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STATE OF CONNECTI CUT
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BI LL NO. 7090
PUBLI C ACT NO. 07-239

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2007

TIME: 5:12 P. M.

HELD AT: UNI VERSI TY OF CONNECTI CUT
DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSI ON
UNI VERSI TY DRI VE
TORRI NGTON, CONNECTI CUT

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APPEARANCES:

HON. JOAN McDONALD, COMMI SSIONER,
CT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

DR. STANLEY McMI LLEN, MANAGING ECONOMI ST
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

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1 MR. McMI LLEN: Woul d everybody
2 please take a seat? Good evening ladi es and

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3 gentlemen. Thank you for coming to our first regional
4 forum at UConn in Torrington. My name is Stan
5 McMillen. I'm the managing economist at the
6 Department of Economic and Community Development, and
7 I want to welcome you here tonight, and I want to make
8 a few introductions. I want to recognize Senator
9 Roraback. Hi, thank you for coming. Are there other
10 elected officials in the room? And you are?

11 MS. EPSTEIN: Ruth Epstein, the
12 First Selectman in Kent.

13 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you for coming.
14 Good to see you. Tonight we are going to have our
15 first regional forum, and this is pursuant to Public
16 Act 07-239, which calls for the Department of Economic
17 and Community Development to create an economic
18 strategic plan for the state. In doing that, we need
19 to collect public input to build a vision of a
20 different future for Connecticut, and so that's what
21 we hope you're here to do to help us do, and it's a
22 wide open any area that you can think of. We need
23 your ideas for a different and hopefully better
24 Connecticut.

25 This Public Act 07-239 calls for the

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1 Department of Economic and Community Development to
2 develop this plan. It has to recognize and take into
3 account the comprehensive economic development
4 strategies of the regional planning agencies and the

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5 plan of conservation and development. This is what
6 the Public Act requires us to do. It's basically
7 section IV of the Public Act, and so in order to do
8 that, and I'll describe the process later, we need to
9 collect public input, and that's the purpose of these
10 forums. So please go to the next slide.

11 This section IV of Public Act 07-239
12 requires the Department of Economic and Community
13 Development, by July 1 2009 and every 5 years
14 thereafter, to prepare an economic strategic plan for
15 the state. As part of this development, we host these
16 regional forums to involve the public in this planning
17 process. This plan that's a strategic plan is to
18 serve as a roadmap for the next 5, 10, 15 and 20
19 years. The act requires that the plan establish clear
20 and measurable goals and objectives for the state and
21 its regions.

22 And, finally, the plan requires or
23 the Act requires that the plan establish relevant
24 performance measures, and report annually on progress,
25 and the plan would be revisited every 5 years, and we

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1 would come back for public input again in five years
2 to update this plan.

3 So as I said, the purpose of these
4 forums is to engage in an open dialogue, to engage the
5 public in an open dialogue. We don't have anything to
6 review. This is blue sky, think ahead, think of the

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7 future, think of a different state of the world for
8 Connecticut. We want to be specific about issues and
9 concerns in terms of the time frame, and in terms of
10 an area of focus whether it be transportation, work
11 force, infrastructure and so on, and we'll list some
12 of them for your reference, and we would like to
13 identify strategies to move Connecticut forward.

14 So the areas to sort of focus our
15 attention are the competitiveness of the state, and
16 you can think in any terms you want, regulatory
17 environment, tax environment, and so on, the cost of
18 doing business which involves regulatory, energy costs
19 and tax structures, the housing situation in the
20 state, transportation infrastructure, work force, and
21 responsible growth and development. The strategic
22 plan, I look at it as this is sort of a conceptual
23 outline of the way I look at this plan, and the first
24 three-legged stool.

25 The first part of it is to look at

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1 where we are, where are we today. So it's a sort of a
2 situational assessment, and we want to understand
3 where we are, how we got where we are, and why we are
4 where we are, which involves the collection of a lot
5 of data, and then not just portraying that data, but
6 analyzing the data to answer the questions of describe
7 where we are, how we got here, and why we are here so
8 we have a good idea of where we are.

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9 The purpose of the ball on the right
10 is where we want to be, and this is where we need your
11 help. This is not something that comes from the top
12 down or the bottom up. It's from every direction, but
13 it's got to come from the public. So what we want to
14 do tonight and in these 10 forums around the state is
15 build a vision for a different Connecticut 5 years, 10
16 years, 15 and 20 years into the future.

17 Then the bottom ball basically says
18 here's where we are, and we understand where we are
19 very well, and how we got there and why we're here,
20 and now we have a pretty good idea of where we want to
21 go. So the key piece is to build this plan of how
22 we're going to get from where we are to where we want
23 to go, and that's going to involve strategies and
24 tactics and matrix and benchmarks, because we need to
25 say, and the Governor would ask, as we go along, how

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1 are we doing. So we have to understand where we are
2 with respect to where we want to be. So we need to
3 build clear strategies and tactics, which are detailed
4 steps to get from where we are to where we want to go,
5 and be able to measure our progress along the way. We
6 also need to get feedback from the public and public
7 agencies as we proceed. So this is all part of this
8 process of moving the state from where it is today to
9 a different place.

10 Now, this public comment process we

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11 have a few rules. As you can see, the entire process
12 is being recorded by a recording service, Jackie here,
13 to set the stage for some planning that's already been
14 done in the regions. We have a five-minute
15 presentation by one or more regional planning agencies
16 of their comprehensive economic development strategy,
17 because there's already been some planning that's
18 going on, and some of you may have been involved in
19 that.

20 The next thing is we're going to
21 open it up to the public. Public officials will speak
22 first who have signed in. Everybody will have 3
23 minutes to speak. I have a timer so everybody has a
24 chance and this moves along. And as you think of what
25 you want to say, we want you to be specific in the

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1 time frame whether you are talking about something you
2 would like to see happen in five years or 10 years or
3 15 or 20 years in the future, and that sort of
4 suggests something that's doable, something that is
5 large or small, low-hanging fruits, things that you
6 might like to achieve. We want you to think big,
7 think big. We don't want to be trapped in the status
8 quo. We want to think of where would we really like
9 to see Connecticut be in all these different areas.

10 I mentioned transportation and work
11 force and so on in 5 years, 10 years, 15 years in the
12 future. Now, you may not be able or feel comfortable

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13 responding tonight, getting up in public and talking.
14 There's an e-mail address up on the slide, and we
15 encourage you to respond by e-mail, if you can, in
16 writing, and put your ideas in writing. You may have
17 ideas that occur to you after tonight, and please give
18 that input to us as it occurs to you.

19 Okay. I want to put this next slide
20 up, which is coming back to sort of the concept of
21 what we're doing. Before I go on, I want to introduce
22 Commissioner Joan McDonald of the Department of
23 Economic and Community Development.

24 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thanks, Dan.
25 I am going to stand-up and not use the microphone. I

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1 apologize for being a few minutes late. I drove over
2 from Hartford. This is my second trip to Torrington
3 since I've been commissioner in June, and, thanks,
4 Larry, because having ridden with you in that first
5 trip I had my bearings when I came over route 4, and I
6 just want to reemphasize what Stan said in our
7 presentation, which is we're very excited about
8 developing a strategic plan, and I say two things when
9 I go out and talk to groups. One of the things is the
10 glass is half empty and the glass is half full, and we
11 want to capitalize on what all those components are
12 that make Connecticut a great state, quality of life,
13 educated work force, our transportation system, etc.,
14 and then we want to improve those things that we feel

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15 need to be improved. So that's the glass is half
16 empty/half full mantra.

17 The other thing that I have told
18 people is I like to see things happen quickly. So we
19 do have some statutory legal guidelines we have to
20 follow as part of the Public Act. But part of why
21 when Stan said we're looking for specific ideas, we do
22 want a combination of blue sky and specifics, because
23 all of us want to look to the future, and know that we
24 left Connecticut a better place whether it's 5, 10,
25 15, 20 years out, but we also want to focus on

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1 specifics that we can work on today.

2 Part of our process will be Governor
3 Reil convened a council on economic advisors. We had
4 our first meeting yesterday. We will be bouncing a
5 lot of the data and the statistics and the analysis
6 that comes out of this off of them. Actually,
7 yesterday at our first meeting we reached consensus on
8 one thing, which is hard to do with a group of
9 economists. Right, Stan?

10 MR. McMILLEN: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: They all
12 agree for Connecticut to be competitive in the global
13 marketplace we need to deal with work force training
14 issues whether it's on the high school level, on the
15 Technical College level or on the college and
16 university level, and how we maintain our

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17 manufacturing edge. Connecticut is still a great
18 state for manufacturing so lots of good ideas.

19 The reason we're -- one of the
20 reasons we're using the regional planning entities is
21 we don't want to re-invent the wheel. We want to take
22 the good analysis and the good data and the good
23 research that's been done and use that, because we
24 don't want this plan to just sit on the shelf. We
25 want to be able to implement solid initiatives, and

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1 see them come to fruition.

2 So with that, we'll turn it over to
3 the regional plans, and then we'll turn it over to the
4 elected officials and to all of you that are here.
5 Thanks so much. Who is first? Mr. Roraback?

6 MR. RORABACK: If the group would
7 forgive me, I was scheduled to at the Northwest
8 Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. They are having their
9 annual legislative session tonight. They have a
10 speaking program, which is supposed to start at 5:45
11 at which I'm supposed to speak. So I am in a never
12 ending quest to try to be in two places at one time.
13 If you would just indulge me 2 minutes of welcome
14 before I hit the road.

15 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: We'll be
16 your dress rehearsal.

17 MR. RORABACK: Exactly. Thank you.
18 I just want to welcome you, and thank you for giving

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19 northwest Connecticut the honor of being the first
20 stop on your tour. In my view northwest Connecticut
21 represents the perfect microcosm for the State of
22 Connecticut to begin to focus its long-term economic
23 development objectives. We have an urban core in the
24 City of Torrington, Town of New Milford, and we also
25 have rural areas with a quality of life second to

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1 none. The state must be a partner in strengthening
2 our urban core by investing in our downtown
3 revitalization effort in Torrington, and by supporting
4 economic growth and job initiatives in every corner of
5 this county.

6 What makes Connecticut special is
7 that we have side by side urban areas who have
8 limitless potential for economic development side by
9 side with rural areas which are deserving of our
10 protection, and the smart growth initiatives that the
11 General Assembly is focusing on want to strengthen the
12 cities and preserve the rural areas, and those goals
13 are entirely compatible and tonight, when I look out
14 at the people you are going to hear from, you see
15 representatives from the agricultural community, you
16 see representatives from small towns, you see
17 representatives from our cities, and I know you'll
18 listen closely to all that they have to say, as I
19 will.

20 I would like to be the first one to

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21 order a copy of the transcript so that I can read with
22 my own eyes, and I do apologize for having accepted
23 the Chamber's invitation before this, so thank you and
24 thank you, Whit. Thank you, Dan. Thank you all.

25 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you,

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1 Senator.

2 MR. McMILLEN: I'm not sure which
3 regional plan agency is going to speak first, but
4 please come up and make a presentation.

5 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Do we need
6 to flip a coin? We can do that.

7 MR. McMILLEN: Just please state
8 your name.

9 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: And
10 affiliation for the record.

11 MR. LYNN: Good afternoon,
12 Commissioner, and everyone. My name is Rick Lynn. I
13 am the planning director for the Litchfield Hills
14 Council of Elected Officials, and we appreciate this
15 opportunity to provide input to the Department of
16 Economic and Community Development as you begin to
17 prepare the strategic economic plan for Connecticut.

18 The Litchfield Hills Council
19 prepared a comprehensive economic development strategy
20 or CEDS report back in 2004 with the assistance of a
21 Connecticut-based consultant. Preparation of this
22 CEDS was guided by a broad based partnership

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23 consisting of both public and private sector
24 representatives from the regional area.

25 The CEDS provides an overview of the

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1 economy in the Litchfield Hills region including
2 various statistical data on current trends and
3 conditions. It establishes regional goals and
4 strategies, and presents an action plan for priority
5 projects in order to improve the economy in the
6 regional area. The CEDS was approved by the
7 Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials, and the
8 federal Economic Development Administration, and
9 implementation of the priority projects identified in
10 the CEDS is now being pursued both through municipal
11 efforts and the efforts of the Northwestern
12 Connecticut Economic Development Corporation, which
13 operates under the aegis of the Northwestern
14 Connecticut Chamber of Commerce.

15 Among the major concerns identified
16 in the CEDS are (1) the area has very limited staffing
17 resources to support economic development activities.
18 The Litchfield Hills Council is a small regional
19 planning organization. It consists of myself as
20 planning director and administrative assistant. The
21 Northwest Economic Development Corporation that I
22 mentioned basically operates with volunteer support
23 and limited technical and staff assistance from the
24 Chamber of Commerce.

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1 CEDS is that our regional economy is struggling with a
2 continued erosion of the manufacturing base. It's
3 really striking that back in 1970 44 percent of the
4 jobs in Torrington were manufacturing jobs. By the
5 year 2006, according to the Department of Labor
6 Statistics, the manufacturing jobs in the regional
7 area have now withered to 14 percent of the jobs in
8 the 11-town Litchfield Hills region.

9 We've seen a shedding of over 2,000
10 manufacturing jobs in just the past five years alone
11 in the regional area, and in that five-year period of
12 time the percentage of manufacturing jobs has dwindled
13 from 21 percent of our employment base in the year
14 2,000 down to, again, 14 percent, so very much an area
15 of concern.

16 A third area of concern mentioned in
17 the CEDS is the significant out-migration of the
18 area's employed labor force. We have 40 percent of
19 the labor force in the Litchfield Hills region that
20 are traveling outside of the region for their jobs,
21 and we have a disconnect between the jobs in the area,
22 and the amount of housing in the regional area, and
23 that ratio is getting further and further from what is
24 desirable in the regional area.

25 The report recommends -- the CEDS

1 report recommends that the regional area pursue a
2 long-term coordinated effort with municipal and area
3 institutions to achieve the CEDS vision of creating a
4 more diversified economy that strengthens the economic
5 well-being and quality of life for all its residents.
6 The CEDS report identifies 60 projects and activities
7 to build upon the region's strengths and weaknesses.

8 The top four priorities identified
9 in the CEDS report are, first, to develop a regional
10 program for the reuse of targeted vacant industrial
11 buildings and facilities in the regional area; No. 2,
12 to establish a regional program for brownfield
13 renewal; No. 3, to create a regional website that
14 supports economic development in the area; and No. 4,
15 to strengthen the linkage between the region's job
16 needs and the excess regional labor force.

17 I think that funding in support of
18 the Northwestern Connecticut Economic Development
19 Corporation that I mentioned earlier is particularly
20 needed in order to effectively and efficiently pursue
21 the recommendations in the CEDS. While the CEDS
22 raises some significant concerns by projecting, again,
23 that we can expect slow economic growth at best,
24 continued erosion of our manufacturing base and
25 ongoing out-migration of the labor force, this is the

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1 half empty glass that you referred to, Commissioner, I
2 do think it's important to note that since the CEDS
3 was prepared three years ago, the regional area has
4 made some significant progress in achieving our
5 economic development objectives.

6 Looking at the half full part of the
7 glass, some of those achievements include
8 implementation of the highly successful Litchfield
9 Hills Facade Improvement Program that has benefitted
10 over 200 businesses in the regional area; designation
11 of an enterprise corridor zone in Torrington and
12 Winchester which provide significant incentives for
13 business relocation; town center enhancements in the
14 communities of Norfolk, Morris, Winchester, Goshen and
15 Riverton; progress in creating a new transit center in
16 downtown Torrington with a transit oriented
17 development focus; site selection for a new Litchfield
18 County courthouse in Torrington; designation of the
19 Naugatuck River as an official state green way;
20 improved organization of cultural, arts and
21 entertainment resources through the Northwestern
22 Connecticut Arts Council; and also continued
23 coordination for regional economic development
24 activities through the Economic Development
25 Corporation.

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2 stating that one of the major reasons that the CEDS
3 was prepared in the Litchfield Hills was to enhance
4 the competitive position of the region in applying for
5 funding from the federal Economic Development
6 Administration. And according to EDA officials,
7 funding opportunities are constrained in Connecticut,
8 because the state does not authorize economic
9 development districts. And in preparing the statewide
10 economic strategy, I would like to urge the Department
11 of Economic and Community Development to consider
12 potential advantages of enabling the formation of
13 economic development districts in Connecticut.

14 In order to improve the
15 institutional capacity for economic development in the
16 Litchfield Hills, and implement some of the priority
17 projects recommended in the CEDS, increased state and
18 federal funding is essential. Thank you for your
19 consideration of these comments. I do have a copy of
20 the CEDS in CD form, which I will leave for you this
21 evening, and a copy of the comments. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.

23 MR. McMILLEN: Okay. Who will be
24 the next presenter? State your name.

25 MR. MCGUINNESS: I am Dan

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1 McGui nness, Northwestern Connecticut Council of
2 Governments. The Northwest cog is nine rural towns in
3 the northwestern part of the state. There has been no

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4 comprehensive economic development strategy prepared
5 recently. Back in 1993 there was something called the
6 Mount Auburn Report, which is an economic development
7 strategy that was prepared with a grant from the
8 state. Interestingly enough, most of the points and
9 analysis remain the same. There is still an emphasis
10 on tourism. There is still manufacturing in the some
11 of the small towns. There is still private schools
12 that provide a lot of employment in the region.

13 Of the 15 regions in the state, the
14 northwest cog is by far the smallest in terms of
15 population. It has roughly 23,500 people. The region
16 is rural, and the intent of the people in the region
17 is to keep it that way. There's very limited
18 infrastructure. Water and sewer to support large
19 scale which is businesses is simply not there. It is
20 also the only region in the state that does not have a
21 limited access highway like route 8 or route 391 in
22 it, and it really doesn't want a limited access
23 highway in it.

24 One misperception that I think it's
25 very important that people understand is that these

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1 are not extremely wealthy towns. The perception is
2 that they're all, you know, very upper income. Well,
3 in 2005, nine of the towns had median household
4 incomes that are within 2 percent of the state median.
5 One town is significantly below the state median and

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6 three were above it. Actually, only two of those
7 towns were significantly above the state median. The
8 misperception is due to the large number of second
9 homes. 17 percent of the region's housing units
10 compared to only 5.8 percent of Litchfield County, and
11 1.7 percent of the state's units are second homes. In
12 some of the towns like Cornwall it's even higher than
13 17 percent. You're over 25 percent.

14 Commuters there's an approximately
15 12,000 residents in the labor force, but only roughly
16 9,700 jobs net that order, that actually jobs in the
17 region. Obviously you're going to have a lot of
18 commuting into and out of the region. But really it's
19 more complicated than that. In most towns less than
20 half the labor force actually works in the town where
21 they live. In Warren, actually, it's less than 20
22 percent. There's significant in-commuting to the
23 region, which is somewhat surprising, because what
24 you're always taught is that everybody commutes out of
25 the rural regions into the center city, which would

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1 be, in this case would be Torrington. That's not
2 really the case.

3 You have commuting in Salisbury.
4 More people commute from Torrington to Salisbury than
5 commute from Salisbury to Torrington, and it's
6 basically -- I'll get into that a little bit, but --
7 also more people work in Sharon. More people in

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8 Sharon actually work in Manhattan than work in
9 Hartford or in Torri ngton.

10 There's a couple key di fferences
11 with the state and the region besides it being a very
12 rural region. One is it's a much higher percentage of
13 self-employed workers. You have 18.5 percent of the
14 workers in the region are self-employed compared to
15 only 6.2 percent of the state's. As you also expect
16 with a lot of self-employed workers, you have a lot of
17 work at home. Roughly about 9.1 percent versus 3.1
18 percent for the state. One of the major issues, and
19 it is an economic issue although it may not, at first
20 blush, seem like that, is affordable housing. That's
21 simply because the businesses in the region have
22 di ffi cul ty in attracting workers to the area.

23 When you have housing prices -- I
24 think it's seven out of the nine towns have housing
25 prices above \$300,000 is the latest medi an even with a

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1 supposed decline. When you have that, you're pricing
2 out -- you're pricing out, you know, your store
3 clerks, your retail workers, but you're also pricing
4 out -- your town road crews cannot afford to live in
5 the town. Your teachers have a hard struggle, your
6 nurses, all of those types of people. I once did
7 something for Salisbury, and if you work it out, what
8 they pay the Salisbury First Selectman, they couldn't
9 afford to live in the town. There's just no way.

12 article in the paper the other day.

13 MR. BINGHAM: Thank you. Okay.

14 Seeing as it's loosely based, I didn't have anything
15 prepared so I was jotting down notes, and I didn't
16 want to trip over Dan and Rick's toes, so I crossed
17 some things out. But my first comment is it is
18 absolutely critical for you, as our representatives of
19 the state for economic development, to carry on the
20 voices of the cities and towns in the northwest corner
21 to other cities and towns of maybe the southwest
22 corner, because we don't get an opportunity to go over
23 and interact with them.

24 So it's important that whatever you
25 learn from them and from us that you share that

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1 information, and you kind of bring to us what works
2 and what doesn't work, technical support, so that
3 we're not chasing our own tails up here while southern
4 Connecticut is succeeding fast. Not that that's the
5 case, but I do just want to pre-empt what I was saying
6 with that.

7 I'll just run down the list. It's
8 kind of a hodgepodge so ... The enterprise corridor
9 zone has been an absolute success for us. We've
10 established and signed up nine companies within 2
11 years who have taken advantage of that incentive to
12 grow expand and come into the Torrington area. We
13 share it with Winsted, the enterprise corridor zone.

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14 We would like to see more initiatives and phases with
15 regard to incentives for companies to grow in
16 Torrington or in the areas as well as us being able to
17 retain companies from moving not only to other places
18 in America but China, India, and throughout the other
19 countries, and to attract companies to this area.

20 So along with the industrial end of
21 it we really have utilized some brownfields, money
22 from EDA or EPA, sorry, and we've applied for more
23 grants, but it's never enough, because the expense of
24 (1) finding out what exists in these brownfields
25 properties; and (2) cleaning it up and also finding a

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1 way to speed up the process, because it's not only
2 time, money is also a huge part of that.

3 I did speak at a public hearing for
4 transportation not too long ago. I appreciated that
5 so I won't go into too much detail as to what I said
6 at that public hearing. But it is really important
7 that Torrington not be forgotten in the long term plan
8 with regard to public transportation. Rail and public
9 transportation for us as a city to connect to larger
10 cities, you know, we are a micropolitan area, a small
11 city within an urban setting close to Hartford and
12 close to Waterbury, but still far enough where we are
13 kind of set out of the loop with regard to public
14 transportation, so we would like to be a part of that
15 discussion. I couldn't come to a DECD hearing without

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16 mentioning our downtown project. Darn it.

17 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: One more
18 minute.

19 MR. BINGHAM: Okay, thank you.
20 Downtown is huge for the City of Torrington. It is
21 the heart of our community. We have been, in part,
22 working for almost 10 years on this process. We did
23 have some money appropriated within the bonding bill.
24 We hope that that would get relinquished. It's been a
25 pleasure working with Chet and his crew at DECD, and

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1 all the staff at DECD, so I will leave you --

2 We had talked about the CEDS, and
3 I'm working with you on smart growth so that's
4 important. Tourism, the state park system, and some
5 of the initiatives with regard to that need to be
6 drastically improved, because, you know, we have a lot
7 to offer in regard to our public spaces. But at the
8 same time they are not staffed properly. They are not
9 maintained properly, so we would like to see that
10 continue, and to leave you with a huge thank you for
11 coming to Torrington as well as the area to listen to
12 our concerns, and I look forward to the documents that
13 come forward from these discussions, and always
14 looking for any type of feedback, support as to what
15 we're doing right and/or wrong. So thank you again,
16 and I'll see you soon.

17 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thanks. I
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18 just want to add two comments. No. 1, Mayor, the
19 reason it says it's an iterative process is because we
20 really want it to be an iterative process, and what we
21 glean from these public forums will result in the
22 initiatives, and then we will be back out to the
23 public, we don't know exactly what forum it will take,
24 to get feedback on the specific initiatives. That's
25 No. 1; and No. 2, I just want to pick up on a point

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1 that you made when you opened, which is one of the
2 things I hear a lot also is sharing of ideas, and, you
3 know, we have a lot of discussion about whether we
4 should have more instituted regionalism or not, and,
5 you know, things like the enterprise corridor zones.
6 Those are perfect examples of towns coming together
7 and dealing with issues and saying, you know, we don't
8 want to pit one against the other. We're better off
9 working together, and those are the types of programs
10 we need to expand on.

11 MR. BINGHAM: I agree with you.

12 It's been an absolute pleasure working with Rick and
13 the rest of the group so thank you very much.

14 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.
15 First speaker is Mrs. Janet Burritt.

16 MS. BURRITT: I'm just an interested
17 citizen. I hold no public office at the present time.
18 I read about this in your legal notices, and I was
19 curious to hear what other people had to say.

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20 However, my husband had a small business in
21 Torrington. We arrived in the City of Torrington in
22 1952, and it was such a thriving manufacturing area,
23 and now there is no Torrington Company. There's no
24 American Brass, and it is distressing to see these
25 companies desert the City of Torrington. I don't know

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1 whether it is part of the whole overall problem with
2 the cost of the energy, but I feel from what I have
3 read that we've got to do more with the nuclear
4 energy.

5 France, in each one of its
6 provinces, has nuclear. I don't know what they do
7 with the problem of the disposal of the residue, but
8 it seems to me that we have some brilliant scientists
9 in this country that they can get to the moon, they
10 can get to Mars perhaps. It seems as though we could
11 take care of the potentially dangerous materials, and
12 I would hope that the State of Connecticut would kind
13 of help us further our nuclear power. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.
15 The next speaker is Doug Parker.

16 MR. PARKER: I just wanted to see if
17 Kay Carroll had -- I wasn't sure if she arrived and I
18 don't see her. I'm Doug Parker. I am the
19 president/executive director of the Northwest Economic
20 Development Corporation, so both Rick and I work with
21 Dan and with Ryan Bingham in Torrington. We have 20

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22 towns that are actually working collaboratively with
23 the Chamber of Commerce, so we are kind of an
24 extension, if you will, the economic development
25 extension of the Northwest Chamber of Commerce so we

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1 serve the same towns.

2 It's been exciting. I'm a
3 volunteer. I am a retired teacher. I am also the
4 chairman of the Litchfield Economic Development
5 Commission, so I do know what the small town part of
6 it is, and I think these two guys, Rick and Dan, are
7 right on the right track. We realize, as a region,
8 whatever happens in Torrington and Winsted really
9 affects the rest of our region completely. So we
10 really feel it's important to work together. We want
11 to see a strong downtown Torrington and a strong
12 downtown Winsted. We also agree that manufacturing
13 has taken some really, really heavy hits over the last
14 few years.

15 It's a national trend. It's a
16 worldwide trend. It's not something that we can solve
17 within any particular region of the state, but we
18 certainly are aware of that. We're working toward
19 bringing in smaller manufacturing outfits, incubators
20 and so forth, that are really taking hold. We are in
21 the process now of reviewing the CEDS. It was
22 completed in 2004. We're now in the review process;
23 and as we are reviewing, we're saying, okay, we've

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24 done really well here. We're doing our benchmarking,
25 and where do we need to go next.

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30

1 We're planning to do something, you
2 know, thinking out of the box, which is what you're
3 talking about, and that's why I was looking for Kay
4 Carroll. Kay Carroll is someone who lives in
5 Litchfield, is a good friend, and I invited her to our
6 last Economic Development Corporation meeting. She is
7 someone who has done a lot of scenario planning, and I
8 don't know if you're familiar with that concept.

9 The Art of Long View by Peter
10 Schwartz is the book that refers to this. She's done
11 training with AT&T, major corporations using that
12 model to actually look at a process for looking down
13 into the future, and I think it's what you need. You
14 need a process, because when you start talking about
15 ideas, it really has their own idea, and you have to
16 somehow validate is that going to hold or not hold.
17 So you need a process to kind of weigh everyone's
18 ideas.

19 So planning, we would recommend, is
20 a nice path. We are planning to do that statewide.
21 That might be a nice path, and Kay would probably be
22 willing to help you with that. She's very good.

23 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: You can
24 volunteer here.

25 MR. PARKER: She is a retired
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1 executive. She's very, very sharp, and, again, really
2 has used the process, is trained in the process
3 through the Wharton School of Business and University
4 of Pennsylvania, so you want to grab hold of her. You
5 might have a chance. Energy, I think that's a huge
6 issue for the whole state. I think one of the things
7 we have in our own backyard in Torrington is a fuel
8 cell plant. We would love to see support for them. I
9 know they are having a hard time keeping up with what
10 they are doing now, but a fabulous alternate energy
11 source, clean energy, takes you off the grid, so to
12 speak, to a certain degree. We really would love to
13 see the support from the state to continue to build
14 fuel cells in this region. It's been a fabulous
15 company and they are growing.

16 Transportation. As was mentioned
17 before, the railroad system, we do have a train system
18 going up here. It's fairly dated, needs some
19 renovation. We also have someone that lives in our
20 area, that lives in Litchfield, another good friend
21 who actually used to manage the railroad system for
22 Mexico, 10,000 employees. He's on our Economic
23 Development Corporation board. He's talking about
24 using light rail. He suggests that we might want to
25 look at light rail.

1 Have you ever been in the West
2 Coast, Seattle, Portland, where they're using a light
3 rail system? He says it's far less expensive to
4 operate. It's a good people mover especially in
5 Fairfield County when you are looking to go down there
6 to kind of get people from place to place, so another
7 suggestion on that one as well.

8 Highways. You know, we never have
9 enough highways, but you can always -- you can expand
10 them adding for lanes, but sooner or later the other
11 thought is a monorail system looking at using instead
12 of -- we know eminent domain to be an issue -- using
13 the medians where you put monorails between the two,
14 and looking at that I know that was discussed already
15 at the state level, too, so we think -- and
16 high-speed -- looking around the region is high-speed
17 trains. You are looking at Japan's with the magnetic
18 levitation trains. You might want to have trains that
19 are going from Washington to Boston that are
20 high-speed, and, again, you know, where do you put
21 them? How do you put them in? That's all.

22 MR. McMILLEN: Ostensibly we already
23 have that in Acela.

24 MR. PARKER: So those are some
25 thoughts, but we are very active. We are a very

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1 active group, and, again, I would reiterate what Rick
2 said. I'm a volunteer, but sooner or later we are
3 going to need an executive. My job needs to be split
4 into two, president and executive director. We need
5 somebody to really be able to kind of conduct a lot of
6 these activities, and make sure that they're being
7 managed.

8 One more last plug is research. We
9 had our bus tour today. We had our annual bus tour
10 through the region highlighting all the commercial
11 properties. Joann Ryan set that up with the Chamber,
12 and that's kind of a cooperative thing between the
13 Chamber and Northwest Economic Development, and we had
14 Melissa Pascal from CERC was on the bus tour. Great
15 organization. I would love to see state money to,
16 fund, them. One of the issues --

17 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: It does.

18 MR. PARKER: Does it? Okay. Jump
19 it up. I don't know about the level. Here's the
20 issue. Litchfield, we belong to CERC, and it costs
21 like \$800 a year. I guess they did lower it to \$500 a
22 year. We don't have that many properties, so it's not
23 small towns can be a member of CERC, but it's a great
24 organization, and I know they need staffing to kind of
25 collect the research and make that available. Great

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1 organization.

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2 So I would say continue your
3 support, and if you can increase it, that would be
4 good. I think it's really done a good job
5 particularly in the commercial area. Just kind of let
6 communities know what information is out there, and
7 I'll be quiet. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Mark
9 Waterhouse?

10 MR. WATERHOUSE: I really signed up
11 on the list so you know I was here, but I don't really
12 need to speak.

13 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Vincent
14 Nolan?

15 MR. NOLAN: Good evening,
16 Commissioner. I'm Vinny Nolan. I am economic
17 development supervisor for the Town of New
18 Milford. Like Mark I really didn't plan on speaking.
19 I wasn't clear on how the forum was operating. I
20 guess I'm here to learn more about where we're headed.
21 But as I'm sitting here thinking and hearing about the
22 regional planning folks, and thinking about New
23 Milford as the largest town in southwestern Litchfield
24 County, we're actually part of the Regional Planning
25 Agency that incorporates Danbury and the Housatonic

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1 Valley region, and it brings to mind one of the things
2 we should be looking at in terms of breaking down
3 silos and regionalism. That is really connected,

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4 because I also sit on the Northwest Regional Work
5 Force Investment Board, and that includes Waterbury,
6 Danbury and Torrington, and, you know, we have these
7 pockets in silos that overlap, and don't represent the
8 same interests at all times.

9 So we have a work force investment
10 board that represents three major communities, smaller
11 ones like ourselves and Naugatuck, which has no
12 relationship to Danbury or New Milford, and yet we
13 talk about planning agencies. We're a part of
14 Litchfield County, and we do have a relationship to
15 Torrington and Litchfield, but our linkage is more
16 with Danbury. So we're the stepchild to Danbury often
17 in those regards.

18 So I think one of the things we're
19 going to look at a long-term strategic plan for the
20 state is if we're going to talk about regionalism,
21 let's define what regions we are, and let's get all of
22 our alliances, whether it's work force or
23 infrastructure or planning, more aligned in a manner
24 that makes some semblance of sense. So that when
25 we're at the table as a group, it's not one group on

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1 one day, and a different group the next day, and
2 another group the day after, and I think that also
3 relates somewhat to our state agencies.

4 You know, we've done a better job in
5 recent years, I think, of talking across lines DECD

6 and DOT and DEP. We need to continue to move in a
7 much better direction there. You know, we've got some
8 projects ongoing in New Milford that are large, and
9 that require collaboration of all those agencies.
10 DPUC is another. Often times, you know, one hand
11 doesn't know what the other is doing and impacts
12 growth and development.

13 Our recent energy initiatives with
14 Kimberly-Clark is a good example of that. The state
15 improvements on route 7 are impacting the ability to
16 drive the utility service needed to create the energy
17 plant that's there, and roadway improvements are
18 impacted by DEP regulations. So we're trying to move
19 forward in one fashion, and being held up in another,
20 and that's not really meant to be ultra critical.
21 It's just a recognition that we have to continue to
22 break down silos.

23 The last comment I think I'll make
24 is that I feel somewhat disconnected in a town like
25 New Milford, which has a growing population, and a

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1 good economic base with the cluster strategies that
2 have been implemented. I don't see how we integrate,
3 how we benefit from it. Maybe that's just a lack of
4 recognition on my part, but I think we need to feel as
5 though we're part of the greater whole as the state
6 moves forward.

7 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.

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8 A couple of points. Your comments on being part of
9 different regions, so to speak, and I think it goes
10 back to -- I don't know if it was Dan or Rich who said
11 that, you know, one size doesn't fit all, and I think
12 part of what we will be grappling with, as one of the
13 things that I mull over and have lots of discussions
14 with my staff, are, okay, what are the macro issues
15 such as energy that confront all of us, and how do we
16 institute some uniform changes that will affect all of
17 us, and then how do we also continue the programs to
18 marry that one size doesn't fit all, so that's one
19 comment.

20 Another comment with the clusters,
21 you know, we're taking a hard look at what they are
22 and what they do. We do feel that, you know,
23 alternative energy is one very big area. It's not
24 just fuel cells where a couple of us from, myself, Ned
25 Bowman, who is the new chair of CI and Marie O'Brien,

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1 the president of CDA, we know about the fuel cell
2 company coming to visit, and it's just what do we need
3 to do to make sure the climate is good for those types
4 of companies; not just in fuel cell but other
5 alternative energies; that we have the programs in
6 place, seed money for start-up companies; and then
7 that the work force is trained to meet those demands.

8 That's why I keep going back to the
9 class is half empty, and the glass is half full, which

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10 is grappling with these issues some of which are very
11 emotionally charged like nuclear energy, and how we
12 have this interactive dialogue to come up with some
13 short-term solutions, and some solutions that we won't
14 reason the benefits until a few years down the road,
15 so that's what hopefully this process is all about.

16 MR. McMILLEN: One thing I like the
17 point you made about regionalism. We have talked
18 about it for a long time, and then you said, well,
19 what regions are those, and how would we define them.
20 One of the things that I might like to throw out to
21 the public is to think of, you know, what regions
22 might we define that could serve the different parts
23 of Connecticut, and, you know, how would we define
24 those. There's 15 RPAs that carve up the state, and,
25 you know, do they characterize something about the

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1 region that they serve? Is there some
2 characteristics?

3 The University of Connecticut looked
4 at a collection of attributes, and they did a
5 statistical analysis. It's like a cluster analysis or
6 factor analysis, and you actually characterize regions
7 of the state based on similar characteristics, and
8 they came up with five regions, and they call it the
9 five Connecticuts, and it's a report that's on the
10 state data center website, which is situated at UConn
11 in Storrs, but it's an interesting question.

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12 It's like what regions could we
13 imagine that would some way serve Connecticut better
14 than the regional puzzle, jigsaw puzzle that we have
15 today. I throw that out as a challenge to the group.

16 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Okay. Next
17 speaker is Leslie Cosgrove.

18 MS. COSGROVE: I just signed up just
19 here as an observer this evening.

20 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Okay.

21 MS. COSGROVE: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: David -- I
23 hope I pronounce the name correctly -- Jacquier?

24 MR. JACQUIER, JR: You did good.
25 The Frank Jacquier. The Americanized is Jacquier. I

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1 guess I could say I'm a little bit new to the whole
2 situation here. Last year in August Jodi Reil throws
3 in this hand basket, and in January she decided that
4 the dairy farmers were going to get an enhancement
5 loan through your organization. I don't know who
6 learned more when we got done, if you did or we did,
7 but it was an expensive trip.

8 I'm not here to complain about it.
9 I'm here to thank you that you finally got the work
10 done. I didn't realize it was going to take almost 8
11 months and \$10,000, which was 10 percent of the cost,
12 but that's how life goes on. I think there is a very
13 small number of dairy farmers left in the state of

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14 Connecticut, and some people may not believe it, but I
15 would say we care for about 30 percent of the land in
16 the state of Connecticut. We have been the caretaker
17 that has never got paid, and I think your rural towns,
18 I heard a few of them talk tonight here, and some of
19 them said they really weren't here to ask you for
20 anything. They sort of want to stay where they were.

21 Well, us dairy farmers would like to
22 stay in the state as long as we make a profit, and we
23 can't stay in the state unless we make money. Just to
24 give you an idea, in 1968, which is almost 40 years
25 ago, there was 2,000 of us. This year here by the end

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1 of the year we're going to be down to the 150 mark.
2 All the ones that have left did not sell out to get
3 rid of the money to stop the income. That's why you
4 have all these houses. Some of these small towns,
5 they want to stay small, but they want 100 acres, 50
6 acres or 60 acres to have their house on. Taxes kills
7 them or they got more money so they aren't working
8 here.

9 It's that 17 percent second home
10 which is really taking its toll in some ways, in some
11 ways not. This country has a cheap food policy, which
12 every one of us in this room really enjoys. You only
13 take 12 percent out of your pocket to fill your belly.
14 If you live anyplace in the world, you would put half
15 the money you make to feed your belly. So I don't

Torrington.txt

16 know if us dairy farmers are going to be on your
17 program in years to come. If our milk price slides
18 one more time, I don't think you're going to have the
19 opportunity to help us, because the 400 acres that I
20 farm I'll put the houses on it, and take my last crop.
21 Thank you for your time.

22 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.
23 Robert Jacquier?

24 MR. JACQUIER, SR: Thank you. I'm
25 Robert Jacquier. I represent Laurel Brook Farm, which

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1 is a partnership licensed in the State of Connecticut,
2 and we are what I call a productive farm, and you have
3 many productive farms in the State of Connecticut out
4 of that 100 some, and we have been caught in a lot of
5 programs where it's a cap for one farm in dairy, and a
6 lot of the crops in the other parts of the country
7 there can be more than one partner on the same
8 identity.

9 Our farm, when we have a government
10 program in milk production, it lasts about six weeks,
11 and there's 52 weeks in the year. I want to thank the
12 state for the help we had for the 2006 production of
13 milk. My son, who is on a separate farm, has gone
14 over that pretty well with you, but we had to plant
15 crops in 2007, and we thought we would have money from
16 the state programs, two programs. We did not even get
17 the money to start the harvest this fall, so that is a

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18 big load that is still carried, because about every
19 productive farm that had any size, our farm dropped
20 2,800 acres. We only own 100.

21 So we use a lot of that 490 land in
22 the State of Connecticut, and we use land in Dutchess
23 County, New York and Berkshire, Mass, which do have
24 programs, and that's how we're able to farm, and
25 that's how we can be efficient. I'll leave that

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1 program except two things. We are strong in
2 Connecticut, because we still have our Department of
3 Agriculture and our college and our extension service,
4 and that's why we are still here, because we have had
5 help in the cooperative movement and working land, and
6 taking care of our farm.

7 I would like to hit one other one
8 that I think our corner really needs help on and
9 that's forestry. We have a lot of land in the town,
10 in the northwest corner. We do not have a forester.
11 When I started farming on my own in 1948, we had a
12 forester in the Town of Norfolk. We still have the
13 land that we had at that time plus over 5,000 acres
14 from the Great Mountain Forest and a bunch through
15 Goshen that came on. We still have no forester. We
16 have land that was not cut when I came there in 1948
17 that is still on the mountain that has not seen
18 anything done since the cc's went through. That could
19 be a lot more productive for welfare of the state, and

Torrington.txt
20 a lot more productive for wildlife.

21 I guess I probably used up my time,
22 but I would like to say that you have towns growing
23 and houses coming. You have problems with wildlife.
24 It is nothing on the land we farm to see hundreds of
25 turkeys and deer that are surviving well, and a lot of

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1 the land that you're saving we need to save some farms
2 to keep it open to keep this wildlife going. Also, I
3 would like to say in the Town of North Canaan there is
4 over two miles of brook that is leased by the State of
5 Connecticut for fishing that us farmers keep open so
6 people can get along it, and that land was rented
7 forever and a day. That was one of the jobs the state
8 did many years ago. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Thank you.

10 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, sir.

11 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: I just want
12 to pick up on a point that was made by the last two
13 gentlemen. Governor Rell does place a high priority
14 on the agricultural community here. I have had
15 several conversations with Commissioner Pirelli on the
16 unique needs that you all face. So I know they are
17 not easy solutions, but I'll take this back to him,
18 and we'll continue the dialogue. Is there anyone else
19 who would like to speak? Go ahead.

20 MR. PARKER: I have something after
21 the agricultural comment.

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22 COMMISSIONER McDONALD: Sure.

23 MR. PARKER: This is Doug Parker,
24 Northwest Economic Development Corporation. With
25 agriculture, actually in Litchfield, we face the same

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1 problem as well. We have a lot of land and how can we
2 keep our farms or keep our farmers productive, so to
3 speak. So we wrestled with that issue as well, and
4 it's part of our plan of conservation and development
5 is to try to support the agricultural aspects of the
6 community. Well, we just started a farmers' market
7 this year for the first time and it was highly
8 successful. We had over 20 vendors.

9 And the other thing the extension of
10 that, probably the more valuable extension is the
11 schools. We're now trying to get local farmers to
12 provide food for the schools, for the local schools,
13 instead of shipping out and bringing in, you know,
14 from everywhere in the world; to really support our
15 local agriculture. That way why don't we have local
16 food? It's our local schools. Why don't we have
17 local agricultural crops or whatever you are eating in
18 our schools?

19 The other connection we made, it was
20 kind of by chance, is with the food banks. We had one
21 of the women that ran a food bank in Torrington, and
22 we connected her with WAMOGO to start a student
23 agriculture program this year where they had students

24 raising crops, bringing them to the market and selling
25 it. They weren't selling everything. So what do they

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1 do with those extra crops? They were donating them to
2 the soup kitchens. So, again, it's an outlet. So you
3 are keeping your farmers productive. Why not help the
4 farmers help the soup kitchens by having some of that
5 happen as well, where you really encouraging them to
6 provide some crops, fresh crops, locally grown crops
7 to some of the food kitchens or the schools.

8 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you. Is there
9 anybody else who wants to speak? Yes, sir.

10 MR. LYNN: Once again, to respond to
11 your question regarding regional boundaries, and you
12 understand I have an obvious bias working for regional
13 planning organization, but I would like to say that a
14 planning regions, those 15 planning regions, when they
15 were established, were based on a rather detailed
16 technical analysis that included such things as
17 commuter travel patterns, newspaper circulation areas
18 and so forth.

19 The 11-town Litchfield Hills region,
20 I think, represents a classic strong center regional
21 area where we have Torrington at the heart of the
22 regional area surrounded by north suburban and
23 regional communities, and the chief elected officials
24 get along with one another, meet on a monthly basis,
25 and it's a very good working group. What I would like

1 to mention is that there have been a number of
2 occasions when it makes sense to work with our
3 neighborhing regional planni ng organi zati ons. We work
4 very closely with the Northwestern Connecticut Council
5 of governments, and our recycling and also hazardous
6 waste programs. As Mr. Parker mentioned, the two
7 regions are working together with regard to economic
8 development, and most recently we have been working
9 with our regional planni ng planni ng to the south, the
10 Housatonic Valley region and Housatonic Valley region
11 for homel and securi ty purposes.

12 So I guess the message I would want
13 to convey is that considerati on be given to using the
14 regional planni ng organi zati ons as the bui ldi ng blocks
15 for when larger regions are necessary, but, again,
16 under the theme of one size does not fit all. I think
17 that allows some of those deci sions to be made at the
18 local level. When it makes sense to work in a larger
19 regional setting, then local offici als are certainly
20 willing to do that. Thank you.

21 COMMI SSI ONER McDONALD: We're going
22 through a little bit of protocol. With regard to the
23 public meeting process and the rules of the state,
24 since we said we were going to be open for comment
25 until 8, we have to stay open for comment until 8. So

1 we'll take a brief recess and reconvene in 10 minutes.

2 If other people come, we'll see what happens.

3 (Whereupon, thi s hearing was
4 concluded at 7:10.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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2

I, Jacqueline V. McCauley, a Notary Public
duly commissioned and qualified in and for the State
of Connecticut, do hereby certify that the hearing
taken on November 15, 2007 was taken to the best of my
knowledge and belief.

5

6

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
and affixed my seal this 20th day of November, 2007

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Jacqueline V. McCauley

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Notary Public

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My Commission expires: 5/31/10

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CORRECTION SHEET

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I, JOHN DOE, do hereby certify that the
following corrections and additions of the transcript
taken on March 21, 2007 are true and accurate to the
best of my knowledge and belief.

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CORRECTION	PAGE	LINE	REASON
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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SANDERS, GALE & RUSSELL

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Torri ngton. txt

5 personally appeared JOHN DOE, and ^ he ^ she made oath
6 to the truth of the foregoing answers by ^ hi m ^ her
7 subscri bed.

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9 Before me, , Notary Publ ic.

10 My Commi ssi on expi res:

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