

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 14-43

SB314

House	4641-4669	29
Senate	1081-1083, 1211-1212	5
Environment	809-814, 1134-1135	8
<u>Children</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>1</u>
		43

H – 1194

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

**VOL.57
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vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

68
May 2, 2014

A VOICE: 144-0-7.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On House Bill 5554 as amended by House "A."

Total number voting	144
Necessary for passage	73
Those voting Yea	144
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 462.

THE CLERK:

On page 25, Calendar 462, favorable report of the joint standing committee on Planning and Development.

Substitute Senate Bill 314, AN ACT CONCERNING THE HERITAGE

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

69
May 2, 2014

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate

Will you remark, madam?

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill streamlines an existing state statute allowing for the creation of heritage parks. It requires the DEEP Commissioner in consultation with the Commissioner of DECD to develop criteria and guidelines for designating heritage parks, consisting of sites in a region that are linked by a common social, historical or economic theme. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, a few questions through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, madam -- sir.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

70
May 2, 2014

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Why, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On line 5, there's a deletion to reference to the State Historic Commission. Through you, Mr. Speaker, and for the information of the Chamber, what is or was the State Historic Commission. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that I don't know. It is specifically involving the Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Economic and Community Development.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My recollection from the discussion about this bill, whether at a public hearing or otherwise was that either the State Historic Commission no longer existed or that its duties had changed. Through you, Mr. Speaker, does the Chairwoman have the same recollection? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

71
May 2, 2014

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that it was merged -- this department was merged with the Department of Culture and Tourism.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thus the need or the wisdom anyway of deleting the language in line 5 because it's an obsolete reference.

Moving on in the existing language, there's reference to designating boundaries, the name and theme of any such park as well as any physical sites to be included.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, what lands are subject to becoming a heritage park?, i.e., it is only state lands? Is it only open space? Is it private? What are the limitations, if any? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, it could be state land. It could be nonprofit. It could be a municipal. It could be pretty much anything.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

72
May 2, 2014 .

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Chairwoman.
So we know how many heritage parks exist now in the State
of Connecticut? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there were
six that were being considered, but none have been
implemented as of yet.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I note that the original
bill, or I'm sure the original statute, which is Title 23,
Section 10i was passed back, I believe, back in 1987.
Through you, Mr. Speaker, does the Chairwoman have any
understanding why there have been no heritage parks
developed in the intervening time between '87 and now?
Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

73
May 2, 2014

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I do not.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Looking down on lines 18 through 29, I think this is probably the guts of the bill for folks who are looking at it and trying to figure out what we're doing here.

The main thrust of what this bill seeks to do is to delete or remove the requirement that the Commissioner establish an advisory board concerning the designation of boundaries, name, theme, et cetera, et cetera, in the local municipalities.

Now through you, Mr. Speaker, why or why not -- why are we doing this? Why is that a good thing to remove some local input on where these parks may go? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there would still be a local public hearing. So the public would still have input into the process.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

74
May 2, 2014

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's important, again, for the Chamber to know that it's not going to be an edict from on high, but, in fact, there is still some local input. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't recall this from our discussions in the Environment Committee, maybe the Chairwoman does or learned.

Have any of these advisory boards been established in the last 15-20 years pursuant to this statute? I mean, what's been the experience of the Commissioner with these advisory boards? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there was an advisory board created maybe in the 1990s somewhere for Thames Maritime Park -- Heritage Park.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, I don't recall whether or not that was -- we had any testimony if that was a good experience, bad experience, good input,

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

75
May 2, 2014

bad input. Through you, Mr. Speaker, does the Chairwoman recall or have any information regarding whether that advisory park was a useful or not useful. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we had any testimony submitted on that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Chairwoman. That comports with my recollection. I find it interesting that, you know, we have this ability to create heritage parks. Sounds like a good idea. The requirement of a local advisory board, but for whatever reason either it didn't happen or if it did happen, it didn't have a whole lot of impact.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, moving down to lines 42, 43. No site shall be designated for inclusion in such park unless the owner of such site consents to its inclusion. Through you, Mr. Speaker, is it the -- is it the anticipation of, or I guess maybe just for legislative history or information, inclusion in a heritage park. Is

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

76
May 2, 2014

that by way of transfer of title or, you know, what is the actual legal effect of consenting to inclusion into a heritage park? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that that would be established through some sort of an agreement or consortium.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, again, just to kind of flesh this out a little bit, I can envision a scenario where someone, a property owner may say, all right, I'll have my property included in this heritage park, but it could be by way of permanent easement or a conservation easement or a license or something less than the transfer of title. Through you, Mr. Speaker, does that comport with the Chairwoman's understanding?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that would be

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

77
May 2, 2014

done through a license.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of more comments or questions. Well, I guess that is really -- really comes to the core of it, about what an owner may or may not be consenting to. Last question, if I may, through you, Mr. Speaker, under this bill and under this statutory structure, I'm correct, am I not, that there is no power of condemnation being granted to the Commissioner or anyone else with respect to the development or creation of a heritage park. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, that would be absolutely correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Chairwoman for her comments. I rise in support of the bill. You know, I think at first glance it's a little concerning

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

78
May 2, 2014

where you say, well, why are we cutting out the local input? Is it a power grab by the DEEP Commissioner? Are we losing control of this kind of thing?

And my recollection from the discussions is not so much the public testimony, was the process that was put into place may have mistakenly been a little too burdensome or too tedious, but there still is local input. And the last point is the important one.

If a landowner doesn't consent to being in the heritage park, they're not going to be in the heritage park. And then the DEEP or nobody in connection with this statute has any power of condemnation.

So again, it's a cooperative effort. If you want in, you can be in. I believe you can set your own standards as a landowner of how and whether and how long you want to be involved in a heritage park. And overall I support the bill because I think it's a fine idea. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

79
May 2, 2014

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, if I may, a couple of questions to the proponent.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lines 30 through 37 of the bill, looks like existing language makes discussion on the public hearing concerning the boundaries name, theme, and sites of the heritage park, and this to me becomes much more important because the advisory board, if this amendment goes through, will cease to exist. Would this public hearing take place within the region of that heritage park? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just trying to follow the discussion between the Chair and the ranking member, do I understand correctly that this will address the situation

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

80
May 2, 2014

with the Thames Maritime Heritage Park in terms of trying to get that property back into some usage which might be more appropriate to today, in light of some advancements with technology? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, once again the gentleman is correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there's no intent in this to the best of the proponent's belief, in terms of crowding out municipal input into the -- to the development of these heritage parks. It's essentially looking to take another pathway to get there in light of some changes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is my understanding as well.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and in light of those responses, I also rise in support of this amendment. It seems like it's a workable approach, a workable bill, rather, not an amendment, to addressing some of the changes in technology. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Would you occasion to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have just a few questions to the proponent of the bill, please, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you very much. To the good chairwoman of the Environment Committee, I wanted to follow up with my colleagues here regarding lines 30 and the public hearing requirements. And I understand Representative Alberts has clarified where the public hearing will take place.

My question would be also, is there any communication required to the municipality or, say, the town historian

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

82
May 2, 2014

above and beyond the public hearing to make sure that this
doesn't fly under the radar somehow to the municipal folks
that can lend some help or area of expertise. Through
you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that that
would be covered in lines 33 and -- through 35 of the
bill, at least 30 days before such hearing, the
Commissioner shall cause to be published once in a
newspaper having a substantial circulation in the affected
area. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that
clarification. And then also in lines 47 and 48, the
requirement for DEEP to have -- come up with a timeline --
I mean to come up with a plan. My question is, is there a
timeline for them to develop that plan for this new
proposal? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

83
May 2, 2014

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, there is no timeline designated. But I believe that that would be impacted by the public process.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that answer. And then moving on through the bill, in Section lines 49 through 56, it talks about the ability to designate additional sites. And I have a couple questions about that. One of them is, is there any requirement for those sites to be contiguous to the existing park? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, there is no requirement. They may or they may not be.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile -- I'm sorry.

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I took a moment to go

back and review the testimony on the bill, and I had remembered it as a member of the Environment Committee. And it looks like a wonderful project that's being talked about specifically in the Groton and New London area. And I've read DEEP's testimony. And I certainly love this concept. I'm very supportive.

I'm also wondering what the availability is for other towns who would like to connect their scenic natural and historic sites. Do you see other towns being able to benefit from this, and is DEEP prepared for other towns to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, I do see opportunity for other areas, and yes, I do believe that DEEP would be prepared.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Great, thank you so much. I stand in strong support of this legislation. I think it's a wonderful way to kind of blend the fabric of our communities, not only our

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

85
May 2, 2014

natural assets, but our historical assets, and really -- really tried to focus in on how you can turn that into economic benefit and tourism in our areas.

My district has a lot of these same components and certainly would, I think, fit another model for this. We have some wonderful assets, including being the home and burial location for Venture Smith, who was once a slave, freed himself, and owned land, had a wonderful, vibrant part of our community.

That's a historic piece. Of course his property, we have state parks nearby, and I really think that this is a wonderful opportunity for my district, and I'm sure each of you have some of your own special places in your districts that can also take advantage of this. I encourage your adoption. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Moukawsher.

REP. MOUKAWSHER (40th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This -- this bill is a more general application, but first of all, I'd like to express my appreciation to the Chair of the Environment Committee,

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

86
May 2, 2014

because the genesis of this bill is the Thames Maritime Heritage Park that, you know, we've been working a long time in my -- my home area to make a reality.

In fact, it goes back to the eighties. '87 was when it was initially was a concept. So I'm very grateful that this -- this bill has been brought forward. I very much appreciate the expressions of support.

I'd like to just point out that among other benefits of this -- this proposal, and a heritage park, is economic development.

I mean, the idea is that we're going to be connecting two communities with similar historical and similar infrastructure by way of the Thames River, and we're expecting or hoping that we'll have a water shuttle that will connect New London and Groton.

And another great advantage of it, something that we've really been emphasizing is that this will be a regional concept, a regional development.

For instance today, The Coast Guard -- there's a National Coast Guard Museum that has been proposed, and is going to be sited in New London. Today at 1:30 there is a ground breaking and deed transfer to create this museum.

And certainly it will benefit the region. But with this concept that we have of the heritage park, now there

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

87
May 2, 2014

will be -- it'll be one of a number of sites that can be visited and that can connect the historic sites on both sides of the river.

So I think it's a very exciting concept. It's been something that goes back many years. One of the reasons we're doing this bill is because it ran into some differences of opinion about where a visitors' center should be. We're now at a time where we can do that virtually.

So I think this is hopefully going to be a very successful enterprise, and I think it will also inspire other similar type parks that will lead to development and -- and further opportunities for people to be exposed to the history and the natural beauty of our state.

So again, I thank the Chairwoman of the committee for bringing this out. And I appreciate the expressions of support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Elissa Wright.

REP. WRIGHT (41st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been noted, a quarter

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

88
May 2, 2014

of a century ago in 1987, the state created the framework for a system of heritage parks throughout this -- the state, and they were envisioned as a nontraditional form of state park that would coordinate the historical and cultural sites in a city or a region in a cohesive way to promote tourism, support historic preservation, and strengthen local economies.

And also give residents and visitors a deeper understanding and sense of the people, places, and traditions that have shaped the region.

And at that time, a number of such parks were envisioned, including the Thames Maritime Heritage Park. Over the past year or so, the idea of a Thames Maritime Heritage Park has gained new momentum. And that would encompass historical, cultural, and recreational sites in New London and Groton that straddled the Thames river. And with the promise of the addition of a water shuttle across the Thames.

The streamlining modifications to the current statute offer a more flexible approach to establishing the organizational framework and management structure of heritage parks and would help realize the potential and long-held goals of the original heritage park initiative and encourage protection and continued use of the rich

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

89
May 2, 2014

historical and cultural offerings in the Thames Estuary area and also with potential for other heritage parks throughout the state.

And I thank the Environment Committee, and the co-chairs for bringing this bill forward, and urge my colleagues to join me in support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Camillo.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good morning -- or good afternoon. Through you, a couple quick questions and a point of clarification.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you very much. Not being that familiar with heritage parks, do we have any information on their presence in other states and how long they've been there, and how they're doing? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

90
May 2, 2014

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the only other state I'm aware of, I believe, is Delaware.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Camillo.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, and in the State of Delaware do we have any information on how long they've been in existence, what they may or may not preclude, as far as activities go? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't have specific information on that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Camillo.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I'm trying to get at is some -- some ideas, no matter how great they are or well-intended they are, sometimes have unintended consequences, and I'm worrying about if this is not an issue where we're going to have total local control, activities that may or may not have been present on these

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

91
May 2, 2014

sites, I'm worried about maybe losing some of those activities. We've seen that on local levels before, not through heritage parks, but through other means.

So if there's any way of clarifying that, I'd be appreciative. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure I have great confidence that the department would be able to set that up.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Camillo.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that and I do like this concept of a heritage park, but being a believer in local control I don't know if I'd want to put that much faith in the Commissioner for a venue that's really going to be in a local municipality. So I'll wait and see if there's any more information coming up, but I'm a little skeptical right now about some unintended consequences down the road. But I thank the gentlelady for her answers.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

92
May 2, 2014

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in strong support of this bill. I have one question to the proponent, through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Plead proceed, sir.

REP. O'DEA (125th):

To the proponent, in reading the bill it doesn't look like this bill would in any way preclude a public/private partnership, would it? Through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Gentile.

REP. GENTILE (104th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is my understanding as well. In reading the bill it would seem not to.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125th):

Thank you to the proponent for those responses. As long as a public/private partnership is not precluded by

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

93
May 2, 2014

this bill, I'm strongly in favor of it.

Because, what I would envision here is similar to what has happened to the Baltimore Harbor, and that happening in New London and happening in Norwalk and happening in Greenwich, where you have a vibrant downtown harbor atmosphere that would encourage tourism to these areas.

And I guarantee you, with having the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, and working with the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, we can get public -- or private money to finance these types of investments and have boats going around, have fireworks shows financed privately so that it wouldn't be a burden on our already heavily burdened municipalities for finances.

So I would like to see a Baltimore harbor type initiative come into New London, Greenwich, and Norwalk, and so I would like to hope that the Commissioner of Energy and Environment and the Commissioner of Economic Development would encourage private funding of this type of -- these types of initiatives, and I hope that they're listening to this.

And I had asked my colleagues to support this bill because I believe it is -- it will be very successful if

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

94
May 2, 2014

we use private money to help finance this. So with that, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Bowles.

REP. BOWLES (42nd):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good afternoon.

REP. BOWLES (42nd):

I rise in strong support of this proposed legislation. I think this could be beginning of some very exciting things happened, not only in Southeastern Connecticut, but all the way through the, what I call the Eastern Connecticut Heritage Corridor. I think beginning with what's happening now and what's being proposed in Groton and New London, very exciting, I do concur the Baltimore Harbor area is actually a very beautiful place. And this is exactly what I think is envisioned.

I would like to go further and eventually see this corridor established all the way up to the Norwich harbor,

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

95
May 2, 2014

which I think is very viable, and tie into the, actually to the Quinebaug-Shetucket Corridor, which is actually a federal-state -- both states, Massachusetts and Connecticut, public/private partnership that's run by a nonprofit organization, and which really capitalizes on, not only the cultural and historical assets that we have in the Eastern Connecticut Valley Corridors, The Last Green Valley, as they call it, but it also taps into potential economic development that we can have there. Continue to promote some of our agricultural enterprises.

So I think the very modest beginning down in New London, Groton, Thames River Corridor can really set up a model throughout Eastern Connecticut, and as we all know, we're looking for anything that we can do to maintain the beauty of this state and to really encourage economic development through the preservation of the beautiful assets that we do have here. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us? If not, staff and guests to the well of the house. Members take your seats, the machine will be open.

vd/mr/ch/gm/jf/cd
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

96
May 2, 2014

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the Chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Members, please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 314 in concurrence with the Senate.

Total number voting	416
Necessary for passage	74
Those voting Yea	134
Those voting Nay	12
Those absent and not voting	5

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill passes in concurrence with the Senate. Are there any announcements? Any announcements?

Representative Zupkus.

REP. ZUPKUS (89th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for an announcement

tk/ch/cd/gbr
SENATE

79
April 23, 2014

Through you, Madam President.

I think Senator McLachlan has made a good technical catch here, because okay, at the suggestion of staff we're going to PT the bill and fix that.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much. The bill will be PT'd.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 31, Calendar 172, substitute for Senate Bill Number 314, AN ACT CONCERNING THE HERITAGE PARK'S ADVISORY BOARDS, favorable report of the Committee on Environment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Madam President, I do move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR MEYER:

Yes. Colleagues, we have a system in Connecticut of what's called Heritage Parks. Heritage Parks are lands that have some specific social or economic or recreational purpose and character. The current law with respect to these parks is quite bureaucratic, and what this bill is intended to do is to end some of the bureaucracy.

It terminates the advisory board as not being necessary, and some of our colleagues who are supporting this bill have said that the advisory boards have messed up the operation of the Heritage

tk/ch/cd/gbr
SENATE

80
April 23, 2014

Parks and therefore are asking us to eliminate the need for an advisory board. So that's the first thing the bill does.

Secondly, it eliminates the approval, the current approval by municipalities, which are located within a park's boundaries or post-park's boundaries. While it eliminates that approval process, it does not eliminate the public hearing that's required with respect to the creation of a Heritage Park. And so our towns will be able to participate in them.

The bill has specific application to the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park in the Southeastern part of Connecticut. It's been requested by Senator Maynard and others, and that's in essence what this rather small bill does.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark?

Senator Chapin.

SENATOR CHAPIN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I also rise in support of the bill before us. As the good chairman said, we didn't have testimony I think from (inaudible) New London, both the legislative delegation, as well as those who live in that district, it is one of our smaller bills out of the Environment Committee, but I would encourage my colleagues to support it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark? Will you remark?

Seeing -- Senator Maynard, I'm sorry.

SENATOR MAYNARD:

tk/ch/cd/gbr
SENATE

81
April 23, 2014

I just want to thank the distinguished ranking member on Environment. It's a bill that directly affects my district down the Thames are, and I appreciate very much the support of the body. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Senator Meyer?

SENATOR MEYER:

If there's no objection, could this please go on our consent calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

Mr. Clerk

THE CLERK:

On page number 9, Calendar 258, Senate Bill Number 446, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT GRANT AND PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM, favorable report of the Committee on Environment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Madam President.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee favorable report and passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR MEYER:

tk/ch/cd/gbr
SENATE

209
April 23, 2014

that we might proceed to a vote on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Madam would the people please take their conversations outside the chamber so the Clerk can so we can all hear the items on the Consent Calendar? Madam Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Items on the Consent Calendar. Page 1, Calendar Number 325, House Joint Resolution 66, and Calendar Number 326, House Joint Resolution 67.

Page 5, Calendar Number 102, Senate Bill 258. Page 6, Calendar Number 143, Senate Bill 363. Page 10, Calendar Number 287, Senate Bill 257.

Page 16, Calendar Number 368, Senate Bill 262. Page 17, Calendar Number 370, Senate Bill 411, and Calendar Number 372, Senate Bill 463.

Page 19, Calendar Number 391, Senate Bill 154. Page 20, Calendar Number 411, Senate Bill 493.

Page 27, Senate Bill 101, excuse me, Calendar 101, Senate Bill 156.

Page 28, Calendar Number 105, Senate Bill 221, and Calendar Number 115, Senate Bill 291.

And Calendar Number 114, Senate Bill 295.

Page 29, Calendar Number 123, Senate Bill 290. Page 31, Calendar Number 172, Senate Bill 314.

And Calendar Number 169, Senate Bill 70. And page 33, Calendar Number 217, Senate Bill 318.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Madam Clerk. Please announce the pendency for roll call vote, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

tk/ch/cd/gbr
SENATE

210
April 23, 2014

There will be an immediate roll call vote in the Senate. All senators report to the Chambers.
Immediate roll call vote for Consent Calendar in the Senate. All senators report to the Chambers.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Frantz.

Have all members voted? If all members have voted, please check the board to make sure your vote is accurately recorded. If all members have voted, the machine will be closed and the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Total voting	36
Aye	36
Nay	0
Absent	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. I would yield the floor for members if there are announcements of any other committee meetings or other points of personal privilege to be announced before adjournment.

THE CHAIR:

Any members with additional announcements or points of personal privilege? Seeing none, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, since there are a number of committee meetings tomorrow morning, it's our intention to begin the day with a Senate caucus at noon, and then session to follow. And with that I move the Senate stand adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**ENVIRONMENT
PART 2
593 – 1065**

2014

it was everywhere and I didn't know what it was. So I'm so glad you brought it to my attention.

So I think that -- that's where we can be different.

REP. MILLER: Thank you, Senator, and thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. GENTILE: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Anybody want a diet Coke?

REP. GENTILE: Thank you, Senator Bye. Representative Wright. Representative Wright, thank you for your patience and your understanding.

REP. WRIGHT: Not a problem. Good afternoon, Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Representative Elissa Wright. I represent the 41st District consisting of portions of the town of -- the town of Groton and city of Groton and New London, and I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 314 concerning heritage parks advisory boards.

Just by way of a little historical background, the framework for the system of state heritage parks began in 1987 with the enactment of Public Act 87340 that created the statewide heritage park system.

And that system envisions a non-traditional form of state park that would sort of coordinate various non-contiguous historical and cultural sites, could be in a city or a region, in a cohesive way through a sort of

park without boundaries that would create a picture of the significance and the cultural assets linked by a common social or economic theme.

Unfortunately, in the intervening nearly 50 years, to date, no heritage park in the state has actually be implemented, although a Thames Maritime Heritage Park proposed for the Thames Estuary near Long Island Sound came close to being created in the 1990s.

This bill would streamline and provide more flexibility for the planning and designation and development of a state heritage park under the statutory framework. Under that framework, currently the commissioner of DEEP must establish an advisory board to advise him or her on the -- on the boundary, name, theme of such a park.

And each municipality within the park area is entitled to representation on that board, with members designated by the commissioner from lists provided by the legislative body.

Under the language of this bill, that advisory board layer would be eliminated, a revision and modernization that I believe would facilitate the creation and development of a heritage park. As I mentioned, and is more fully detailed in my testimony, in the 1990s, significant steps were taken to establish a Maritime Heritage Park for -- to straddle the lower Thames Estuary on both the Groton and the London side and link those cultural and historical attractions on both sides of the river.

And in the past year, there has been a renewed interest in reviving that concept and bringing that heritage-based park without boundaries to

fruition. And we appreciate the involvement and support of the DEEP commissioner, Robert Clay, Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen, the former Commissioner Esty, as well as Deputy Commissioner Kip Bergstrom at DECD, and Commissioner Redeker at DOT, among others.

We feel it's important to capture that present momentum and I believe that the modifications suggested in this bill or some version thereof would help to realize that potential of the original heritage park goal. And I thank you very much for the opportunity to testify and would be happy to answer any questions members might have.

REP. GENTILE: Thank you, Representative Wright. Any questions? Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony. I'm reading the bill and I -- and I found your advisory board in Groton and I just want to make sure I understand this correctly. Because when I read the bill, it takes out all public input and only relies on the Commissioner. And I just want to make sure that that is the correct -- my understanding and would you agree that that is now the new language of the bill?

REP. WRIGHT: I think it still provides for significant public participation through public hearings, notice. And -- and it certainly would not preclude if the Commissioner, should so choose, the establishment of a taskforce or a group of interested participants to create the management mechanism or organizational structure of such a park.

And -- but I do think that the flexibility would be important. In the previous proposed Thames Maritime Heritage Park, the advisory

committee spent a lot of time discussing and exploring possibilities for a -- a centralized visitors' center with, you know, costly infrastructure.

And a number of advocates now feel that, with technology and advances in technology, the ability for visitors to explore an area through self-guided tour apps, find their way around the park, use their cell phone to dial up information, sites, really sort of changes the landscape -- landscape of the kind of physical infrastructure in that sense that would be needed, and in that case was one of the major functions of the advisory board.

REP. ZIOBRON: Okay. You know, I'm -- I'm very supportive of the concept, but my concern has always been about the limited staffing with DEEP. And, you know, they're already stretched so thin and I just wanted to make sure that by only -- only relying on the commission or DEEP to put this process in place and not using the energy and the thoughtfulness of the public and removing them out of the -- out of the statute, I was just a little concerned about that.

And so, you know, I just wanted to clarify that and -- and I guess you've done that for me. But I'll -- I'll continue to look at it.

REP. WRIGHT: I would just say in addition that under 22 -- General Statutes 22a-21, which is referenced internally in 23-10h, there's broad authority and powers of -- of the Commissioner to coordinate activities with other agencies, sister agencies, municipalities, non-governmental persons and organizations having the -- an interest in -- in planning, development, and maintenance of -- of recreational and outdoor natural resources and recreational facilities.

So I think the Commissioner has -- already has brought powers to work with the Historic Preservation Office, for example, or DECD, or, in this case, what's contemplated is a water taxi that would be able to ferry visitors back and forth across the river. And that would, of course, involve the -- the commissioner of the Department of Transportation. So --

REP. ZIOBRON: I -- I appreciate that. You know, I'm looking in front of me. I only see 23-10g. I don't have an h in front of me so I'm glad you -- you made that point and I'll be sure to -- to look for that. Thank you -- thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. GENTILE: Thank you.. Representative Bowles.

REP. BOWLES: Yes. Thank you, Madame Chair.

Perhaps it would be helpful if you could explain, because I've -- I've had the privilege of being somewhat exposed to some of the activities that you and Senator Maynard have been working on with the specific project down at the Lower Thames River.

Could you explain a little bit about some of the advisory work that has been provided pro bono, specifically by, for instance, Yale University, that that there has been some expertise brought into the process?

Again, as I understand it, on a pro bono basis? But I was very impressed with that. Could -- could you just describe that a little bit? Thank you.

REP. WRIGHT: Yes. Thank you, Representative. The Yale Urban Design Workshop was engaged as a -- a consultant by a historic house museum on the

Groton bank side of the Thames in the city of Groton to help develop a master plan or -- or a proposal for going forward to better coordinate these various non-contiguous, I guess you would say cultural and -- and historical, attractions.

And there were gradually expanded to -- and -- and built on the previous work in the 1990s, the Thames Maritime Heritage Park, which also developed a -- a very comprehensive and thorough implementation plan and master plan.

So the two efforts were kind of serendipitously dovetailed and came together and many of us in the area, Representative Moukawsher has been working on this as well, thinks that the time may be right to -- to move forward with this as way of -- to invigorate tourism and support historic preservation, promote local businesses, economic and community development. And -- but we do feel that a little more flexibility in -- in the process would be helpful.

REP. BOWLES: Thank you, Representative. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. GENTILE: Thank you. Representative Wright, thank you for your time.

REP. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. GENTILE: Since our first hour is up, we'll now alternate. Having said that, Karen Laski. Okay. No Karen? Then, we'll move on -- oh, I'm sorry. Karen will be followed by Representative Hampton.

KAREN LASKI: Hi, everyone.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**ENVIRONMENT
PART 3
1066 – 1779**

2014



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – March 7, 2014 ·
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Interim Commissioner Robert J. Klee
Presented By Deputy Commissioner Susan K. Whalen

Raised Senate Bill 314 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE HERITAGE PARK ADVISORY BOARDS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill 314 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE HERITAGE PARK ADVISORY BOARDS. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP supports the further development of the concept of a “heritage park” after discussions with legislators and community leaders in the New London and Groton area. A large group of stakeholders in the area has been working over the past months with each other, legislators, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Yale Urban Design Workshop to develop a framework for a community-based Thames River Maritime Heritage Park, incorporating a wide array of cultural and historic sites on both sides of the Thames River. Fort Trumbull State Park in New London, and Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park in Groton are important elements of the local fabric of tourism destinations, and we are anxious to play a role in the development of this project if it comes to fruition.

The language of the proposed bill revisits statutory language that was created many decades ago when a string of state owned and managed heritage parks across the state was envisioned. With the passage of time, enthusiasm and financial support for that direction has waned, and new models of local and regional cooperation are actively under exploration.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee and proponents of Raised Senate Bill 314 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE HERITAGE PARK ADVISORY BOARDS to discuss further and to advance our shared goal of a Thames River Maritime Heritage Park which includes participation by all the local, regional and state stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP’s Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov (or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov).

Did not speak

Testimony of Bruce Hyde of New London on Raised Bill 314 before the Environment Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of raised Bill 314. From 1990 to 2008 I was the Director of Development and Planning for the City of New London. During that time I, along with many others from the city of New London and the city and town of Groton and the then CT Department of Environmental Protection worked long hours to establish the Thames Estuary Maritime Heritage Park as set out in the legislation creating by PA 87-463. This effort was viewed as economic development project as well as the creation of a cultural attraction. While some progress was made, ultimately the Maritime Heritage Park exists in name only. The original concept was to link together existing historic sites, state parks, museums and other attractions with a maritime theme to create a visitor experience that was greater than the sum of its parts. In addition, a 10,000+ sq.ft. interactive visitor's center was envisioned to act as an anchor, getting people excited about traveling to the satellite sites to learn more. The possibility of establishing a water taxi or tour boat to ferry tourists and residents to two state parks (Ft. Griswold and Ft. Trumbull), three lighthouses (New London Ledge, New London Harbor and Avery Point) as well as the Coast Guard and Submarine Force Museums was also in the planning stage. Being a state park, the costs associated with construction and operation of the visitor's center would come from the CTDEEP budget. While some capital funding was made available, understandable concern over ongoing operational costs resulted in the center never being built. This combined with the somewhat cumbersome administrative structure and lack of any real marketing or promotional plan lead to a gradual decline in interest in the Maritime Heritage Park. Some outdoor elements, requiring no staff and little maintenance, were put into place but the true potential of the park to be a destination for tourists, a place of interest for local residents and a compliment to existing major tourist attractions in the region has yet to be realized.

The Maritime Heritage park concept is still sound and should be resurrected. The announcement of the Coast Guard Museum in New London has sparked a renewed interest in the Maritime Heritage Park and the story we can tell. And, what better way to promote the *Connecticut-Still Revolutionary* tourism campaign than by creating an attraction that boasts two of the most recognizable names from the Revolutionary War, Nathan Hale and Benedict Arnold, as part of its history. An unparalleled variety of ships, from submarines to America's tall ship The Eagle, ferries to research vessels, fishing boats to tugs can be seen from the banks of the Thames River. There are few other places in the world where one can see working waterfront with such an array of vessels.

So what is different now? Beside the Coast Guard Museum acting as an anchor, technological changes have allowed us to rethink how to deliver the message. Back in the early 1990s no one had heard of a smart phone or an app. By using new technology, there is an opportunity to expand the impact of the Coast Guard Museum. I believe that this bill will help to streamline the process and make the Thames Maritime Heritage Park a reality, promoting tourism and economic development in the region and the state as a whole.

While my comments have been focused on the Thames Maritime Heritage Park, the other Heritage Parks created under PA 87-463 in Willimantic, Waterbury, Norwalk, and other communities stand to benefit as well. I urge your support for this bill. Thank you.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**CHILDREN
PART 1
1 – 488**

**2014
INDEX**

**CONNECTICUT
VOICES
FOR CHILDREN**

Independent research and advocacy to improve the lives of Connecticut's children

**Testimony Supporting
S.B. 47: An Act Concerning Second Parent Adoption
Testimony of Grace Hart¹
To the Committee on Children
February 18th, 2014**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and Distinguished Members of the Children's Committee:

I am a member of the Legislative Advocacy Clinic of the Jerome Frank Legal Services Organization at Yale Law School. I am testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

Summary: CT Voices supports S.B. 47, which will provide legal certainty and continuity in family relationships for all co-parented children. The bill waives the home study requirement for second parent adoptions, or cases in which a person who shares parental responsibility with the parent of a child is seeking adoption. Current state law expedites the adoption process for step-parent adoptions only by waiving the home study requirement, which often takes considerable time. S.B. 47 would extend this exemption to second parent adoption recognizing that the need for home study is similarly low for co-parent adoptions. This change would not only remedy a policy inconsistency but also align state law with Connecticut's changing family demographics. CT Voices believes bypassing the lengthy home study process is crucial to more quickly move the children of co-parents to a position of legal certainty, particularly for the children of same-sex couples. This bill contains identical language to S.B. 314, which passed the Senate with an overwhelming majority during the last legislative session.

I. The Adoption Process Should be Streamlined for Second Parent Adoptions

Connecticut state law currently allows for second parent adoptions, meaning that a person who shares parental responsibility for a child may adopt or join in the adoption of the child. When the Probate Court receives an adoption petition, including one for a second parent adoption, the Court asks the Department of Children of Families (DCF) or a child placing agency to conduct a home study and compile a written report.² The home study as a whole is intended to assess the applicant's ability to provide an environment that will advance the physical, mental, emotional, educational and social development of the adoptive child. The investigation examines the physical condition of the home, the health of the applicant and other members of the household, and the character of the applicant and other members of the household.³ A final copy of the home study report is submitted to the Probate Court, which must provide a favorable recommendation to complete the adoption.

¹ Grace Hart is a student at Yale Law School. This testimony was prepared through the Yale Law School Legislative Advocacy Clinic under the supervision of J L Pottenger, Jr, Nathan Baker Clinical Professor of Law, Shelley Geballe, Distinguished Senior Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children and Clinical Visiting Lecturer at Yale Law School, and Kenneth Feder, Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children.

² State Agencies Regs § 17a-145-132

³ State Agencies Regs § 17a-145-132