

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES April 19, 2006

Attendance:

WCRPC Board Members and Staff

Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
Beverly Kenney, Hopkinton Town Council
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
Robert Ellis Smith, New Shoreham Town Council
Larry Aker, Exeter Town Council
Sue Barker, WCRPC Executive Director

Advisory Members and Public

Geoff Marchant, Director, Community Development Consortium
Donna Walsh, Charlestown Town Council
Linsey J. Cameron, Principal Planner, North Kingstown

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) held on Wednesday, April 19, 2006 at The Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown was called to order by President Chris Duhamel at 8:40 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

B Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 15 2006 meeting. J O'Neill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Director's Report, April 2006

The WCRPC received a grant from the RI State Planning Program for \$113, 650 to study transportation and land use solutions on the Route 1 Corridor between North Kingstown and Westerly. The study will look at land use, inter-modal transportation, safety, growth centers, affordable housing transportation needs, and signage along the corridor. The Washington County Transportation Resources committee will meet today after this board meeting. Interested committee members will be invited to join an advisory committee for the Route 1 corridor study. Others who have agreed to be on the advisory committee are the SK Land Trust, Grow Smart, RIPTA, RISPP, Amtrak, and town planners from North Kingstown, Narragansett, South Kingstown, Charlestown, and Westerly. WCRPC board members are invited to join the advisory committee.

The letter of intent for funding in 2007 to the Rhode Island Foundation is due on May 1. The WCRPC project manager is Devon Preston. M Rauh and S Barker met with her to discuss our action plan for 2007. The top three items identified as priorities in the meeting are: (1.) A Study of the Route 1 corridor, (2.) Regional Economic Development, and (3.) Public School Funding.

D Preston and S Barker discussed a mini grant proposal to the Rhode Island Foundation (RIF) to support development of a strategic plan to guide our fundraising efforts. She feels that it is advisable in light of the potential for decreasing grants from the RIF and suggested that we ask for \$3000 and match it with \$2000 of our own funds. The proposal will be submitted this month for consideration in April. If funds are granted, we will begin work on a strategic plan immediately.

The final presentation of the URI landscape design students' Route 1 corridor study will be held on Friday, May 5 from 2 to 5 PM in Rodman Hall. The students did an excellent job on this study. Board members are encouraged to attend.

Anna Prager, Chair of the Washington County Community Development Corporation (WCCDC), and S Barker are working together to design a workshop to encourage cooperative community participation in the affordable housing planning process entitled "*Growing Together, Consensus Building, Smart Growth and Community Change*". The workshop will be held on April 20 at 4:30 p.m. The workshop is supported by a \$1000 grant from the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine. The intent is to launch the WCCDC in a positive manner by encouraging the various community leaders involved in affordable housing to work together.

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Gerhard Leib assumed the position of Executive Director of the WCCDC on April 3. His office is located at 313 Main Street, Wakefield. The telephone number is 788-0090

C Duhamel, M Rauh, H Oppenheimer, and S Barker will attend the April 24 meeting of the South County Legislative Caucus, that was postponed last month, to present the work of the WCRPC.

The March 21 monthly planners meeting included a presentation by Rupert Friday, Director of the RI Land Trusts Council and Brenda Clement, Director of the RI Housing Network to clarify the different roles and mutual interests of Land Conservation Trusts and Affordable Housing Land Trusts. Geoff Marchant gave an update on the TAG zoning ordinance project. Workshops to clarify the TAG funding grants will be held April 26 in Richmond and May 2 in West Greenwich, all at 7:00 p.m. in town halls.

Presentation of Public School Funding at Congress of Councils:

C Duhamel introduced the purpose of the Congress of Councils this year as a discussion to bring alternative proposals to deal with public school funding issues to Washington County decision-makers. H. Oppenheimer added that the impetus for including this agenda item was the tri-town meeting held recently at which RI Senator Kevin Breene alerted the three towns of Hopkinton, Charlestown, and Richmond to the fact that Washington County received less state support in this year's budget than any other area in RI.

It was suggested that the WCRPC hold the 4th Annual Congress of Councils early in the summer and invite the Governor to attend as the keynote speaker. Public school superintendents and chairs of public school committees from all rural towns in RI should be invited to attend. The intention will be to create a coalition of rural towns to represent the needs of those communities to the legislature. A tentative date of May 31 was set for the event. Suggested speakers: Governor Carcieri, Gary Sasse, Valerie Forti, and Senator Kevin Breene.

New Business

Geoffrey Marchant reminded the board of the Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) workshops to be held in Richmond and West Greenwich. The workshops will prepare town officials with the necessary information to most effectively work with the TAG and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded consultant.

Guest Presentation

Cynthia Giles, Executive Director of the Conservation Law Foundation, led a discussion of the work of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) now under scrutiny by several watch dog organizations. It requires dedicated citizen involvement to ensure that the agency adheres to the laws and regulations in place to guide their actions. The CRMC board appears to be comprised of developers and/or their lawyers.

C Giles suggested that the structure of the CRMC is not sustainable as it exists today and needs to be changed. A state agency, such as the RI Department of Environmental Management, might include a Coastal Management Division with a professional staff to eliminate the influence of personal interests in decision making. The North Carolina system is very good and should be reviewed to serve as a possible model for change. The legislature is concerned about the decisions of the CRMC and wants to know of their activities. Legislators want to learn about the issues we wish to have addressed.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by L Aker, seconded by B Kenney, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Katharine H. Waterman, April 19, 2006
Board Secretary