

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 2004

ATTENDANCE:

WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council
Bob Corrigan, Hopkinton Town Council
Dale Grogan, North Kingstown Town Council
Martha Ball, New Shoreham Town Council
John Hickey, Narragansett Town Council
Michael Cerullo, Exeter Town Council
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
Michael Rauh, Facilitator
Devon Preston, Executive Director
Alexandra Adams, Program Associate

Advisory Members and Public

Tom Brillat, WCALC
John Glasheen

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, May 20, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

Approval of Minutes

Bob Corrigan made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Mike Cerullo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Staff Report

Henry Oppenheimer began the staff report, discussing the Rhode Island Foundation meeting that he, Devon Preston and Michael Rauh attended. The meeting, in Aquidneck Island, was designed to share WCRPC experiences and models with the participants in the Aquidneck Island area. Michael Rauh indicated that the Rhode Island Foundation was pleased with the work of the WCRPC to date.

Henry Oppenheimer then discussed the funding of the WCRPC for next year. He reported that Richmond has committed the requested \$3,000. Bob Corrigan said that the money did not appear in the Hopkinton budget yet, but he will make sure that the \$3,000 is there by the end of the week. Chris Duhamel reported that Westerly has approved the requested \$6,000. John Hickey stated that Narragansett had currently approved only \$3,000 of the requested \$6,000. Mike Cerullo reported that he was unsure if Exeter could provide the full amount requested. He said that he would be fortunate to

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receive level funding this year. Dale Grogan then stated that North Kingstown had committed the full requested amount of \$6,000, but that it was a struggle to get that funding committed. She added that if her town council knew that other towns were paying any amount they liked, it would be unlikely that they would send the full requested amount again in such a difficult budget season. ***There was some discussion around the perception that annual funds to the WCRPC are “dues” which must be paid for inclusion in the organization.*** Michael Rauh stated that the problem would grow as towns struggle to pay the amount requested, and that if some towns pay less than that amount, the situation would worsen. He said that there had to be some equalization of town contributions, either by funds or services given. The group then discussed the issue of whether the requested funds could be construed as dues, or contributions, and how to handle towns that do not plan to pay the full amount. The group considered going back to the original funding request and reducing it, but it was decided that would not be the best solution. It was then suggested that a notice should be sent to the towns who had not paid the full amount, asking for the remaining funds and reminding them of the added value they have received and will continue to receive from the WCRPC. Jim O’Neill said that the South Kingstown council looked at the percentage increase requested rather than the dollar figure; ***at this time, South Kingstown had dedicated \$4,000 to the WCRPC.*** He said that he knew the value that the WCRPC provided and would continue to work to get the entire amount committed.

~~The group decided that it would be a mistake to not permit a town to be a member if dues were not paid because the strength of the organization rests with its membership. It was decided that the Executive Director would continue to work with the towns that had not committed the entire amount to see what can be arranged to keep them involved. ***It was decided that the Executive Director would continue to work with the towns that had not committed the entire amount.***~~

The Executive Director then continued the staff report, providing an update of a discussion with Kelly Woodward in the Senate Policy Office regarding the affordable housing legislation. Henry Oppenheimer added that the new draft put total control with the planning boards, which was positive. However many agreed that the legislation was still vague and described it as an urban bill. Dale Grogan made a motion that the WCRPC send correspondence to Ken Payne telling him what the board had discussed and expressing its disappointment that the board’s comments were not reflected in the bill. Jim O’Neill seconded the motion. There was discussion as to whether a phone call or letter would be better and who would be the best contact to speak with. Dale Grogan then amended the motion, stating that the letter should be send to the chairs and Ken Payne explaining that the board’s concerns were not incorporated into the new legislation and the board respectfully submits that they be included. Mike Cerullo seconded the amended motion and it passed unanimously.

The Executive Director then reported to the group that the proposal that had been sent to the Rhode Island Foundation suggesting a feasibility study of a regional housing entity would be funded if the WCRPC wanted to pursue the study. The money could be fast tracked to get started, providing a great opportunity to continue the group’s work on affordable housing. The Executive Director then asked if the group would be interested in pursuing the study. John Hickey said that Narragansett is not interested. Mike Cerullo stated that Exeter would be interested. Chris Duhamel stated that Westerly would be interested. ***Other members generally agreed that it would be worth pursuing.***

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The board did not have time to review the priorities matrix provided, and decided to review that at the next meeting. Dale Grogran made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mike Cerullo and passed unanimously.

Michael Cerullo
Board Secretary

June 17, 2004