

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

January 18, 2007

Attendance:

WCRPC Board Members and Staff
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Company
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
Beverly Kenney, Hopkinton Town Council
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
Anthony Miccolis, North Kingstown Town Council
Chris Wilkens, Narragansett Town Council
Calvin Ellis, Exeter Town Council
Ray Torrey, New Shoreham Second Warden
Sue Barker, WCRPC Executive Director

Advisory Members and Public

Michael Rauh, The Washington Trust
Chip Young, University of Rhode Island Coastal
Institute Communications Liaison

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC), held on January 18, 2007, at The Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown was called to order by President C Duhamel at 8:40 a.m. C Duhamel welcomed new members to the Board of Directors.

Approval of Minutes

B Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes of the December, 2006 meeting. K Waterman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Route 1 Corridor study: The consultants have collected maps and materials needed from the towns. The consultants will consolidate the files and maps to begin creating the recommendations we wish to make. The second quarterly report is due at the end of this month.

The second URI study of the Route 1 Corridor was presented at a public workshop on December 18. The students in Will Green's landscape design studio studied the section of Route 1 between the intersection with Route 4 and the intersection with Route 102. They did an excellent job.

Requests for funding to all towns have been completed. In addition to letters to Town Councils, requests were sent to the town financial officers in Westerly, Exeter, Narragansett, New Shoreham, and North Kingstown. The WCRPC received a grant for \$30,000 from the Rhode Island Foundation to support organizational capacity building, \$500 from AAA and \$250 from the Sherburne Foundation for operational support. Staff is working with Senator Reed's office to apply for funding from the federal government. The WCRPC request for funds from the state has been submitted through Representative Carter's office.

The *Washington County Regional Planning Council Legislators Breakfast* will be held on Friday, January 26 beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the URI University Club. A second event, *Community Planning in Washington County Towns: What Council Members Need to Know*, co-sponsored with Grow Smart RI, will be held on Wednesday evening, January 31, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the same location. All board members were reminded to encourage their fellow Town Council members to attend both meetings.

The next Town Planners Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, January 23, at 8:30 a.m. at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center. The agenda will include a discussion of sustainable development and the progress of individual towns toward completion of the recommendations of the 2004 Sustainable Development Study. Architect Troy West will present his vision for Dale Carlia Corner in Wakefield.

The WCRPC will continue to work to develop police reserves training. Plans are underway to meet with Anthony Silva, Director of the RI Police Academy, and interested town officials to determine next steps.

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Chip Young has agreed to work with the WCRPC to increase visibility in the community and provide public relations assistance for the Route 1 Corridor Grant.

The board agreed to retain the third Thursday of the month, beginning at 8:30 at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center for WCRPC monthly board meetings.

2007-2008 Board of Director Officer Elections

C Duhamel presented the nominations for WCRPC officers in 2007-2008:

- President: Chris Duhamel
- Vice President: Henry Oppenheimer
- Secretary: Kate Waterman
- Treasurer: Jim O'Neill

A motion to accept the slate of officers was made by B Kenney, seconded by A Miccolis and approved unanimously as presented. B Kenney volunteered to serve as a back up for board secretary.

Washington County Community Development Corporation (WCCDC) Update

C Duhamel clarified the purpose of the WCCDC for the new members and reported on the progress of the WCCDC on behalf of H Oppenheimer, WCRPC liaison to the WCCDC. The WCCDC and their executive director are in the process of parting ways. The organization plans to institute a search for a new executive director. The CDC has funds in place and plans to restore one of the properties on Pierce Street. They need zoning approval for the other property and hope to receive approval at the February Westerly Zoning Board meeting. They will move forward on them when a new executive director is in place.

The Westerly Planning Board voted unanimously to:

- approve the preliminary plan merging these two properties,
- build 10 affordable townhouse units,
- give Bill Haase, westerly Town Planner, authority to approve the final plan
- send a favorable recommendation to the Zoning Board

Plans will be presented to the Westerly Zoning Board at the February meeting for preliminary review and order to advertise for March. The selective demolition on 72 Pierce should begin on or about 13 February. The selective demolition of 72 Pierce is to find out what sort of issues are hidden by the walls since a massive renovation is called for in the 10 units of affordable housing. The first part of the project has a HOME grant and Westerly redirected CBDG money.

The WCCDC requested 10 hours of S Barker's time to support the search for a new executive director. H Oppenheimer thinks it is possible for the CDC to reimburse WCRPC. B Kenney made a motion to approve up to 10 hours of S. Barker's time to assist the WCCDC in their search for a new Executive Director at a rate of compensation set by the WCRPC. The motion was seconded by K Waterman and approved unanimously. S Barker was instructed to set the parameters and cost of such service.

New Board Member Introduction and Action Plan Review

M Rauh introduced the purpose of the WCRPC to preserve the quality of life, bring new revenue to the towns, and strive to find a balance between opposing pressures in five key areas with regional impact. The WCRPC strives to create consensus in the areas of affordable housing, transportation, land use, water quality, and economic development. M Rauh reviewed the Action Plan, identifying public school funding and regional economic development as most critical for all towns. M Rauh encouraged board members to expand the Action Plan to include additional regional issues.

Town Reports

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South Kingstown: The proposed casino remains a threat to Washington County. The zoning changes being considered by the towns need to be carefully considered.

APC has signed an agreement with another company and may be moving out of Rhode Island. The move may result in job losses to Washington County residents.

The property tax cap passed by the general assembly will force local school committees to limit their expenses.

Charlestown: The big issue is Trust Status of the Narragansetts. Settlement Land is subject to state and town jurisdiction, under the Chafee Bill. A casino cannot be built on such land. Use of Trust Land is under federal jurisdiction only. The BIA granted Trust Status to 31 acres of land in Charlestown. The Trust designation has been appealed by the state in federal court. The decision will not come down for several months. If the appeal fails, the issue will be taken to The Supreme Court, because neither the state nor the town would have control on what happens to this land. Any environmental issues would be decided in federal court. The Charlestown land is in a SAMP area and subject to CRMC regulations.

K Waterman attended a presentation on windmill energy production and suggested that the WCPRC present a similar program.

Exeter: C Ellis cited special needs issues and the resulting pressure on public school funding as most pressing in Exeter. Exeter shares a concern with the issues included in the Action Plan.

Hopkinton: Current roads in Hopkinton could not handle the increased traffic resulting from a casino in the area. Hopkinton would like to secure RIPTA service for Hopkinton, Richmond, and Charlestown.

Hopkinton is pursuing economic development around exit 1 on Route 95 in Rhode Island. B Kenney suggested submitting a regional proposal for a TIP grant to study Route 95 and the exits feeding into South County.

Block Island: Affordable housing is a priority issue on Block Island. Because the island is served by the ferry, the workforce has to live on the island. The island needs at least 10% affordable housing for those who work on the Island. The town received a proposal to develop 21 units on 1.5 acres. The number of units was negotiated down to 10 units.

Over capacity in the summer is creating a dilemma. It is the lifeblood for Block Island but is at a tipping point. The landing fee collected by Interstate Navigation is not audited by Block Island.

Power for Block Island is provided by The Block Island Power Company. The charge is 50 cents per kilowatt-hour in the summer. Block island is considering wind power or a cable to the mainland.

Narragansett does not have a town manager or finance director. The town plans to hold a planning session to set new goals for the town.

The proposed polo facility in Narragansett remains under consideration.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by B Kenney, seconded by A Miccolis, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 AM.

Katharine H. Waterman, January 18, 2007

Board Secretary