

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES November, 2005

Attendance:

WCRPC Board Members and Staff

Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
Anthony Miccolis, North Kingstown Council
Robert Ellis Smith, New Shoreham Town Council
Beverly Kenney, Hopkinton Town Council
George Tracy, Narragansett Town Council
Sue Barker, WCRPC Executive Director

Advisory Members and Public

Scott A. Gibbs, President, The Economic Development
Foundation of Rhode Island
Cathy Collette, Charlestown Affordable Housing
Commission
Bob Sherman, Block Island alternate
Robert Rohm, Chair, Charlestown Planning
Commission

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) held on Wednesday, November 16, 2005, at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown was called to order by President Chris Duhamel at 8:40 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

K Waterman made a motion to approve the minutes of the October meeting. B Kenney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

The Washington County Community Development Corporation committees developed a job description for an executive director, invited a new candidate to join the board, and met with the planners to discuss the towns' concerns. Members of the WCCDC housing committee met with Brenda Clement of the RI Housing Network to discuss funding.

Donald Sullivan is working with the executive director to prepare WCRPC tax returns.

Representatives of interested groups met after the October board meeting to discuss transportation connections in Washington County. The group agreed to meet twice each year to carry on a dialogue to work toward improved public transportation in the region.

D Preston has returned to the WCRPC on a part time basis to work as a grant writer. Work on grant writing has begun.

M Rauh and S Barker met with Richmond town officials this month completing presentation and discussion of the work of the WCRPC.

Work has resumed on the Route One project with Will Green URI professor of Landscaping Design. The plan is to hold a full semester studio for his graduate students.

Patrick Durney will hold a teleconference with Professor Robert Comerford and S Barker today to talk about progress on the public school funding study.

Old Business

The board reviewed the Washington County Regional Priorities for Study determined at the October Board Meeting. K Waterman suggested that the following item, discussed at the October meeting, be added: "The impact of Trust Status on regional planning". The list will be modified to include this priority item.

The financial report was tabled until a future board meeting.

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Town Updates

Narragansett:

The Narragansett Affordable Housing Plan was approved by the state. G Tracy submitted four issues with a request for those with answers to send any available information to the town planner at the following email address:

mdeluca@muni.ri.net:

1. Have any other WC Towns researched specific language on “inclusionary zoning” for new subdivisions and land developments?
2. Are there any WC Towns considering the possibility of “un-merging” substandard lots of record for affordable housing?
3. If so, has there been any research done on the legal mechanism to implement this?
4. Are any other WC towns considering provision of tax incentives for multi-family rental housing?

Block Island:

Block Island is considering hiring a town planner.

A referendum to reaffirm a two-year-old tax on monthly rentals was approved last Tuesday by a vote of the citizens. The 1.5% tax on seasonal rentals of less than 6 months raises about \$100,000 per year and will be used for affordable housing.

Charlestown:

Charlestown recognizes the importance of the school funding study and wishes to include the views of additional town officials in the study.

North Kingstown:

The Town Council approved the Lyme disease resolution similar to that of South Kingstown. The council has installed a cap on the budget for fiscal year 2007.

Westerly:

Mark Brodeur from the RI Division of tourism will be invited to visit the Westerly Town Council to discuss how Westerly can increase tourism.

Guest Presentation: Scott A. Gibbs, President of The Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island, introduced his organization that specializes in real estate based economic development projects as a potential resource for the region. He noted that several towns in RI have downgraded their economic development offices or eliminated them completely. He encourages towns to work together to encourage economic development projects.

The organization conducted an economic development plan for Northern Rhode Island, “The Second Revolution”, that included an inventory of land available for industrial development in the region. The organization seeks to expand the inventory to include the entire state list available land and make it available to everyone.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by A Miccolis, seconded by R E Smith, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.

Katharine H. Waterman
Board Secretary

November 16, 2005