



The Kenyon Building  
344 Main Street, Suite 202  
Wakefield, Rhode Island  
02879

401.284.1784

CHARLESTOWN

EXETER

HOPKINTON

NARRAGANSETT

NEW SHOREHAM

NORTH KINGSTOWN

RICHMOND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

WESTERLY

www.wcrpc.org

# WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

## Meeting Minutes: Board of Directors

October 13, 2010; Kettle Pond Visitors Center

### Council Members Present:

- Chris Duhamel – Westerly (President)
- Henry Oppenheimer – Richmond (Vice President)
- Cal Ellis – Exeter (Treasurer)
- Beverly Kenney – Hopkinton (Secretary)
- Marge Frank – Charlestown
- Chris Wilkens – Narragansett
- Ray Torrey – New Shoreham

### Also Present:

- Jeff Broadhead – Executive Director
- Maura Sayre – Program Coordinator
- Rachel Ackerman – Energy Program Analyst
- Kara Kilmartin - Intern

**Summary:** The Energy Program continues to move forward with 10 towns and 7 school districts participating. The Energy Services Company (ESCO) selection process is progressing with the three finalists undergoing reference checks. The Washington County Broadband grant application was denied, however the WCRPC is still hopeful that increased service will be achieved through the grant award to OSHEAN. The Planning Council continues to participate in statewide planning, transportation and energy initiatives.

**Executive Session:** The Board convened to discuss the 2010-2011 budget and voted to continue the discussion until the November meeting. They will meet at 8:00 a.m. in order to accommodate schedules prior to guest speaker, Keith Stokes.

**Minutes:** Approval of the minutes from the September 8, 2010 meeting was postponed until November meeting.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

**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 and other funds to reduce energy costs and create local jobs as well as a Performance Contracting process, through the use of an Energy Services Company

Jeff Broadhead 10/15/10 5:53 PM

**Deleted:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ They

Jeff Broadhead 10/15/10 5:53 PM

**Deleted:** budget

(ESCO), to fund major efficiency and capital improvements with savings generated from reduced energy use.

**PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING** - After narrowing the field of RFQ respondents from 7 down to 5, on September 2nd the Energy Review Team (made up of a point person and an alternate appointed by each town and school district) conducted all day ESCO interviews. With all 10 of the participating towns and 4 of the 7 participating school districts represented, the team made a unanimous decision to advance 3 of the ESCOs to the next stage. These ESCOs are Johnson Controls, Noresco and Siemens. Each of these ESCOs was then asked to analyze, at least to the level of a Preliminary Audit, one sample school (Richmond Elementary) and one sample town hall (Narragansett). In addition to the Energy Team, the WCRPC staff and our consulting engineer David Ward, P.E., LEED AP, from Energy Engineering & Design, participated in the interviews and presentations. We did not, however, vote on advancements—thus the selections have been entirely by the towns/schools. The ESCOs presented their results to the Energy Team on October 5<sup>th</sup> as though they were presenting to a school committee or town council. The Energy Team is currently reviewing the presentation materials and requesting clarification on several items from each of the ESCOs. We are also carrying out reference checks on the remaining ESCOs.

Under Rachel's direction, the URI Energy Fellows continue to fill in the missing information from energy bills for each town and school department. We are creating an electronic database of all the utility bill information in order to benchmark and help the selected ESCO to move forward in a timely manner.

The second round of federal EECBG reporting took place last week. WCRPC handled the jobs reporting for all ten participating towns, and the "1512" (expenditure) reporting for Exeter, Narragansett and Richmond. The other towns opted to handle their own reporting, uploading or entering data provided by WCRPC. Since these grants are on a reimbursement basis, WCRPC does the work (with staff or consultants,) and then invoices the town. Each town then invoices the state (Office of Energy Resources,)), which has been paying very quickly (sometimes within 24 hours.)

We continue to stay on top of the plans at the State Office of Energy Resources for altering the EECBG drawdown procedures. The current system is largely reimbursement, but they are planning changes (we have seen the language) that will allow advances.

**STRATEGIC ENERGY PLAN** – The State Guide Plan Energy Element is being revised, and we are working with Statewide Planning and the Office of Energy Resources so that we have a Washington County Strategic Energy Plan that not only meets all their requirements but can also be used by each town in their next Comprehensive Plan update. Additionally, the State's Office of Energy Resources wishes our towns to be basing their energy-related decisions on a rational basis. Therefore, they authorized some of the EECBG funds to be used to prepare an energy plan. WCRPC applied for these funds and was accepted.

Two of the Energy Fellows are helping to create the Washington County Strategic Energy Plan. They have a terrific draft of the strategic energy plan that encompasses global, national, state, county, and town information. The Energy Fellows have been busy contacting the Town Planners to gather information on local projects and progress in the

energy field. This report will be presented to all the towns and submitted to the Office of Energy Resources as part of the EECBG work.

**ROUND 1 - NON UTILITY SCALE RENEWABLE GRANTS** – In June the WCRPC was officially notified of an award of \$750,000 as a grant towards a Solar PV (Photovoltaic, or sunlight to electricity) project to be located on the capped Westerly landfill. We have explored several funding mechanisms to try to make this project financially feasible, since it has only a 7.5% subsidy and commercial scale solar needs more like 30%. However, it is looking like we will be able to proceed with an RFQ for a development partner, and using both our public status and the tax incentives, may be able to develop the project after all.

**ROUND 2 – NON UTILITY SCALE RENEWABLE GRANTS** – WCRPC has been awarded one \$750,000 grant for one turbine on Block Island and another \$750,000 grant for two turbines in Charlestown. We are now moving the Chariho meteorological tower to Ninigret Park to measure the wind resources on-site, and will then proceed with our due diligence on economic, environmental, and grid-connection areas. For both the New Shoreham and Charlestown projects, we are waiting for implementation from the Office of Energy Resources for a minor modification to the “guidance” on these grants that will allow us to charge “development” costs to them. When this is in place we can move quickly on these projects.

## MEETINGS

- 12 town council and school committees meetings (57 this year)
- ESCO interviews
- OSHEAN regarding the Broadband grant
- URI regarding Broadband grant (multiple)
- Numerous Energy Review Team meetings
- Numerous meetings with energy companies regarding renewables.
- Regional Municipal Energy Coalition
- State Technical committee
- Northeast Sustainable Energy Association
- Rhode Island Foundation
- Dave Ward, Energy Engineer for Energy Program
- North Kingstown School Dept. Facilities Committee
- URI Energy Center
- Charlestown Town Manager and Planner regarding wind project
- DEM Executive Director, Mike Sullivan
- Office of Energy Resources Administrator, Ken Payne, and OER Chief of Program Development Dan Carrigg regarding EECBG reporting and NUSR grant agreements
- Accountants to implement new accounting models and methods
- Met with ESCOs conducting sample Energy Audits at Richmond Elementary and Narragansett Town Hall
- Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
- RI Department of Education (RIDE) regarding ESCO program

Jeff Broadhead 10/15/10 5:59 PM  
Formatted: Space Before: 3 pt, After: 0 pt

- Dan Cartier, Chariho Regional Schools and Charlestown regarding moving the met town from Chariho to Charlestown
- North Kingstown IT and building department regarding options for regional building permitting.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- The Department of Administration has scheduled the first meeting of the Commuter Rail Committee for November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In addition, Maura is enrolled in the Master Energy Program at URI.

#### **TDR CHALLENGE GRANT**

TDR, or the Transfer of Development Rights, is a means to preserve open space (farm or forest) while fostering development in areas where towns wish higher density. It utilizes market forces, and does not require public funds to purchase property or development rights. In RI, only North Kingstown has such a program, although it has been discussed for years and works well in other parts of the county. Last fall the WCRPC wrote a grant application that was accepted by RI Statewide Planning Program, and we were awarded \$51,000 to hold several public meetings about TDR, and to have a report prepared that will show the benefits of the program and the steps necessary to implement it across town boundaries—this would allow land to be preserved in one town, while the increased development would be located in another. The study will assess not only TDR in Washington County, but a statewide program, where land in outlying areas could be preserved while fostering development in needy central city areas.

The Stakeholders group has met for the study of TDR across the county. The RFP for a TDR consultant has been drafted and is being sent to Statewide Planning for review. Once the consultant is chosen, sessions will be scheduled to introduce the TDR concept to planning boards and commissions, land trusts, town councils and conservation commissions. The sessions will explain the program stressing that TDR is a voluntary program that does not involve down-zoning and should be a win-win situation for all parties involved.

#### **BROADBAND**

We have received official notification that the WCRPC was not chosen for funding by the NTIA for our Broadband grant. We are working with URI and OSHEAN to leverage URI's funds to build as much of the proposed network as possible. It will almost certainly serve our eastern towns, and a western leg is being explored. While there are funds (thanks to URI) to build part of the system, the changed financial package because of our grant denial means that contingency costs (like a catastrophic hurricane) might not be covered. We will not proceed if there is any financial risk to the towns, unless they are full knowledge of them and agree to them.

#### **NEW PROJECTS**

We have just begun initial research regarding the opportunities for regional on line building permitting, currently in use by North Kingstown. It appears that there is a no-cost option here that may be quite attractive to our towns.

We have also started a dialog with the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission regarding opportunities to work together and possibilities for spearheading town-up regionalism .

**TOWN REPORTS:**

**Richmond** – Henry O. reported that the Senior Center group has decided to disband amidst a controversy over their financial and membership operations. A new group is looking into reorganizing for a fresh start.

**Charlestown** – Marge F. reported that Rich Hosp is not running for reelection and will be a great loss to the town council; the election is getting very heated and there are concerns over misinformation being distributed.

**Narragansett** – Chris W. reported that they are still in union negotiations; they finally got an arbitration ruling on the fire department for 2009; they are currently reviewing the police contract; Chris initiated a discussion of policies on post retirement health benefits in each town.

**Hopkinton** - Beverly K. reported that they have a hearing scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup> of the exit 1 ordinance.

**New Shoreham** – Ray T. reported that the council race on Block Island is being fueled by pro wind and anti wind sentiments.

**Exeter** – Cal E. reported that they hired a new tax assessor and feel that she is making good progress in organizing their records; they continue to straighten out staffing issues; work continues on the new wind ordinance; they are bringing to vote 5 Charter questions.

**Westerly** - Chris D. had to leave the meeting prior to reporting.

The next meeting of the WCRPC will be **Wednesday, November 10, 2010** at Kettle Pond Visitors Center.

- 8:00 a.m. – Executive Session continuation of Budget Review
- 9:00 a.m. - Guest Speaker: Economic Development Director, Keith Stokes
- 9:30 a.m. - Regular WCRPC business meeting
- Monthly meetings for 2010 are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

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

Beverly Kenney, Secretary, WCRPC

Jeff Broadhead 10/15/10 5:54 PM  
**Deleted:** due to scrutiny

Jeff Broadhead 10/15/10 5:55 PM  
**Deleted:** of