

PURSUANT TO NOTICE, THE QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION was held at the Connecticut River Conservancy conference room at 15 Bank Row in Greenfield, MA on March 9, 2018.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

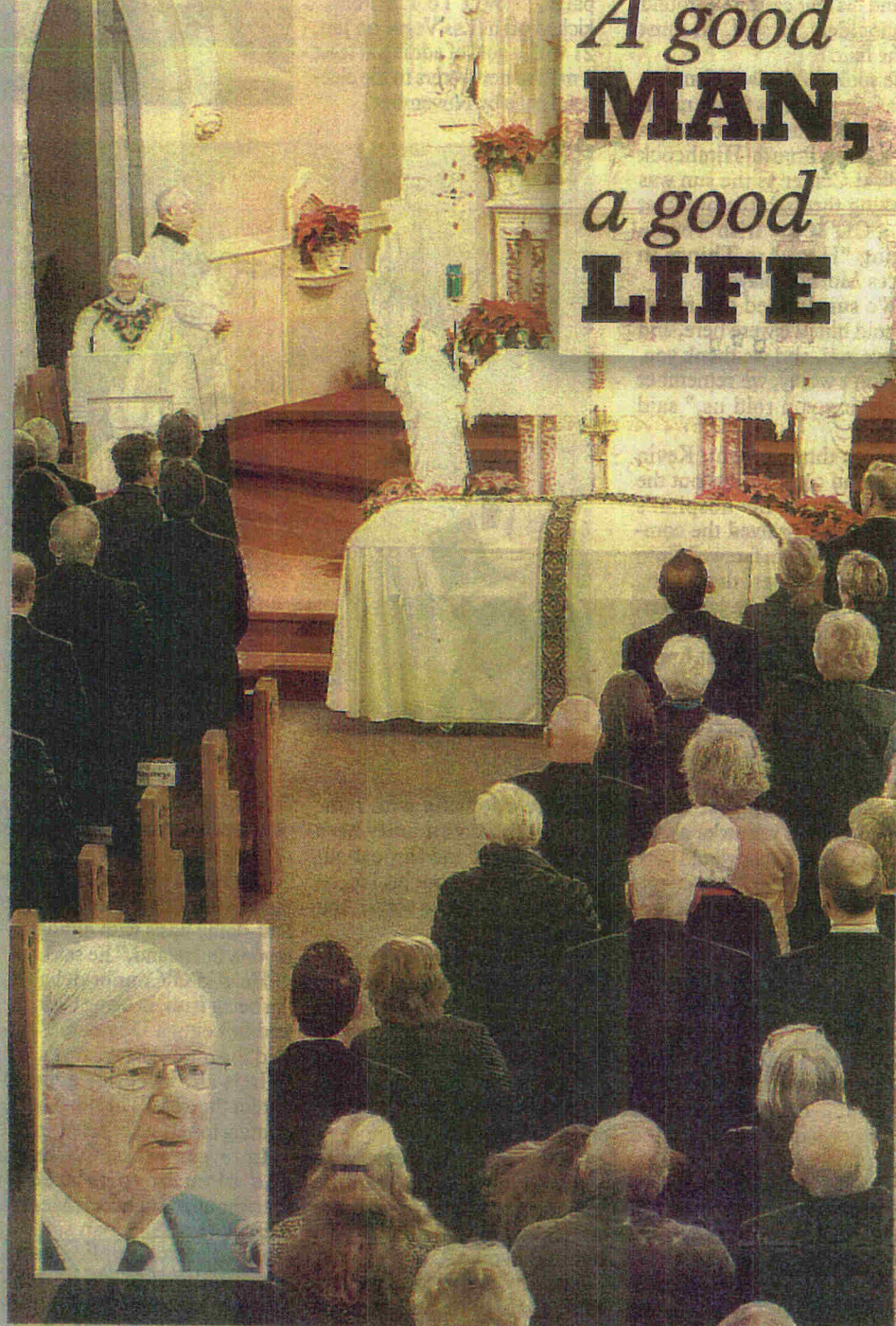
Connecticut	Commissioner Denise Ruzicka Commissioner Jason Bowsza (proxy) Commissioner Richard Sherman (via phone)
Massachusetts	Commissioner Mike Misslin (via phone) Commissioner Carl Gustafson (via phone)
New Hampshire	Commissioner Robert Kline (via phone) Commissioner Linda Tanner (via phone)
Vermont	Commissioner Evan Hammond (proxy) Commissioner Gary Moore (proxy)

Also attending:

Angela Chaffee – Administrator for the Commission.

1. Denise Ruzicka, Chair, called the meeting to order. Roll call of who is on conference line.
2. Public Comment – Denise mentioned the wonderful news article about Tim O’Connor, recently deceased Commissioner. Denise proposed making the article part of the official records and note his service to the Commission. Vote by acclamation approves.
3. Old Business
 - a. Commission reviewed December 1, 2017 meeting minutes. No vote to approve due to lack of quorum.
 - b. NH: Linda Tanner spoke with Governor’s assistant about vacancy. Looking for someone from the region who is interested. Linda will check on her reappointment. MA: No response from the letter to Governor urging prompt appointments. Not great deal of interest. Mike will suggest candidate from DCR. CT: All set. Denise Ruzicka is being reappointed. VT: no update.
 - c. All states have paid their annual administrative support payments. Linda reports that NH is not interested in increasing administrative support payments. Linda will follow up and suggests sending a letter to the state from the Commission.
 - d. We expect a response from the district engineer in Concord. Suggested to send polite letter requesting a response. Mike will touch base with Frank Fedele of USACOE. Angela & Denise will check to see if the original letter went to USACOE and if not, will send.
4. New Business
 - a. CRC invoice paid via standing motion.
 - b. Discussion of field trip/tour/lunch for June meeting. Suggestion to visit Townshend and Ball Mountain dams to see sedimentation issues, recent maintenance, and hydroelectric modifications. Mike will call USACOE to set up field trip.
 - c. Other New Business – none
5. Public Comment – none
6. Meeting adjourn.

A good
MAN,
a good
LIFE



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/THE COMMONS

It was standing room only for the Jan. 20 funeral of Timothy J. O'Connor Jr.

*With laughter and song, friends and family
bid farewell to former House Speaker,
Town Moderator Tim O'Connor*

By Randolph T. Holhut
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Tim O'Connor didn't want a lot of pomp and pageantry for his funeral, held on a warm and sunny Jan. 20 afternoon at St. Michael's Catholic Church on Walnut Street.

O'Connor, who died on

Jan. 16 at the age of 81 [See *Milestones*, C2], requested a service that was as modest as he was.

There was no procession bringing his casket down the center aisle of his home parish. He still got an honor guard, anyway, as much of the Windham County legal community lined the sidewalk outside the church before and after

the ceremony to pay tribute to a beloved colleague and mentor and to his 50-year career as an attorney in Brattleboro.

No dignitaries spoke at his funeral, yet four former Speakers of the Vermont House—Stephan Morse, Mike Obuchowski, Gaye Symington, and Shap Smith, plus the current speaker, Mitzi Johnson,

■ SEE O'CONNOR, A2

all came to honor the memory of O'Connor, the first Democrat to wield the gavel in Montpelier in more than a century.

The last two Democratic governors — Howard Dean and Peter Shumlin — were there, too, with Dean and former Attorney General Bill Sorrell sitting with the O'Connor family: his wife, Martha, and his children, Kate, Kevin, and Kerry. It was another sign of how much influence Tim O'Connor and his family had on the Democratic Party in his lifetime.

State and local officials past and present, civic leaders, and friends from all over Vermont and beyond filled the church to overflowing for a funeral Mass.

A good deal of laughter broke through the solemnity.

"My dad is loving this," said his daughter, Kate, as she and her siblings offered their memories of their father.

"When we were growing up," she said, "we had a sailboat he called the Red Baron, which meant a lot of time upside down in the water with my dad as the captain. He was a little high-tech challenged and never could understand that the World Wide Web meant he could check his email from anywhere. He always wanted the tallest Christmas tree in the forest, which usually meant the one he brought home was too big for the living room."

Speaking of Christmas, Kate talked about the many inflatable Christmas decorations in the yard of her father's Oak Street home — so numerous that "the

neighbors [would] have to wear sunglasses."

He was into composting and recycling "before it was fashionable," and Kate said her mother "loved to drive him crazy by intentionally putting recycling items into the trash." And Kate spoke of the sight of seeing his beloved cat, Valentino, "sit in the chair next to Dad and help coach" the basketball, baseball, and football games they watched on TV.

Kevin brought down the house with a simple gesture.

"People occasionally tell me, 'You remind me of your father,'" he said. As he untied his ponytail and his hair cascaded around his shoulders, he said, "It must be the hair."

He spoke of the last moments of his father's life, as family members were gathered around his bed at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center as the sun was breaking through the overcast and a CD of the Irish Tenors singing "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?" played.

"We surrounded our father and told him we were here, and we love you, and we thank you, and don't worry, we remember everything you told us," said Kevin.

But, at that moment, Kevin said a loud complaint about the scratchiness of the hospital's facial tissue dissolved the composed and solemn farewell "into child-like laughter, then tears, then more childlike laughter, then more tears."

"It was only later that I realized that, thanks to that box of Kleenex, my father's last sights and sounds in this world were of three kids acting like three kids," he said.

Kerry, the youngest child, echoed Kate's remarks about how much her father would have loved this service. "It is everything that is important to him — his family, his friends, his faith — and it is a captive audience. And it is followed by another one of his favorites — a reception at the Elks' Club."

The Rev. William Sheehan, former pastor of St. Michael's and a long-time friend of the O'Connor family, delivered the eulogy.

"People spoke so eloquently about his compassion, his kindness, his capacity to listen, his desire to build consensus and bring people together to respectful dialogue," said Sheehan. "In

Tim's relationship with family, with the community here in Brattleboro, and throughout the state, throughout his life, he lived with a desire to serve. And serve he did."

Sheehan spoke of some principles to live by that he once received from one of his mentors — to never judge the motivation of another person, to always choose the path of forgiveness, and to always choose to love others just as they are.

"In my own experience with Tim over many, many years, he embodied and lived up to those principles," Sheehan said. "He was a good man."

The O'Connor family made many visits to Ireland over the

years, and Sheehan spoke of the time when he joined them on one of those trips.

"It did not take me long to become aware that Tim was on a first-name basis with almost everyone in Ireland," he said.

He said O'Connor delighted "in being Irish, in being Catholic, and in being a Democrat," but said that after last August's visit to Ireland, "it became quite apparent that Tim's health was beginning to seriously deteriorate."

In recent weeks, O'Connor had been hospitalized at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and Sheehan said the medical team "implied that if Tim were going to live, he would have to have a breathing tube and a food tube."

"In the midst of this conversation, Tim said to Martha and

Kevin and Kerry and Kate, 'I've lived 81 years, and I've lived a good life, and I am very, very grateful.'

"It was in this frame of mind and heart that on last Tuesday, Tim took his last breath."

The Mass ended, at Tim's request, with a chorus of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," sung by everyone in the church. It was followed by a long and loving ovation.

Only after everyone departed the church and started the short walk up the hill to the Elks' Club for the post-funeral reception, did Tim's casket leave St. Michael's — as quietly and unobtrusively as it entered.

Laughter, song, stories, and not much of a fuss about him.

It was definitely the exit he wanted.