

**RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, January 7, 2005
Rhode Island Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI**

MINUTES

I. ATTENDANCE

Members Present

Ms. Kristine Stuart, Chair	Public Member
Mr. Raymond Allen	R.I. Public Utilities Commission
Ms. Terry Bisson	Representing Ms. Janet Keller, R.I. Department of Environmental Management
Mr. Howard Cohen	R.I. Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Clay Commons	Representing Dr. Walter Combs R.I. Department of Health
Ms. Stephanie Davies	Town of East Greenwich
Mr. Stephen Devine	Department of Transportation
Ms. Diane Feather	R.I. Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. William Haase	Town of Westerly
Mr. Dennis Langley	Urban League of Rhode Island
Ms. Eugenia Marks	Audubon Society of Rhode Island
Mr. Ralph Rizzo	Federal Highway Administration
Ms. Diane Williamson	Town of Bristol

Land Use Advisory Members Present

Ms. Susan Bodington	Rhode Island Housing
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Members Absent

Mr. M. Paul Sams, Vice Chair	Public Member
Mr. Mark Adelman	Governor's Office
Dr. Patrick Malone	Brown University

Guests

Ms. Beverly O'Keefe	Water Resources Board
Mr. Bruce Payton	R.I. Department of Environmental Management
Mr. John Stachelhaus	Manager, GIS
Mr. William Sequino	Town of East Greenwich
Mr. Michael Walker	Economic Development Corporation

Staff

Mr. John O'Brien	Chief, Statewide Planning
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
Ms. Joyce Karger	Principal Planner, Economic Development
Mr. Kevin Nelson	Principal Planner, Land Use
Ms. Christina Delage	GIS Technician
Mr. Benny Bergantino	Senior Planner, Land Use
Mr. Paul Gonsalves	Senior Planner, Comprehensive Plan
Ms. Patricia Greene	Customer Service Specialist I

I. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Stuart called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Approve December 3rd Minutes

Action:

Mr. Haase requested that the spelling of his name be corrected.

Mr. Haase moved:

THE MINUTES BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

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

3. Chief's Progress Report

Mr. O'Brien reported that the 2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Report was approved by the U.S. Economic Development Corporation. He referred the Committee to the comments received from EDA on the process that compliments the work of the committees involved.

Mr. O'Brien noted that at the beginning of December, staff issued Planning Guidance Memo #5 - "State Review of Affordable Housing Plan Amendments to the Local Comprehensive Plan" to provide detailed instructions as to submission of the affordable housing plans.

All of the required 27 local Affordable Housing Plans were submitted by the appropriate communities and accepted for State review by the 12/31/04 deadline. Most of these plans have been posted to Statewide Planning Program's web site.

Preliminary comments by Statewide Planning and RI Housing were forwarded regarding the Affordable Housing Plans for Bristol, Charlestown, Exeter, Lincoln, Narragansett, New Shoreham, and Warren.

State approval was granted for the City of East Providence's Five-Year Update and the Town of Charlestown's Comprehensive Plan Amendment concerning Conservation Development (CHA 04-1).

Mr. O'Brien stated that the Transportation Section has prepared an outline for a Technical Paper on Freight Planning Needs.

Staff has also provided updated TIP proposal submission guidance to communities with projects in the Bicycle Study and Development Program.

Mr. O'Brien noted that four public hearings to receive TIP proposals have been scheduled at various locations around the state for the end of January and early February. Dates, times and locations are posted on Statewide Planning Program's web site.

Staff has received a request from RIPTA for Amendment #12 to the FY 2003-2005 TIP that reflects actual appropriations levels and discretionary funding as well as shifting some dollars among programs. It was advertised on December 28th. The hearing will be held at the January 27th TAC meeting, and the State Planning Council will consider the amendment at its February 10th meeting.

Mr. O'Brien introduced Mr. Paul Gonsalves and Mr. Benny Bergantino, new Senior Planners that recently joined the staff.

Action:

Mr. Feather moved to:

ACCEPT THE CHIEF'S PROGRESS REPORT.

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

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

Mr. O'Brien noted that this presentation had been postponed from the December meeting. A revised draft of the plan had been forwarded to the Committee with the agenda. He introduced Mr. Bruce Payton from the Division of Forestry who reviewed the update with the Committee.

Mr. Payton provided a comparison of the issues that were presented in the current plan and the update. He also discussed some of the accomplishments in implementing the recommendations of the current plan. He concluded by reviewing the matrix in Part 4 that presented the objective, strategies and performance measures.

Discussion:

Mr. Rizzo complimented Mr. Payton on the use of performance measures and the presentation of the matrix. Mr. Payton noted the assistance provided on that matrix by Statewide Planning staff.

Ms. Marks complimented the staff on the level of coordination evident in the process. She suggested that the role of forestry to mitigate greenhouse gas be emphasized. She also noted the importance of canopy cover in developed areas.

Ms. O'Keefe stated the forests have an impact on water quantity as well as quality.

Mr. Haase stated that forest fragmentation was often the result of local planning decisions and asked how that was addressed. Mr. Payton responded that it was addressed through training and education and he cited a number of examples.

Ms. Boddington noted how subdivision practices impact affordability of housing.

Ms. Williamson stated that RIDOT was good in ensuring appropriate species for canopy coverage.

Mr. Langley questioned the level of outreach to local schools on this subject. Mr. Payton identified the individual responsible for this effort.

Ms. O'Keefe suggested that the URI Master Gardeners program be listed as a resource.

Ms. Stuart stated that the plan should do more to emphasize what has been lost due to staff reductions.

Action:

Mr. Langley moved to:

RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE PLANNING COUNCIL ACCEPT THE DRAFT UPDATE OF THE FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR A PUBLIC HEARING.

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

5. Amendment: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Vild reported that an amendment has been proposed to the FY 2005 Rhode Island Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Priority Project List. This amendment consists of a recently submitted project proposal from the Town of East Greenwich in partnership with the R.I. Economic Development Corporation (EDC) entitled "Construction of Public Infrastructure at the Rocky Hill Fairgrounds." The project was assessed the customary ten-point penalty for lateness but still scored above the median for inclusion on this year's Priority Project List.

The applicants have described the project as follows:

"The project contemplated by this application is the construction of public infrastructure at the 97 acre site commonly known as the Rocky Hill Fairgrounds site. The build-out proposed by the developer, and subsequently approved by the Town of East Greenwich, contains a new Brooks Drug Corporate Headquarters on 25 acres, 178,000 square feet of additional office development contained in multiple structures, a hotel, several [no more than three] restaurants, and approximately 80 housing units..."

The primary component of this project, according to the applicants, and the aspect for which EDA assistance has been requested, "will be for matching funds to construct an extension of the public water supply service. The water line is approximately 1 mile in length, begins at J. P. Murphy Highway in West Warwick, and ends at the site on Division Road in East Greenwich."

Mr. Vild reported that the CEDS Subcommittee had reviewed the project and recommended it as an amendment to the CEDS with the following three conditions:

1. The development project include a day care component
2. Public transportation be promoted, and
3. The subcommittee endorses the commitment for recruitment and training of enterprise zone residents.

Discussion:

In response to a question from Ms. Marks, Mr. Sequino addressed the water and wastewater treatment capacity of the town to accommodate the project.

Mr. Devine inquired as to the location of the line. Mr. Sequino noted that it would not be within the state right of way.

Mr. Langley noted the potential positive impact of this project providing employment opportunities to nearby residents of the West Warwick enterprise zone.

Action:

Mr. Langley moved to:

RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE PLANNING COUNCIL APPROVE THE ROCKY HILL FAIRGROUNDS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY2005 CEDS PRIORITY PROJECT LIST WITH THE CONDITIONS SPECIFIED BY THE CEDS SUBCOMMITTEE.

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

6. State Land Use Policies and Plan - Update

Mr. Johnson provided the Committee with an overview of the methodology for development of various land use scenarios that would compose Part VI of the plan. He noted changes to the methodology that had been made since the December meeting and as a result of input from the Committee. He noted that staff is in the process of applying this methodology and developing the future land use scenarios.

There followed a lengthy discussion regarding the use of water service areas and/or urban boundaries as parameters for the analysis. Mr. Johnson noted that staff would likely be making additional changes to accommodate the requirements of such a complicated analysis but he encouraged the Committee to continue to provide input.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:35a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. O'Brien
Secretary, Technical Committee

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