

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program  
**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**

**Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006**  
William E. Powers Building  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island

**Members Present**

Mr. Kevin Flynn, Acting Chair	Representing Ms. Beverly Najarian, RI Department of Administration
Mr. Jake McGuigan	Representing Mr. Clarke Greene, Vice Chair Governor's Policy Office
Mr. George Johnson, Acting Secretary	Statewide Planning
Ms. Susan Baxter	RI Housing Resources Commission
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	Acting City Manager, City of East Providence
Ms. Lucy Garliauskas (Advisory Member)	Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Thomas Deller	Department of Planning & Development, City of Providence
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Mr. B. Michael Rauh	Environmental Advocate
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Ms. Rosemary Booth Gallogly, Budget Office
Mr. Robert Shawver	Representing Mr. James Capaldi, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Mr. Steven Cardi, Public Member
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Ms. Janet White Raymond	Public Member
Mr. William Sequino	Public Member

### **Members Absent**

Mr. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Mr. Jared Rhodes	Representing League of Cities & Towns

### **Guests**

Mr. Robert Griffith	Strategic Planning
Ms. Kelly Mahoney	Senate Policy Office
Ms. AnnMarie McMahan	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

### **Staff--Statewide Planning Program**

Mr. Bruce Vild	Supervising Planner, Economic Development
Ms. Joyce Karger	Principal Planner, Economic Development
Mr. Michael Moan	Principal Planner, Transportation
Mr. Kevin Nelson	Principal Planner, Land Use
Ms. Derwent Riding	Principal Planner, Land Use
Ms. Patricia Greene	Customer Service Specialist I

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Mr. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

#### **2. Approval of May 11<sup>th</sup> Minutes**

Ms. Prager moved that:

**THE MINUTES OF MAY 11<sup>TH</sup> BE APPROVED.**

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

#### **3. Chief's Progress Report**

Mr. Johnson noted he was sitting in for Mr. O'Brien whose last day in the office was Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Johnson reported, as indicated on the agenda supplements, that due to a problem with posting last month's meeting agenda on the Secretary of State's web site, the actions taken last month, including adoption of the Housing plan, will be submitted for action again at today's meeting.

Mr. Johnson reported that one of the requirements of the Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act of 2004 is the development and maintenance of a state GIS map of sites suitable for high-density housing development. Using some of the same analysis conducted for the Land Use Plan,

staff is preparing 21 regional area maps within the Urban Services Boundary. As the maps are completed, staff will review them, and then forward the maps to local planners for comment beginning sometime in July.

Grow Smart Rhode Island's Power of Place Summit was a huge success with 500 individuals registering. Land Use 2025 was showcased and staff continues to work with Grow Smart on feedback from the session. Other implementation activities include work with URI on a final executive summary that staff anticipates will be completed this month. The Strategic Planning unit is beginning work on development of performance measures for the plan that will entail feedback from local communities. In addition, staff is refining some of the earlier work done by the Growth Planning Council that would identify state and federal programs that can become part of a State Investment Strategy.

Mr. Johnson stated that while other staff members were at the Power of Place Summit, Ms. Katherine Trapani represented Statewide Planning at the Northeast State Planners Retreat sponsored by the Lincoln Land Institute. She reported that Rhode Island does quite well compared to our peers on smart growth issues.

Hurricane Evacuation Routes have been developed and posted on EMA's website. Statewide Planning staff continues to work with DOT and their consultant on modeling the routes and creating an evacuation plan. Staff has brought SRPEDD into the group to initiate the regional and interstate coordination.

Mr. Johnson stated that there has been some movement on the State Airport System Plan Update. Staff met with RIAC and a member of the Governor's staff to discuss the plan. RIAC has hired a consultant who is retired from FAA who was familiar with the current system plan when it was adopted in 1984. Staff expects to be seeing this before the end of the year.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Technical Committee has begun its review of the update of the Solid Waste Management Plan drafted by the Resource Recovery Corporation and an Advisory Committee. Staff has communicated some comments on the draft to the Corporation, and a meeting was held in May with Corporation and DEM staff. The Corporation is responding with revisions, and it is expected that review of the draft plan will continue at the August Technical Committee meeting.

Staff is working with the recipients of the 11 Planning Challenge Grants to get Cooperative Agreements in order, release advance funds, and get the projects underway. To date, staff has signed agreements with 9 recipients, and expects to have the others in place shortly.

Mr. Johnson concluded by noting that the RI APA Annual Clambake on June 23<sup>rd</sup> will include some "informal" recognition of John O'Brien's retirement. He noted that a limited number of tickets are available, and information on this event is in the handouts.

Mr. Flynn noted that he wished to especially recognize the efforts of Ms. Nancy Hess and Mr. Vin Flood, as well as other staff members who contributed to the Program's presentations at the Power of Place Summit. He also noted that several staff, including himself, were active participants in last week's national conference of the Congress on New Urbanism in Providence. He acknowledged R.I. Housing's financial support for the registration, not only of the Program staff, but a number of local planners. He noted that the Governor addressed the conference, and he demonstrated his understanding and support for many of the key concepts of new urbanism. His speech was very favorably received, especially by Rhode Islanders in the audience, who may not have previously known that the Governor was so attuned to these development principles.

#### **4. Strategic Housing Plan**

Mr. Flynn indicated that the Council at the May meeting approved this Plan unanimously. However, due to a glitch in posting of that meeting's agenda with the Secretary of State's Office, it is necessary that the Council take adoption action again at this meeting. To refresh members, the Council voted to accept the draft plan for public hearings in March. Two hearings were conducted in April as part of a 30-day public comment period. Copies of the plan, reflecting revisions recommended based on comments received, together with the public hearing report were provided prior to last month's meeting. He noted that several copies of each are also available today.

Action:

Ms. Prager moved to:

**ADOPT THE RHODE ISLAND FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC HOUSING PLAN 2006-2010 AS ELEMENT 423 OF THE STATE GUIDE PLAN.**

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

#### **5. Federal Transit Administration Resolution**

Mr. Flynn stated that this item also was a recapitulation of an action taken by the Council at its May meeting. This resolution is requested by the Federal Transit Administration. It authorizes the Chief of the Program to execute grants on behalf of the Council in its capacity as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning.

Action:

Ms. Raymond moved to:

**APPROVE THE AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION**

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

#### **6. FY 2007 Work Program**

Mr. Johnson noted that the various portions of the draft Work Program had been reviewed at earlier meetings. In response to questions concerning the Transit Planning task raised at the May meeting, staff conferred with RIPTA staff and convened a meeting between RIPTA, RIDOT, and the City of Providence staff to discuss a pending major study of transit. The Transit task (2704 on page 20) has been revised to reflect a coordination role for Statewide Planning as this study proceeds. Mr. Johnson reported that the draft Work Program was also reviewed with the Technical Committee and the TAC during the past month. The Technical Committee requested language be added to Part One relative to Water Supply Planning. He referred to the revision that is shown on the (pink) sheet in the handouts. Mr. Flynn noted that this new text was taken from the recently adopted Land Use Plan. The Technical Committee did not have a quorum at its June meeting, and therefore took no formal action on the draft; but under Council rules, a recommendation is not required, and staff needs to ask for the Council's action in order to get the Program in place for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. If approved, the Work Program will be submitted to Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations for approval as the Unified Planning Work Program for transportation planning. In its adoption resolution, the Council is required to certify conformance of the transportation planning process with certain federal requirements, which Mr. Johnson briefly reviewed, and referred to in the second page of the agenda supplement.

Action:

Mr. Sequino moved to:

**ADOPT THE FY 2007 WORK PROGRAM, WITH THE REQUIRED FEDERAL CERTIFICATIONS LISTED IN THE AGENDA SUPPLEMENT, AS THE UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.**

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

**7. Priority Project List: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

Mr. Vild noted that a CEDS is a report that examines an area's economic development needs, problems, and resources; sets goals and objectives; and proposes projects to achieve the objectives. An *Annual Report*, with a new list of projects, is scheduled to be submitted to the Economic Development Administration each year.

The Technical Committee appointed a subcommittee to work with the staff to evaluate the projects that are submitted. Mr. Vild distributed a revised Project Listing, which reflected a change in the score of the top project after the ranking by the CEDS Subcommittee. This change reflects a loss of points due to inability to meet the deadline for getting a municipal endorsement of the partnership arrangement; but he noted that the change in score did not affect the overall rankings. He stated that the process included reforms as suggested in an earlier Technical Paper and this has lead directly to less but better quality projects submitted for consideration. He stated that as a result of the fewer but higher quality projects, the subcommittee had recommended dropping the requirement that a project must score above the median to attain the priority list. Therefore, the recommendation includes the top eight projects, e.g.; all projects with the exception of the lowest scoring proposal, which was substantially lower than the others.

Discussion:

Mr. Sherlock asked how much funding this Program was expected to bring. Mr. Vild referred to a chart showing that the funds over the last five years has ranged between \$1 and \$2 million, and he noted that over \$2 million was expected for 2006. Ms. Raymond asked what projects accounted for the \$2 million expected in 2006. Mr. Vild replied that \$2 million was allocated to the Bold Point Park project, and that \$270,000 was anticipated for the EDC's state wireless network initiative. Mr. Schaefer asked why the traditional route of user fees were not being used to fund the Coventry/West Warwick sewer project. Mr. Vild responded that the federal funding, if received, would be part of a funding package that includes local sources. Mr. Flynn noted that it is customary to seek several funding sources in supporting such projects. He noted that the project had a number of environmental and economic benefits. Mr. Johnson added that the eastern area of Coventry is an older development that relies upon cesspools, and that past local bond referenda have not been supported. The sewer interceptor constructed several years ago for AMGEN may now make expansion of sewer service in this area via this project more feasible. Mr. Rauh asked if the area in question is within the Urban Service Boundary of the Land Use Plan. Mr. Flynn replied that it was.

Action:

Mr. Deller moved to:

**ADOPT THE PRIORITY PROJECT LIST FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION**

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

## **8. Other Business**

Mr. Flynn noted that he is considering asking the Council to appoint a Subcommittee to work with the staff to oversee implementation of the new Land Use and Housing Plans. He asked for the members input on this idea. Mr. Rauh and Ms. Prager both stated that this would be an excellent way to proceed, because it is not enough to adopt a plan without a follow-up. Mr. Flynn noted that, unfortunately, the current system provides for communities to work alone, without the state's assistance in preparing their plans. Only when a plan is locally adopted does the State respond to it. He felt there should be a better way to get state agencies input early in the process of developing or updating local plans, and that this might be a better means to build consensus and support for moving forward on state plans. Mr. Johnson noted that several of the Planning Challenge Grant projects may provide an opportunity to demonstrate this concept as it applies to Growth Centers. Ms. Boyle mentioned that the way municipalities are approached will be very important.

Mr. Sequino asked what the timing was for the Solid Waste Plan to come before the Council. Mr. Flynn replied that timing is dependant upon the review process at the Technical Committee. As noted earlier, the draft is now being revised by the Corporation to address some comments raised by the staff. Issues raised include: If the plan's principal goal is to maximize the life of the landfill for accepting municipal waste, shouldn't it be more explicit in supporting increased commercial recycling efforts, and by pricing diverting more commercial waste out of state? There are financial implications, in that these will impact the Corporation's budget and the surplus it provides to the state budget. But, since another facility like the Central Landfill cannot be replicated, is it prudent to be consuming landfill capacity at an accelerated rate? The plan presents an opportunity to address these options, and make some critical choices, but the initial draft did not fully frame these issues for decisions. Mr. Sherlock noted that commercial recycling seems to be an area that could dramatically be improved. Mr. Flynn noted that the plan states that the recycling goals are not being met. It attributes that to insufficient staff at DEM to enforce the rules. Mr. Flynn felt that the plan could outline a more aggressive course of action; particularly given the trend towards more multi-family housing, the waste of which is generally considered commercial, and not captured in municipal programs. Mr. Trevor indicated that there is time pressure on completing the plan, because the Corporation cannot seek a license for expansion of a new cell until the plan is approved.

Mr. Johnson noted that there is no scheduled July meeting, and he wished members an enjoyable month off. He noted that the August meeting will likely include an Energy Facility Siting review and possibly other action items.

## **9. Adjourn**

Mr. Flynn adjourned the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

George W. Johnson (for)  
John P. O'Brien, Secretary

GWJ:pag