

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES July 20, 2005

ATTENDANCE:

WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council
Anthony Miccolis, North Kingstown Town Council
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
James O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
George Tracy, Narragansett Town Council
Larry Aker, Exeter Town Council
Sue Barker, Executive Director

Advisory Members and Public

Geoff Marchant, East Greenwich
Community Development Consortium
Michael Rauh, Washington Trust
Company, WCRPC Facilitator
Joanne Riccitelli, South Kingstown Land
Trust

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) held on July 20, 2005, at the University of Rhode Island Faculty Club was called to order by Vice President Henry Oppenheimer at 8:36 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The June minutes were revised to read: Joseph S. Larisa, Jr., Charlestown's Assistant Solicitor for Indian Affairs, the guest speaker for June, discussed issues of Native American Tribal sovereignty, pending litigation relative to federal trust status, and questions of jurisdiction on Settlement Lands. He also discussed the potential impact of federal trust status recently granted to the Narragansett Indian Tribe on land use planning and ramifications for all of Washington County. K Waterman made a motion to approve the May minutes as revised. L Aker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

S Barker reported on the progress of the Washington County Community Development Corporation (WCCDC) start-up. Draft bylaws are being developed. Letters were mailed to individuals in the community with an invitation to submit an application for consideration for membership on the initial board of directors. The deadline for applications is July 22. The Incorporators will review the completed applications and submit a proposed initial WCCDC board of directors to the WCRPC board for approval.

Professor William Green, URI Associate Professor of Community Planning & Landscape Architecture agreed to work with the WCRPC on the Route One Corridor Preservation Project. He will develop a class project to identify and recommend those parcels most important to preserve as open space. Professor Green and S Barker will work over the summer to develop a class project for the 2005-06 fall semester with the possibility of a spring program to follow. Joanne Riccitelli has agreed to assist with the project. Blanche Higgins will continue as an advisor to the project.

Vote on documents to be included in 501-c-3 application for federal tax-exempt status:

The board reviewed a Sample Conflict of Interest Policy and IRS required wording for Article Fourth of Articles of Incorporation. A Miccolis made a motion to accept the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Amendment to the WCRPC Charter as presented. The motion was seconded by L Aker and passed unanimously.

Town Updates:

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A Miccolis reported on a meeting held with members of the Southern Rhode Island Collaborative Education and Training Center (SORICO) learn about the organization. They plan to submit a funding proposal to the Rhode Island Foundation to study possible cost saving initiatives in South County school systems. SORICO requested the support of the WCRPC. The WCRPC board discussed SORICO's request for support. The Board determined that the cost and scope of the study were of concern and that the WCPRC will withhold support until those issues are clarified and the proposal is beneficial to the WCPRC municipalities.

A general discussion of town issues followed. Increased cooperation between Washington County Town Councils and school committees to determine what is the best for the schools in their communities is a goal to be pursued. If the state aid to education formula is revised, Washington County may receive less state aid. We will have research on the issue completed to present at a breakfast for RI legislators to be held in the fall.

Guest Speaker:

Jim Lucht, Director of Information and Technology for The Providence Plan demonstrated The Rhode Island Statewide GIS Internet Map Server, funded by the Rhode Island EDC Community Economic Development Program. This online mapping application will be kept on the Providence Plan server and be available to all towns in the state. The intended use is to support economic development and general planning for site suitability analysis, including the constraints and resources relevant to individual parcels.

The EDC plans to expand the program to include all cooperating towns in the state. The concerns are ease of access, data accuracy, and property owners' rights to privacy. Towns will be asked to submit accurate parcel data and keep it up to date. The data will be updated quarterly or annually by the Providence Plan with towns' cooperation. As the mapping interface does not require specific and expensive software or hardware, it might serve as an impetus for municipalities to develop parcel data. Users only need high-speed web access and a browser such as Internet Explorer to use the program successfully.

It was suggested that a joint GIS system could be employed by towns with very little expense beyond the initial cost of developing accurate parcel data. There is also the potential to install additional overlays and programs under contract with the Providence Plan. One person can be employed by cooperating towns to keep the data updated on a quarterly basis. It was proposed that the tax assessor's office is the best source to enter data into the central system.

The cost estimate to develop suitably accurate parcel data is roughly \$3 to \$6 per parcel. The program can be maintained for all Washington County towns for approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. The number of towns involved will determine the cost to make it self sustaining. It was suggested that the state should support it.

A motion to adjourn was made by L Aker and seconded by K Waterman at 10:20 a.m. The motion was passed unanimously. **WCRPC Board members were reminded that there would be no meeting in August.**

Katharine H. Waterman
Board Secretary

July 20, 2005