

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 2004

ATTENDANCE:

WCRPC Representatives and Staff

Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond Town Council
Kate Waterman, Charlestown Town Council
E. Robert Corrigan, Hopkinton Town Council
Chris Duhamel, Westerly Town Council
John Hickey, Narragansett Town Council
Michael Cerullo, Exeter Town Council
Jim O'Neill, South Kingstown Town Council
Michael Rauh, Facilitator
Devon Preston, Executive Director
Alexandra Adams, Program Associate

Advisory Members and Public

Jim Lamphere, Charlestown Planner
Geoffrey Marchant, Comm. Devel. Consortium

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) was held on Thursday, June 17, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. at The Washington Trust Company building in Charlestown.

Approval of Minutes

Michael Cerullo made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. Bob Corrigan seconded the motion and it passed with one abstention by Kate Waterman.

Staff Report

The Executive Director briefly reviewed the status of town contributions, with Hopkinton contributing \$3,000, Block Island currently contributing \$2,500 and Exeter scheduled to discuss the status of its contribution that evening. The Executive Director then updated the board regarding the affordable housing hearing, relaying that the affordable housing bill was sent to the house and senate to be voted on the following week. The Senate Policy Office had already sent out the newest changes to the bill. Devon Preston then updated the board regarding the planner's meeting, which will be held the following week to discuss regional GIS capability. The planners will also hear a presentation by an intern at RI Statewide Planning concerning the future of Route 1. Devon Preston then added that she was now secretary of the RI Rural Development Council board, in addition to serving on its housing committee, and would continue to brief the board regarding that organization.

The Executive Director then discussed the three new grants that she is applying for on behalf of the WCRPC. The new grants will include funds for general operating expenses, in addition to a grant from

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

the RI Foundation to fund the feasibility study for a regional housing entity. The Executive Director then told the board that the RI Foundation had invited the WCRPC to be a member of the Open Doors Rhode Island group that it had founded. This group will endorse the new housing legislation that has been produced, and Executive Director asked the board if it wanted to join and endorse the legislation. John Hickey said that he did not have authority from his town to endorse this legislation. Henry Oppenheimer then added that this would be interpreted as a WCRPC endorsement, not individual town endorsements. Michael Cerullo added that Washington County got a bulk of the concessions that it wanted in this legislation, and we should show our support now. Kate Waterman then added that she polled her affordable housing task force and got a very negative reaction regarding this bill and could not endorse it following that reaction. Bob Corrigan then made a motion that the WCRPC add its name to the group and endorse the legislation. Michael Cerullo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor (Michael Cerullo, Bob Corrigan, Henry Oppenheimer and Chris Duhamel), two abstaining (John Hickey, Jim O'Neill) and one opposed (Kate Waterman). The motion passed.

Strategy Session – Setting Priorities for Action

The Executive Director then discussed the research of a Brown undergraduate student in a thesis that reviewed the effectiveness of the South County Greenspace Strategy. She said that the three primary recommended actions included creating a regional GIS cooperative, facilitating a regional planning session and discussing the Greenspace Strategy to see if it is accomplishing what it is designed to do.

The Board then discussed the recommendations matrix designed by the staff to determine which priorities the board wished to concentrate on in the following year. Jim O'Neill discussed the importance of working regionally to preserve contiguous tracts of open space, rather than disconnected pieces from town to town. The possibility of utilizing GIS to accomplish this was discussed. Geoffrey Marchant shared with the board his experience with regional GIS in order to evaluate wastewater management in Rhode Island. The board then discussed the potential for using regional GIS and how the University of Rhode Island and the Environmental Data Center may be helpful. Following the discussion it was agreed the regional GIS should be one of the boards top priorities from the strategy session. Jim O'Neill then added that the possible casino in Rhode Island was another issue that should be a top priority of the WCRPC. The board then discussed the current proposal and the possible impacts to the state if the casino is built. The board decided that it should be an issue that the WCRPC is involved in, but that it should wait until the July meeting, when more details about the casino progress are certain.

The Executive Director then reviewed the WCRPC primary priorities which included: affordable housing, the casino issue, commuter rail/transit-oriented development study and regional GIS. Bob Corrigan then added that the board should tackle the education issue this year as well.

John Hickey made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Kate Waterman and it passed unanimously.

Michael Cerullo

July 17, 2004

WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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

Board Secretary