

# WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

Charlestown Exeter Hopkinton Narragansett New Shoreham North Kingstown Richmond South Kingstown Westerly

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## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 2004

### ATTENDANCE:

#### WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council  
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council  
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council  
Michael Cerullo, Exeter Town Council  
John Hickey, Narragansett Town Council  
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council  
Michael Rauh, Facilitator  
Devon Preston, Executive Director  
Alexandra Adams, Program Associate

#### Advisory Members and Public

Sheila Brush, Grow Smart Rhode Island  
Tom Brillat, Wash Cty Adult Learning Ctr.

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, January 15, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

#### Approval of Minutes

John Hickey made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. Mike Cerullo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### Staff Report

Henry Oppenheimer updated the board on the Affordable Housing Initiative. He relayed that all participating towns should have received their drafts of the local housing plans by now. The Steering Committee will meet again on January 6<sup>th</sup> and the final draft of the regional plan will be reviewed. The local task force meetings and public meetings are being scheduled as well. Henry Oppenheimer also reminded the board that the WCRPC legislative breakfast was scheduled for February 27<sup>th</sup> and agenda items needed to be set.

#### Briefing from Grow Smart Rhode Island, with Q&A period

Sheila Brush addressed the board regarding Grow Smart's position on the affordable housing issue. She relayed to the group that Grow Smart's official statement would be added to its website in the next several days. As an organization, Grow Smart has supported provisions for a wide range of housing

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choices that meet all price needs. The group also believes that all municipalities should share the burden of affordable housing, however that mandate requires technical assistance from the state. However Grow Smart does think that the Low-moderate Income Housing Act should be revised. She added that the low density zoning in South County was intended for environmental reasons, but an unintentional outcome is the increase in cost of homes and lots. One problem with the act is that for the first ten years it depended entirely on nonprofit developers to produce the affordable housing and they did not have the capacity. In addition, it limited subsidy options. However, it does have some strengths including allowing local planning and decision-making. In addition, there are now 19 towns that are addressing affordable housing.

There was a question and answer period in which topics were addressed including whether or not the 10% goal was appropriate and how to ensure long-term affordability. Sheila Brush told the group that Grow Smart supported a moratorium on for-profit developers' plans that are not 100% affordable, but the moratorium should have a time limit. The group then discussed the problems associated with the current law and the inappropriate development that is occurring all over the state because of it. Kate Waterman made a motion to send a letter outlining the WCRPC position on the issue, including the organization's support of a moratorium. Mike Cerullo seconded the motion. When the motion was opened for discussion, Michael Rauh suggested that the letter should specifically call for a 12-month moratorium on projects submitted by for-profit developers, retroactive to the passage of the amendment. The motion passed and it was agreed that the WCRPC staff would send the letter to all legislators and The League of Cities and Towns.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

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Michael Cerullo  
Board Secretary

February 19, 2004