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CHARLESTOWN

EXETER

HOPKINTON

NARRAGANSETT

NEW SHOREHAM

NORTH KINGSTOWN

RICHMOND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

WESTERLY

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## WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

### Meeting Minutes: Board of Directors

February 9, 2011; Kettle Pond Visitors Center

#### Council Members Present:

Westerly - Chris Duhamel (President)  
Richmond - Henry Oppenheimer (Vice President)  
New Shoreham – Ray Torrey (Secretary)  
Charlestown – Tom Gentz  
North Kingstown – Liz Dolan

#### Also Present:

Jeff Broadhead – Executive Director  
Maura Sayre – Program Coordinator  
Rachel Ackerman – Energy Program Analyst

**Summary: The new WCRPC Board members were welcomed. Elections were conducted for Officers. The Executive Director's Report highlighted the Energy Program progress, TDR, local wind issues, and exploration into a regional building permitting.**

**New Board Members:** The WCRPC welcomed the following new Board members from Tom Gentz – Charlestown, Scott Bill Hirst – Hopkinton, Ella Whaley - S. Kingstown.

**Minutes:** November minutes were approved as presented. There was no meeting in December 2010 or January 2011.

#### Election of Officers:

Executive Director, Jeff Broadhead, presented the following slate:

President - Chris Duhamel, Westerly  
Vice President – Henry Oppenheimer, Richmond  
Treasurer – Cal Ellis, Exeter  
Secretary – Ray Torrey, New Shoreham

There was a motion made and seconded to adopt the slate as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor of the slate as presented.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**CONGRESS OF COUNCILS** – This annual event will be held on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Invitations have been sent to all Washington County Town Councils, Town Managers, Town Planners, Chairs of Planning Commissions, Chairs of Zoning Boards, Chairs of Economic Development Committees, local Chamber of Commerce Boards, all local State Representatives and various State officials. In addition, we extended the invitation to the towns of West Greenwich and Jamestown since we are working so closely with them as participants in our Energy Program. The speakers at the Congress of Councils will be:

Governor – Lincoln Chafee  
GrowSmart Director – Scott Wolf  
RI EDC Director – Keith Stokes  
Office of Energy Resources – Ken Payne  
DEM Director – Janet Coit

**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. The goal is to reduce energy costs and create local jobs through Performance Contracting process, using an Energy Services Company (ESCO), to fund major efficiency and capital improvements, paid for with savings generated from reduced energy use.

During the past two years we have been heavily involved in following the State and Federal grant opportunities in the energy sector. Many grants have been applied for on behalf of the Washington County towns and several have been awarded. In 2010 we developed an RFQ for an Energy Services Company (ESCO) and the Energy Review Team (made up of a point person and an alternate appointed by each town and school district) worked for 6 months reviewing responses, conducting interviews and checking references. In December 2010 they voted to move forward with Noresco, pending contract negotiations. Working on behalf of all the participating towns and schools, we have consulting engineer David Ward, P.E., LEED AP, from Energy Engineering & Design, and attorney Seth Handy, of Chase, Ruttenberg & Freedman.

At this point we have conducted 16 Kickoff meetings, introducing Noresco to each participating town manager and school superintendent, along with their facilities manager. Noresco is finishing up their Preliminary Audits in all 154 buildings. Once their Preliminary Audit reports are done and internal contract negotiations are completed we will be moving to the next step. This will be to forward the draft Investment Grade Audit and Energy Services contracts to all town/school legal council, then get on the 16 TC/SC agendas to present the Preliminary Audit reports, the Energy Usage Reports, and the Investment Grade Audit Agreement.

Rachel Ackerman presented a draft of the Energy Usage reports she has been working on with the help of the URI Energy Fellows.

WCRPC continues to monitor the reporting necessary for the ARRA grant funding.

**NON UTILITY SCALE RENEWABLE GRANT FOR WESTERLY SOLAR** – In June 2010 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. Jeff reported that Westerly is planning a September voter referendum to bond the project development costs. The \$750,000 grant will be used to subsidize the project. WCRPC and Westerly will proceed with an RFQ or RFP for a development partner.

**NON UTILITY SCALE RENEWABLE GRANT FOR TURBINES IN CHARLESTOWN AND NEW SHOREHAM** – WCRPC was awarded one \$750,000 grant for one turbine on Block Island and another \$750,000 grant for two turbines in Charlestown. Jeff has arranged to move the Chariho meteorological tower to Ninigret Park to measure the wind resources on-site, and will then proceed with due diligence on economic, environmental, and grid-connection. For both the New Shoreham and Charlestown projects, Jeff is negotiating with the RI Office of Energy Resources on how to proceed with these projects. The New Shoreham project is in jeopardy because of RI OER-imposed restrictions.

### **WASHINGTON COUNTY BUILDING PERMITTING PROGRAM**

This is an online program that is in the research and development stage. It holds promise of being a great savings for the town in fees and staff time, and an added convenience for builders and residents. In addition it would allow for in depth tracking throughout the county.

### **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 is ready to release. 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.

## **WIND ISSUES:**

Liz Dolan reported that North Kingstown has requested a Statewide moratorium on wind turbine development and State committee to study issues and guidelines. They have received lots of feedback from towns that do not want a moratorium, which she reported was valuable for NK to hear. Jeff gave an update on the net metering issues being encountered in Portsmouth.

## **MEETINGS**

- 16 Kickoff meetings with Noresco/superintendents/town managers
- New Shoreham Energy Utility Task Force
- New website development
- Numerous meetings with energy companies and consultants regarding renewables
- WC Energy Team meeting
- Environmental Council RI
- WCRPC insurance agent
- NK Wind
- New WCRPC board members
- NK town council
- Several State Technical committee meetings
- Several Northeast Sustainable Energy Association meetings
- Dave Ward, Energy Engineer for Energy Program
- URI Professor, Haibo He regarding his work in renewable energy
- URI Energy Center
- Westerly Landfill tour
- Johnson Controls
- Several at Ninigret regarding met tower and avian study
- RIPTA Planner's meeting at our office
- Coalition for Transportation
- Municipal Energy Committee
- State Renewable Energy Task Force
- Office of Energy Resources Administrator, Ken Payne, regarding NUSR grants
- RI Department of Education (RIDE) regarding ESCO program

## **TOWN REPORTS:**

**Westerly** – Chris Duhamel reported that they are working to advance the solar project and possibly two turbines at the Westerly Landfill.

**North Kingstown** – Liz Dolan reported they are dealing with lots of turbine issues and have in place a 6 month moratorium while they do more wind ordinance research.

**New Shoreham** – Ray Torrey reported the off shore wind project will be decided in Supreme Court this spring. Land based turbine development is left in the lurch while the off shore project and resulting cable to the mainland is uncertain. Ray pointed out that it should be a win-win situation since the cable would allow them to net meter.

**Richmond** – Henry Oppenheimer reported that they are still putting pressure on DOT regarding the flooding issues in March 2010.

**Charlestown** – Tom Gentz reported that they are in the process of rewriting their wind ordinance; they are feeling a lot of resistance regarding the private wind development; US Fish and Wildlife is putting up resistance regarding the proposed municipal turbines at Ninigret; the met tower is up and gathering wind data; the avian study is underway.

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

Raymond Torrey, Secretary, WCRPC