. She believes the route would help preserve the rural atmosphere of Killingworth, would encourage smart growth and reduce carbon emissions.

NEXT STEPS

Rep. Vicino reported that he and the Committee will be meeting with DOT in the near future. He encouraged the audience to continue to write letters in support.

RAFFLE DRAWING

Rep. Thomas Vicino drew the names of the four raffle winners; each winner received a 10-ride ticket book. Two of the winners were VISTA clients; the other winners donated their tickets to VISTA.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Virginia Zawoy again thanked everyone for attending the meeting and urged them to write letters of support which should be sent to Joseph Comerford at ETD. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina Denison
Administrative Secretary

Virginia Zawoy
Chairman