

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 2004

ATTENDANCE:

WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
Dale Grogan, North Kingstown Town Council
Martha Ball, New Shoreham Town Council
E. Robert Corrigan, Hopkinton Town Council
Michael Cerullo, Exeter Town Council
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Devon Preston, Executive Director
Alexandra Adams, Program Associate

Advisory Members and Public

Jason Pezzullo, Hopkinton Planner
Lori Urso, Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Assoc.
Sandra Whitehouse, House Policy Office
Chip Young, Coastal Resources Center
Connie McGreavy, Water Resources Board
Juan Mariscal, Water Resources Board

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, February 19, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

Approval of Minutes

Kate Waterman made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. There was no discussion and the motion was unanimously approved.

Staff Report

The Executive Director reported to the board that the WCRPC had received inquiries from legislators regarding the value of the upcoming legislative breakfast. For reporting purposes, a card will be printed that will list the \$11 value of the breakfast for anyone who needs that information. The Executive Director then updated the board on the Commuter Rail Extension/TOD project. The staff is currently refining the document to ensure that it meets the needs of the WCRPC and will update the board as soon as it is ready for dissemination.

Update on Affordable Housing Initiative

Henry Oppenheimer reported to the board that BC Stewart & Associates delivered the final draft of the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy on February 9th. In addition he reported that all final drafts of town plans had been sent to Narragansett, Richmond, East Greenwich, West Greenwich, North

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Kingstown and Charlestown. Westerly's plan was just completed and Exeter would be receiving its plan on February 25th. Henry Oppenheimer also updated the board about the most recent meeting of the State's Affordable Housing Task Force. The Task Force discussed the issue of zoning boards being given excessive power, in addition to the issue of cities with large numbers of rental units opting out of some of the mandated percentage of affordable housing.

Mike Cerullo drafted a one page disclaimer regarding the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy which he requested that the board consider. The Executive Director reminded the board that while the WCRPC commissioned this report, it does not mean that the board endorses it wholly, or that any town must adopt it wholly. The intent of the report was to inform the board and region of the problems relating to affordable housing in Washington County and Rhode Island.

Issues for Legislative Breakfast

The Board discussed the issues that should be prioritized for the upcoming Legislative Breakfast on February 27th. The board decided that the following issues should be highlighted:

- 1) Change way base number used to define total housing in a community is counted: use number of households versus number of units.
- 2) Broaden types of housing/ housing subsidies that count towards a municipality's 10% requirement to include "developer subsidies" or property tax relief, apartments and Section 8 vouchers.
- 3) Reapportion affordable housing resources/ funding to equally benefit urban, suburban and rural communities
- 4) Encourage development of a regional housing entity.
- 5) Raise and/or reassign real estate conveyance tax to fund housing trust or entity

The board also discussed the possibility of inviting Richard Godfrey to speak at the March 10th Congress of Councils. The board discussed it and decided that it may confuse the audience regarding the role of Rhode Island Housing in the WCRPC initiative and decided against it.

RI Water Allocation Program Presentation

Connie McGreavy, Programming Services Officer of the Water Resources Board and Chip Young, member of the Water Allocation Program's Education and Public Relations Committee, and Communications Liaison with the URI Coastal Resources Center, discussed the issues of water quality, sustainability and availability in Rhode Island. The discussion included the issues of local, regional and statewide water policy in addition to the upcoming challenges facing the State.

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Michael Cerullo
Board Secretary

March 18, 2004