

# 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

February 15, 2006

Attendance:

#### WCRPC Board Members and Staff

Anthony Miccolis, North Kingstown Town Council  
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council  
Beverly Kenney, Hopkinton Town Council  
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council  
Larry Aker, Exeter Town Council  
Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council  
Robert Ellis Smith, Block Island Town Council  
George Tracy, Narragansett Town Council  
Sue Barker, WCRPC Executive Director

#### Advisory Members and Public

Michael Rauh, Washington Trust Company  
Robert Sherman, New Shoreham

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC), held on Wednesday, February 15, 2006 at The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown, was called to order by Vice President Henry Oppenheimer at 8:46 a.m.

#### Approval of Minutes

B Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 2006 meeting. L Aker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### Executive Director's Report

S Barker reported progress on a proposal to the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program to secure funding to study land use and transportation planning for the Route 1 Corridor. Town managers and planners in the five towns have submitted suggestions to ensure that their priorities are included and agree with the requirements in the RFP. The deadline is February 24. The Route 1 Corridor study by a URI landscape design class, under the direction of Professor William Green, will be a part of the study.

S Barker and M Rauh met with Representative John P. Shanley Jr., to explore the potential of receiving state funding. He arranged for us to present the programs of the WCRPC to the South County Legislative Caucus on March 15.

The New England Environmental Finance Center in the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine (through Grow Smart RI) has asked us to present a program and discussion entitled: **Growing Together: Consensus Building, Smart Growth and Community Change**. We will receive \$1000 to facilitate this program.

H Oppenheimer reported that the WCCDC search committee has completed negotiations with their choice for an Executive Director who will assume the position in April. The office of the new organization will be on Main Street in Wakefield. The Housing Development Committee is working with town planners to identify properties for affordable housing. The Board expansion committee has identified three people who represent the affordable housing community as possible board members. The WCCDC received \$5,000 from The Washington Trust Company and \$30,000 from LISC this month.

S Barker held a preliminary discussion with the Champlin Foundation to explore the possibility of funding to purchase a computer with GIS software so that regional land parcel data can be developed. Further research on this project was suggested.

#### Town Updates:

**South Kingstown:** J O'Neill reported that he attended a meeting at the RI Department of Environmental Management to consider expediting licensing fees for fast track development. If approved it will have an effect on South Kingstown. The

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Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) is approving development along the coast in environmentally sensitive areas.

**North Kingstown:** A Miccolis reported that M Rauh and S Barker attended a North Kingstown town council meeting to present the recent accomplishments of the WCRPC in support of continued funding. The North Kingstown Town Council voted to support the WCRPC grant proposal for the Route 1 study.

National Grid wishes to site a new substation behind the Carriage Inn. A lawyer has been hired to represent town concerns. Construction on Wickford Junction may start next spring. Conservation development regulations are in the process of being approved.

**Narragansett:** G Tracy reported that Camp Jouri project is moving toward approval. Affordable housing units will be included. The Gilbane project is meeting with resistance.

**Exeter:** L Aker reported that Exeter is working on an age-restricted ordinance for affordable housing. The Deerbrook project will have 147 units including 20% affordable housing units. The development has an age restriction component.

**Block Island:** R Smith reported concerns about the structure of CRMC. A discussion of the need for representation at the state house on these issues followed. The League of Cities and Towns takes a position on issues that apply to all cities and towns. It was suggested to invite the League to speak at a future meeting. Block Island is considering hiring a town planner and a fire marshal. If the airport closes for repairs for three months in the fall as planned it will affect the shoulder season.

**Hopkinton:** B Kenney reported that the Chariho budget is the focus of town council meetings and will be considered at the financial town meeting in March.

**Richmond:** H Oppenheimer reported on significant issues because of the Chariho budget. There is no control over how much the budget is raised each year. The town is dealing with environmental matters, particularly a stump dumps and holding ponds. Economic development in Richmond is moving along. The Shannock affordable housing project has been taken to SHAB by the developer.

**Charlestown:** K Waterman attended a CRMC meeting and suggested that there is a role for the WCRPC in the issues discussed at the meeting. A discussion of the role of the WCRPC to support the environmental interest of member communities followed. The CRMC is raising the acceptable levels of pollution to accommodate affordable housing production. Affordable housing laws as written are undermining towns' environmental interests. There is a concern that environmental issues are being ignored to the advantage of competing interests. S Barker was asked to compile a list of the current proposals for variances to density bonuses in areas that are environmentally sensitive.

## **Old Business:**

Patrick Durney will complete the second stage of the public school funding study this semester. He will collect more recent town budget data and summarize the suggestions of the school and town officials and include them in the report. He will be asked to develop an annualized growth rate and percentage of the total property taxes for school operating budgets in each town. It was suggested that we invite him back to a board meeting in April.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by L Aker, seconded by A Miccolis, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 AM.

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Katharine H. Waterman February 15, 2006  
Board Secretary