

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES

Thursday, March 10th, 2005
William E. Powers Building
One Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island

Members Present

Dr. Robert Griffith, Chair	Representing Beverly Najarian, Director RI Department of Administration
Mr. John O'Brien, Secretary	Statewide Planning
Ms. Susan Baxter	RI Housing Resources Commission
Ms. Lucy Garliauskas (Advisory Member)	Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Joseph Newsome	South Providence Development Corporation
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Ms. Rosemary Booth Gallogly, Budget Office
Mr. William Sequino	Public Member
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Mr. Steven Cardi, Public Member
Mr. David Tremblay	Representing Jeffrey Grybowski, Vice Chair Governor's Policy Office
Ms. Janet White Raymond	Public Member

Members Absent

Mr. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	Representing Mr. William J. Fuzzily, City of East Providence
Mr. James Capaldi	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Thomas Deller	Department of Planning & Development City of Providence
Mr. Kevin Flynn	Representing Mayor Stephen Laffey, City of Cranston

Guests

Mr. Ralph Rizzo Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Bruce Payton R.I. Department of Environmental Management

Staff--Statewide Planning Program

Mr. George Johnson Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning
Ms. Blanche Higgins Supervising Planner, Land Use
Mr. Bruce Vild Supervising Planner, Economic Development
Ms. Nancy Hess Principal Environmental Planner
Mr. Benny Bergantino Senior Planner, Land Use
Mr. Paul Gonsalves Senior Planner, Comprehensive Plans
Ms. Patricia Greene Customer Service Specialist I

Staff—DOA Information Services

Mr. John Stachelhaus Geographic Information Systems Manager

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Dr. Griffith called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. Approval of February 10th minutes

Mr. Sequino moved that:

THE MINUTES BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Prager and carried unanimously.

3. Chief's Progress Report

Mr. O'Brien reported that work is proceeding on the review of the local affordable housing plans. Staff has completed initial comments on all of the plans and has had meetings with over half of the communities to discuss those comments. Meetings with the remainder of the communities are being scheduled for this month. Staff is also getting some of the initial revisions in response to comments and is in the process of reviewing those changes.

Mr. O'Brien noted that other initiatives on the affordable housing front are moving forward. Staff is working with a coalition of interests in providing training on means to implement the affordable housing plans. An all day workshop on inclusionary zoning has been set for April 8th for invited local planners

and solicitors. On April 5th, the RISD will unveil work of graduate students that designed affordable housing complexes for sites identified in some of the affordable housing plans. Mr. O'Brien stated that on Friday, March 11th the Housing Resources Commission is expected to select a consultant to help in the preparation of the State Strategic Housing Plan. Statewide Planning has been part of the selection committee.

Mr. O'Brien reported that 132 TIP proposals and 112 Enhancement proposals were received. He distributed a summary of the proposals. He stated that eight subcommittees would be meeting over the next six weeks to evaluate and score the proposals. Staff has four regional subcommittees comprised of the Transportation Advisory Committee members, Statewide Planning Program staff and the Department of Transportation staff; Bike/Ped and Rail subcommittees (also TAC, SPP, and DOT); Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee and Air Quality Transportation Subcommittee that are external to the TAC. Mr. O'Brien noted that subcommittee meetings will be posted on the website.

Mr. O'Brien stated that every three years, the MPO's transportation planning unit undergoes a certification review by the FHWA, FTA, and EPA to ensure that Statewide Planning Program's staff is complying with all the procedures and regulations. He noted that the next recertification review is upon us. The TAC will be holding a public hearing to receive comments at the March meeting. This will be followed by a day long session with the federal team on April 13th. There is no agenda yet, but one of the items is progress on recommendations made at the prior review (2002).

The website for the Highway Functional Classification has been substantially upgraded. It now shows a pdf file for every city and town as well as a listing of functionally classified roads for each community.

Scanned digital photography for the 1976-year group has been completed and will be included with other similar historic Statewide Planning digital photographs on the RIGIS web site at www.edc.uri.edu this month.

Mr. O'Brien noted that the latest air photo flight of the state continues to have quality control problems. He noted that this is causing difficulty in maintaining a land use database for the state. Staff is currently using land use data for the 1995 flight. There is an obvious need to update that and staff had hoped to do it based upon the 2003 flight.

Discussion:

Ms. Garliauskas complimented the staff on the posting of the functional classification on the web. There were numerous questions concerning the local affordable housing plans and the action of the State Housing Appeals Board to return some comprehensive permits to municipalities for action. Mr. O'Brien clarified the relationship of the plans to the moratorium that was imposed on the comprehensive permit process.

4. State Guide Plan Element 161 Update: Forest Resources Management Plan

Mr. O'Brien noted that the Council accepted the draft plan for public hearing at its January meeting. The public hearing was held March 2nd. He introduced Ms. Nancy Hess who reviewed the public hearing report and recommended changes to the plan. Ms. Hess discussed specific recommendations regarding off road vehicles and inclusion of specific language to address concerns of the Audubon Society and the Water Resources Board.

Discussion:

Dr. Griffith noted that there has been a close working relationship between DEM and the Water Resources Board on issues of forestry management in the Big River Reservoir and other areas.

ACTION:

Ms. Raymond moved to:

ADOPT THE RHODE ISLAND FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN AS STATE GUIDE PLAN ELEMENT 161.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Baxter and carried unanimously.

5. Strategic Plan for the Rhode Island Geographic Information Systems

Mr. O'Brien noted that although RIGIS has been transferred from Statewide Planning to Information Technology, the State Planning Council remains responsible for appointing members to an executive committee for the oversight of the RIGIS. He introduced Mr. John Stachelhaus, the RIGIS coordinator, to review the strategic plan that the committee has developed. Mr. O'Brien noted that there was no Council action required on the plan but that the presentation was for information purposes only.

Discussion:

Ms. Baxter asked for clarification as to RIGIS's status as a state agency. Mr. Stachelhaus responded that RIGIS was not an agency but rather a cooperative of different organizations.

Mr. Schaefer inquired as to the confidentiality of some of the 911 information. Mr. Stachelhaus noted that the photos of residences were being held as confidential.

In response to questions, Mr. Stachelhaus provided examples of how RIGIS data could be used by the private sector.

6. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Scoring Criteria and Procedural Changes

Mr. Vild noted that the staff had completed an assessment of the CEDS process last fiscal year that examined whether the anticipated benefit for EDA-funded projects was actually achieved and whether the CEDS solicitation process resulted in selecting projects likely to be funded. The results of this analysis were published in *Technical Paper 156: EDA Public Works in Rhode Island, 1996-2000*. The proposed changes to the CEDS scoring criteria and process stem from that work as well as the CEDS Annual Report.

Mr. Vild went on to note that the CEDS subcommittee had met to review the changes and they have recommended them to the Technical Committee who in turn has recommended the Council's approval. He reviewed both the suggested changes to the scoring system as well as the application format.

Discussion:

Ms. Raymond asked how the revised system would better determine the best project? Mr. Vild responded that the staff and subcommittee would use the narrative to help determine which projects better address individual criteria.

Ms. Raymond asked how an incubator project might satisfy the new 50 direct jobs criterion? Mr. Vild replied that the time frame for jobs was long range and not immediately upon project completion.

Mr. Newsome indicated that these projects had more impact on removing blight than raising wages. Mr. Vild concurred.

Mr. Sequino inquired as to whether these proposed changes had been reviewed by the cities and towns. Mr. Vild responded that they had not but that municipal representatives were on both the subcommittee and Technical Committee that recommended these changes.

Ms. Prager suggested that the criteria could be scored on a more subjective basis with points awarded accordingly.

Mr. Newsome noted, that as a past member of the subcommittee, his experience was that the staff and subcommittee gave these applications serious and thoughtful consideration.

Action:

Ms. Raymond moved to:

APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE CEDS SCORING CRITERIA AND PROJECT SELECTION PROCEDURES PROPOSED AND ENDORSED BY THE CEDS SUBCOMMITTEE AND TO REQUEST THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE ADDRESS THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE COUNCIL REGARDING THE SUBJECTIVENESS OF THE SCORING SYSTEM.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Newsome and carried unanimously.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John P. O'Brien, Secretary