

# 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 January 18, 2006

### **Attendance:**

#### **WCRPC Board Members and Staff**

Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council  
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council  
Beverly Kenney, Hopkinton Town Council  
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council  
Larry Aker, Exeter Town Council  
Sue Barker, WCRPC Executive Director

#### **Advisory Members and Public**

Patrick Durney, URI MBA Graduate Student  
Jeffrey Goften, WCCDC board member  
Michael Rauh, Washington Trust Company  
Geoff Marchant, Community Development Consortium  
Steve Ostiguy, Church Community Housing  
Marilyn Shellman, Westerly Planning Department

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) held on Wednesday, January 18, 2006 at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown was called to order by Vice President Henry Oppenheimer at 8:36 a.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

B Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2005 meeting. J O'Neill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **Executive Director's Report**

S Barker reported that the presentation of the **Internet Mapping System** by Jim Lucht on January 12 was well received.

The **Route 1 Corridor study** conducted by a URI graduate class, under the direction of Professor William Green, will start next week. An initial planning meeting will be held today to provide direction to the study. Formal requests for **town funds** were mailed in December. The request has remained level for the past three years and will not increase this year. S Barker will plan to attend town council meetings to support the requests. M Rauh and S Barker presented the WCRPC mission and accomplishments to the NK town council last week at a town council work session.

S Barker will visit the state house tomorrow to introduce the mission of the WCRPC to Washington County's legislators and explore the possibility of state funding for the WCRPC.

The Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program has distributed two RFP's. The WCRPC is eligible to apply as a regional entity for the funds available to conduct a **Corridor Study**. The study must be regional in nature, resemble the corridors as defined in the Travel Corridor Planning Initiative, address land use and multi-modal transportation solutions, demonstrate municipal support and provide opportunities for public participation.

The bi-monthly Planners Breakfast will be held on January 24 at 8:30 a.m. Annette Bourne from Rhode Island Housing will attend the meeting to present a new program to assist towns review and modify local zoning ordinances to facilitate affordable housing

Grow Smart RI has invited the WCRPC to present a program and discussion entitled: **Growing together: consensus building, Smart Growth and Community Change**. There is an opportunity to earn up to \$1500 by facilitating this program.

### **The Washington County Community Development Corporation update:**

The Search Committee is currently interviewing candidates for executive director. The board will interview the top three finalists when they are identified to choose the most qualified candidate.

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The Housing Development Committee is working to identify affordable housing projects and encourages board members to suggest potential properties for development of affordable housing.

The Board Expansion Committee has identified several potential candidates for board membership.

Funding: Over \$90,000 has been pledged to the WCCDC from various affordable housing funding sources

Shared office space with the Saugatucket Watershed Council on Main St. in Wakefield has been secured.

## **Town Updates:**

Richmond: H Oppenheimer reported that the Town of Richmond is suing the Town of Charlestown over a zoning decision. The Richmond Commons development will require extending water and sewer systems to accommodate large retail stores and 400 housing units in the commons.

Charlestown: K Waterman reported that the Charlestown Affordable Housing Plan has been approved by the state. Ten applications for individual homes have been filed with the town. Charlestown needs inclusionary zoning to accommodate affordable housing needs.

Hopkinton: B. Kenney reported that Hopkinton has begun the town budget process. They are reviewing the issues with the Chariho school budget. They have approved a Challenge Proposal to be submitted by the town. The Hopkinton Land Trust has purchased a local farm to preserve open space in town.

South Kingstown: J O'Neill reported that South Kingstown may have a 10.5% tax increase next year although the public school population has decreased 11% over the last 4 years. Over 80% of the South Kingstown budget goes to support public schools. The elderly tax abatement program is successful. 1200 residents over 65 years old own property in South Kingstown.

Exeter: Larry Aker reported that Exeter has an affordable housing plan and committee in place. 25% of Exeter is open space and 25% owned by the state. The town has purchased the development rights to Shartner Farms.

## **Guest Presentations:**

**Patrick G. Durney, URI MBA Graduate Student**, presented the results of the Washington County Public School Funding Study to date. The study summarizes the current status of public school funding in Washington County. The second phase will include recommendations by town officials for solutions to escalating expenses. Board members provided additional data about the status of public school funding in their communities.

**Steve Ostiguy, Executive Director Church Community Housing Corporation & Jeff Gofton, board member, Washington County Community Development Corporation**, outlined a new organization, The Community Housing Land Trust. The CHLT model is meant to keep affordable housing units affordable over time. The homeowner will not own the land, only the home.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by L Aker, seconded by B Kenney, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM.

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Katharine H. Waterman  
Board Secretary

January 18, 2006