

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 2003

ATTENDANCE:

WCRPC Representatives and Staff

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

Advisory Members and Public

Michael Rauh, The Washington Trust Company
Marilyn Cohen, North Kingstown Planner

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, August 21, 2003 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

Approval of Minutes

John Hickey made a motion to approve the July meeting minutes. Jim O'Neill seconded the motion, and it was approved, with Chris Duhamel abstaining from the vote.

Committee Reports

Michael Cerullo reported on behalf of the WCRPC housing committee, whose most recent meeting was held on June 12th. The committee had not met since the last meeting and would not meet again until the steering committee had completed its work on the Affordable Housing Project. The next meeting is scheduled for October 1st.

Marilyn Cohen reported on behalf of Dale Grogan for the WCRPC transportation committee. Alex Adams contributed to the update regarding the Commuter Rail Extension Study in North Kingstown. Alex Adams reported that the WCRPC, Statewide Planning and North Kingstown representatives had met to discuss the study, which would look into the impacts of commuter rail extension into North Kingstown with and without the creation of a transit-oriented development. North Kingstown was in the process of arranging to become the fiscal agent for the project, to receive a grant from Statewide Planning, which would then be used to hire a consultant to complete the study outlined in a draft scope of work.

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Chris Duhamel reported that the water committee had not met and there had been no subcommittee activity. The Program Associate reported that she had attended the Water Use Stakeholders Group meeting for the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed and that there would be opportunities in the future for the water committee to become involved.

Staff Report

The Program Associate reported that the grant application for the WCRPC operating budget was submitted by the deadline to the Rhode Island Foundation. Also, the WCRPC website was still being edited, and the “recent accomplishments” section would be submitted to JF Media shortly. The Program Associate also reported on the Water Use Stakeholders Group meeting for the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed. She reported that USGS reviewed all of the data on water use in the area (including agricultural, residential, industrial etc) and that a complete water budget for the Wood-Pawcatuck was created. The study will be published in October and the board would receive a copy when it was finished. The Program Associate also reported on the RIDE/Quonset Corridor meeting which covered the issue of transportation along the I-95 corridor and also set out its vision for that corridor in addition to others in Rhode Island. This meeting was the last of the corridor planning meetings, and when the final report is finished, the board will receive a copy.

Update on Affordable Housing Project progress

Henry Oppenheimer reported on the progress of the Affordable Housing Project. It was reported the WCRPC received seven proposals from consultants in New England. A rating sheet was being created that would allow the Steering Committee to rank the proposals and narrow the list to three consultants that would then be interviewed. The interviews were set for the Thursday following Labor Day. It was also reported that the TAG application was submitted to Rhode Island Housing Mortgage and Finance Corporation and the WCRPC was awaiting a response. In addition, all town resolutions that had been received were delivered to RIHMFC along with the WCRPC resolution.

The Affordable Housing Steering Committee was then discussed, and whether or not it was appropriate to add the Hopkinton town planner to the committee. Chris Duhamel nominated Jason Pezzullo to become an active member of the Steering Committee. Michael Cerullo moved that he be included on the Steering Committee and Jim O’Neill seconded the motion. The motion passed with all voting in favor except Henry Oppenheimer who opposed the motion.

The issue of East Greenwich being added to the list of participating municipalities in the Affordable Housing Project was then discussed. Henry Oppenheimer reported that he received a letter from the town requesting to be permitted to participate in the project. The board discussed the issue and then John Hickey moved to include East Greenwich with the note that the town would be expected to contribute the same staff time as the other participating towns. Jim O’Neill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. It was noted that East Greenwich would be expected to send a town council resolution to RIHMFC as well.

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The board then discussed the consultants that had submitted proposals for the project. Some observations regarding the consultants were made, and it was decided that board members with experience regarding any of the consultants would send comments to the Program Associate who would share those with the Steering Committee.

Update on Commuter Rail Extension study (Transit Oriented Development Planning Framework Project)

The Program Associate and Marilyn Cohen elaborated on the update of the Commuter Rail Extension study. The issue was scheduled for the September 8th North Kingstown Town Council meeting so that an agreement between Statewide Planning and the town could be reached. Michael Rauh asked the board about their feelings regarding the commuter rail extension and received varying responses.

Discussion of strategic issues for September 2003-2004

Henry Oppenheimer asked the board to list some of the most important strategic issues which would be planned for the 2003-2004 year. The following list and comments were generated from the discussion:

- 1) Affordable Housing
- 2) Water: the limiting of groundwater withdrawals due to inter-basin transfers in addition to limiting new wells will impact most of Washington county
- 3) A WCRPC Legislative Component: the WCRPC must be prepared to become a voice in the State to affect legislative change
- 4) Greenspace: The Greenspace Project should be utilized to make its findings worthwhile
- 5) Regional Tax Sharing/Economics: The WCRPC must move forward with economic strategies that work towards a regional vision

Other business

Tom Brillat then spoke about the need for more attention to adult education in Washington County. The board was given information regarding the key issues affecting adult education in Washington County and will hear an updated from Tom Brillat at a later date.

Jim O'Neill made a motion to adjourn and Mike Cerullo seconded the motion. It was approved and the meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Michael Cerullo
Board Secretary

September 19, 2003