

# 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

May 2003

### ATTENDANCE:

#### WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Dale Grogan, North Kingstown Town Council  
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council  
Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council  
Michael Cerullo, Exeter Town Council  
John Hickey, Narragansett Town Council  
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council  
Devon Preston, Executive Director  
Michael Rauh, Facilitator

#### Advisory Members and Public

Meg Kerr, URI CRC/ RI Sea Grant  
Jason King, Hopkinton Planning Intern  
Jason Pezzullo, Hopkinton Planner  
Alex Adams, Brown University  
Geoff Marchant, Comm Dev Consortium  
James Campbell, USGS  
Peter Weiskel, USGS  
Jeff Nield, RI DEM  
Rob Adler, US EPA, Rhode Island  
Jean Barry, WARM Shelter

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, May 22, 2003 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

#### Approval of Minutes

Prior to the vote to approve the April meeting minutes, Alexandra Adams, newly hired Program Associate for the WCRPC, was introduced and her official start date of June 9 was announced. Dale Grogan (North Kingstown) made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. John Hickey (Narragansett) seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

#### Committee Reports

Mike Cerullo (Exeter) reported on the first meeting of the WCRPC Housing Committee on May 20, and suggested that a formal vote be taken authorizing WCRPC staff and board members on the Housing Committee to negotiate and testify on behalf of the WCRPC around legislative issues.

Chris Duhamel (Westerly) reported on the Water Committee's latest meeting, and provided a summary of the priorities identified by that committee (attached).

#### Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reported on the month's activities, and described an opportunity to receive a grant of \$30,000 from Statewide Planning to work on a study of possible impacts resulting from the

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proposed extension of commuter rail to Wickford Junction. The grant would require a 20% match. While no formal vote was made, the board agreed that this was a project worth participating in. Also, Travel Corridor planning studies being undertaken by RIDOT, RIPTA and Statewide Planning were described, and an initial public meeting for the South County Corridor on June 4 was announced. A chapter relating to housing and homelessness, from a recently released report on children in Washington County produced by the Washington County Risk Response Team, was distributed.

## USGS Presentation on Proposed Groundwater Research Project

Peter Weiskel with Jim Campbell, both of US Geological Survey, described a proposed project to model groundwater flow into the Salt Ponds, which is similar to a recently completed groundwater modeling project on Cape Cod. Staff from both RI Department of Environmental Management and US Environmental Protection Agency had been invited to attend the presentation by the WCRPC Water Committee, in order to provide their comments and perspectives on this project. There was a question as to the value of such research to local municipalities, in terms of actually guiding and informing management, and a question as to where the required \$200-300k in additional funding still needed would come from. USGS staff stressed that they were primarily making the presentation for informational purposes.

## (Vote)

There was a temporary informal break in the meeting while the last guests arrived, and during this time, Mike Cerullo (Exeter) made a formal motion requesting that WCRPC staff and board members on the Housing Committee be authorized to negotiate and testify on behalf of the WCRPC around the current legislative issues relating to private developers and The Low and Moderate Income Housing Act. James O'Neill (South Kingstown) seconded the motion, and it was approved.

## Governor's Office of Municipal Affairs

Deborah Smith, Director of the Governor's Office of Municipal Affairs, and Sandra Winslow, also with the Governor's Municipal Affairs Office led a discussion about the purpose and goals of their newly created office, and asked for questions or suggestions from the board. They expressed great support of the regional coordination occurring in Washington County through the WCRPC, and suggested that it, and the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, should be used as models elsewhere in the state. D. Smith fielded questions and comments from the WCRPC board relating to the creation of a Governor's "Blue Ribbon Commission" to further examine the affordable housing issue, lack of increase in state aid to education, property tax burden, the Governor's position on the current affordable housing issues, and the recent cut in the percentage (to zero) of beach parking fees that previously went to coastal communities to help them offset costs of heavy tourist traffic during the summer.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

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Michael Cerullo  
Board Secretary

April 17, 2003

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## Regional Affordable Housing Initiative in Washington County

Based on March 20, 2003 WCRPC Board meeting  
With Brenda Clement, RI Housing Network  
and Claudia Staniszewski, LISC

### Suggestions/ Issues for WCRPC to work on in regional initiative

These first four points were recommendations from B. Clement, RI Housing

- ✍ Maintain and preserve what Washington County already has (20-25 developments)
- ✍ Develop and preserve mobile/manufactured home parks
- ✍ Create mixed-use developments  
Use space well, with appropriate density and re-use of existing buildings
- ✍ Explore inclusory zoning and reasonable restrictions  
Density bonuses for 20% affordable housing, for ex.

Also:

- ✍ Strengthen Community Development Corporation (CDC) network in Wash County  
(There is presently only one CDC at work in Washington County, the Community Housing Corporation; there are 22 total CDCs in Rhode Island.)
- ✍ Look at Church Community Housing on Aquidneck Island, recent South Kingstown housing initiative, and upcoming Coventry housing initiative as possible models
- ✍ *Statewide partnership strategy:* Legislative strategy to get rid of loopholes for developers
- ✍ *Statewide partnership strategy:* Work on SHAB bill/ process
- ✍ *Statewide partnership strategy:* Address problems with definition of affordable housing: if it's not subsidized, it doesn't count as "affordable" (ex: manufactured home parks do not count towards a town's 10% affordable housing quota)