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CHARLESTOWN

EXETER

HOPKINTON

NARRAGANSETT

NEW SHOREHAM

NORTH KINGSTOWN

RICHMOND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

WESTERLY

[www.wcrpc.org](http://www.wcrpc.org)

## WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

### Meeting Minutes: Board of Directors

*December 9, 2009; Kettle Pond Visitors Center*

#### **Council Members Present:**

Henry Oppenheimer – Richmond (Vice President)

Cal Ellis – Exeter (Treasurer)

Beverly Kenney – Hopkinton (Secretary)

Marge Frank - Charlestown

Kathy Fogarty - South Kingstown

Steve DeToy – North Kingstown

Caswell Cooke – substitute for Westerly

#### **Also Present:**

Michael Rauh - Facilitator

Jeff Broadhead – Executive Director

Maura Sayre – Program Coordinator

**Summary:** Jeff Broadhead distributed a summary of the tremendous increase in revenue for each town due to the work of the WCRPC several years ago. Town funding requests are being sent on schedule along with a WCRPC Overview report. The state energy office continues to be delayed in getting out the first RFP for which we can apply. Planning work continues on getting projects lined up for grant applications. Internal RFQ review is near completion for the ESCO project. WCRPC, NK, Exeter and SK were among the recipients of this year's Statewide Planning Challenge Grants. Each Board member reported on current issues facing their towns.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the November 13, 2009 meeting were approved.

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

- **Town Funding Requests:** All requests for WCRPC funding are being sent out on schedule along with an Overview of the WCRPC mission, past accomplishments and future plans. In addition Jeff has been in touch with Bob Weygand, VP of Administration at URI regarding a request for continued financial support for the WCRPC intern program. Michael R. and Jeff will be meeting with Weygand and new URI President, David Dooley later this month.

- **WCRPC Energy Program:** The Energy Program is designed to reduce energy costs for our towns and school districts through efficiency, modernization, management, training, and use of renewable energy. It includes grant applications seeking stimulus funds to reduce energy costs and create local jobs as well as a Performance Contracting process to fund major efficiency and capital improvements with savings.

Jeff B. distributed a map of the buildings that will be included in the Energy Program along with a Glossary of terms and an EECBG summary. The WCRPC staff has been attending Energy Review Team meetings and closely following developments of the next RFP, which is for Electrical Generation using Non-Utility Scale Renewables (solar, wind, etc.). The list of potential projects in Washington County is still growing for our towns and schools. The RFP has been delayed several times and now will not be released until the end of December or beginning of January with a deadline for submissions later in January.

The Board discussed how WCRPC will maintain a revenue stream from all of the grant preparation, administration, planning and reporting. The plan will be to allow some percentage of each grant to cover these items with the goal to become self sufficient. Some of the grant funding will be allocated to the towns with additional competitive funds available. A portion of the allocated funds is earmarked directly for the performance contracting work being undertaken by the WCRPC and will therefore pass through to them for administrative work. The WCRPC will be submitting applications for every possible area in which our town can benefit.

Jeff reported that he is currently working on a multi-million dollar US DOE grant application that would help fund a Sustainable Washington County program encompassing the Energy Program, a Students for Sustainable Schools program and a Washington County Sustainable Business Initiative. The application is “a real long shot” as only 8-20 awards will be given for the whole country.

- **Real Estate Conveyance Tax:** Jeff B. presented a report showing an estimate of what the tax share would have been had the legislation not been enacted. The board suggested one minor change in the type of chart used in the report – Jeff will make the change and distribute to Town Councils.
- **Challenge Grants:** Statewide Planning just announced the awards for this year’s Challenge Grants. Among the recipients are:
  - South Kingstown - \$40,000 – to study village centers and transportation**
  - Washington County Regional Planning Council - \$51,000 – regional TDR**
  - North Kingstown - \$70,000 – for TDR**
  - Exeter - \$98,500 – for Borderlands village development and TDR**
- **Insurance:** Jeff reported that he has obtained two quotes for insurance. Until now the WCRPC only has worker’s compensation coverage. The quotes include increasing coverage to include Property, General Liability, and Directors and Officers Liability. The Board suggested that Jeff also speak with Jeff Gofton at CDC.
- **Congress of Councils:** The date for the 2010 Congress of Councils is set for February 11<sup>th</sup>. Jeff has several potential speakers in mind. The overall theme of the Congress will be how to help towns

survive these financially challenging times. The board suggested moving from “shared services” to more details on how towns can “buy and/or sell” their services from neighboring towns or from the WCRPC.

- The Board suggested that the WCRPC prepare a report that Town Councils could send to their legislative delegation on the regional efforts in Washington County. Jeff agreed to prepare a report for the January meeting.

### **Town Reports:**

*WC CDC* – Henry reported CDC is working on their first construction project and having trouble connecting the gas – the project includes 2-3 bedroom low to moderate income apartments; they are still interviewing for a Town Administrator; the Chariho budget review process has started.

*Hopkinton* – Beverly reported that they have a Tri Town Council meeting on 12/10/09; they still have no Finance Committee; new Town Manager, Bill McGarry is settling in well.

*North Kingstown* – Steve reported that they have made a good IT connection with Exeter; they are starting their budget cycle early.

*Exeter* – Cal reported that he and the Vice President of their Town Council have agreed to stay in their respective positions until the end of their terms; they are “off to a good start” with the sharing of the North Kingstown IT staff; the list of business prepared by the WCRPC staff has proven to be very useful and prompted new discussion of registering businesses; their tax assessor is looking to adopt requirements for an annual review of affordable housing qualification.

*South Kingstown* – Kathy reported that they have continued good relations with their school committee; they are holding to a zero budget for schools; they continue to pursue joint services with their schools and other towns.

*Charlestown* – Marge reported that they have passed a ban on outdoor heaters; they are still working on a wind ordinance; they continue to have difficulty getting their state reps to meet with them regarding Indian affairs; there was discussion of planning issues in Charlestown.

*Westerly* – Caswell Cooke reported that the School Committee has rejected the teachers’ contract; the Town Council does NOT want to raise taxes but continues to worry about impending state cuts; a draft Comprehensive Plan has been presented – it’s their first update since 1992; they continue to seek ways to consolidate in the recreation and town maintenance departments; they have established a “Plan B” committee to look at shared services.

The next meeting of the WCRPC will be **Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 8:30 a.m. at Kettle Pond Visitors Center.**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Beverly Kenney, Secretary, WCRPC