

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES

Thursday, January 13th, 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
Mr. Kevin Flynn	Representing Mayor Stephen Laffey, City of Cranston
Mr. Ralph Rizzo	Representing Ms. Lucy Garliauskas (Advisory Member), Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Public Member Representing Ms Rosemary Booth Gallogly
Mr. William Sequino	Public member
Mr. Robert Shawver	Budget Office
Ms. Janet White Raymond	Representing Mr. James Capaldi, RI Department of Transportation

Members Absent

Jeffrey Grybowski, Vice Chair	Governor's Policy Office
Ms. Susan Baxter	RI Housing Resources Commission
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	Representing Mr. William J. Fuzzily City of East Providence
Mr. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Mr. Steven Cardi	Public Member
Mr. Thomas Deller	Department of Planning & Development City of Providence
Mr. Joseph Newsome	South Providence Development Corporation

Guests

Ms. Stephanie Davies	Town of East Greenwich
Mr. Bruce Payton	R.I. Department of Environmental Management
Mr. Michael Walker	Economic Development Corporation

Staff--Statewide Planning Program

Mr. George Johnson	Assistant. Chief
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

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Dr. Griffith called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

2. Approval of December 9th Minutes

Ms. Raymond moved that:

THE MINUTES BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Sequino 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 Council 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.

Staff is working with the staff of the Housing Resources Commission to address the requirements for the strategic housing plan. Staff has provided input on a scope of work to be issued as part of a RFP for consultant services. The Commission hopes to have a consultant selected by March.

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).

After some delays, the Resource Recovery Corporation has sent a draft update of the Solid Waste Management Plan to the advisory committee for review. They hope to complete this part of the process by early spring after which a plan will be submitted for adoption as an element of the State Guide Plan.

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 Paul Gonsalves and Benny Bergantino, new Senior Planners that recently joined the staff.

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

Mr. O'Brien noted that a draft of the plan had been forwarded to the Council with the agenda. He introduced Mr. Bruce Payton from the Division of Forestry who reviewed the update with the Council.

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. Schaefer inquired as to the loss of forest lands. Mr. Payton responded that forest lands have decreased from 59% to 56% of the state's total land area over the last twenty years.

Dr. Griffith asked how much of the forest lands was protected. Mr. Payton did not have an exact figure but noted that staff is working on documenting protected lands.

Mr. Flynn noted that agricultural land preservation appeared to be a higher priority than forest preservation. Mr. Payton noted that forest preservation received very high priority from a number of different respondents.

Mr. Schaefer inquired as to the number of communities that have real estate transfer taxes devoted to land conservation.

ACTION:

Mr. Flynn moved to:

ACCEPT THE DRAFT UPDATE OF THE FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR A PUBLIC HEARING

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

5. Amendment: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. O'Brien 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. O'Brien 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 endorsed the commitment for recruitment and training of enterprise zone residents.

The Technical Committee has also recommended the amendment.

Discussion:

Mr. Flynn questioned the credit the application received for enterprise zone recruitment. Mr. O'Brien read the criterion and the applicant's response to the same. It was noted that the site was adjacent to the West Warwick enterprise zone.

Mr. Schaefer asked if the Town or the State was entering into any type of tax treaty for this development? Mr. Sequino responded in the negative.

Ms. Raymond inquired as to the specifics of the condition regarding day care. Mr. O'Brien read the subcommittee's recommendation. Mr. Walker noted that that condition was not enforceable.

Dr. Griffith inquired as to the availability of water to the site. He noted that the Kent County Water Authority had recently been granted only half of the withdrawal they requested from a proposed well site. Mr. Shawver noted that the issue appeared to be more related to water pressure than water quantity. Mr. Sequino assured the Council that there was sufficient quantity and that Brooks had already obtained their building permits.

Action:

Mr. Shawver moved to:

**APPROVE THE ROCKY HILL FAIRGROUNDS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT
AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2005 CEDS PRIORITY PROJECT LIST WITHOUT
CONDITIONS.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Flynn and carried unanimously

6. Other Business

There was no other business

7. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9.58 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John P. O'Brien, Secretary

JPO'B:pag