

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES

Thursday, April 8, 2004
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. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Mr. Russ Dannecker	Senate Fiscal and Policy Office
Mr. Geoff DiCenso	Public Member
Mr. Kevin Flynn	City of Cranston
Mr. Ralph Rizzo	Representing Ms. Lucy Garliauskas (Advisory Member) Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Rosemary Booth Gallogly Budget Office
Mr. Robert Shawver	Representing Mr. James Capaldi, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Stephen Cardi, Public Member

Members Absent

Jeffrey Grybowski, Vice Chair	Governor's Policy Office
Mr. William J. Conley, Jr.	City of East Providence
Mr. Thomas Deller	Department of Planning & Development City of Providence
Mr. William Sequino	Public Member
Ms. Janet White Raymond	Public member
Rep. Thomas Winfield	Represents Speaker of the House
Ms. Deborah Smith	Governor's Office of Municipal Affairs

Staff--Statewide Planning Program

Mr. George Johnson
Mr. Kevin Nelson
Ms. Kim Gelfuso
Ms. Patricia Greene

Assistant Chief
Principal Planner, Land Use
Information Services Technician II
Customer Service Specialist I

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Dr. Griffith called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

2. Approval of March 11th minutes

Action:

Mr. DiCenso moved that:

THE MINUTES BE APPROVED.

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

3. Chief's Progress Report

Mr. O'Brien reported the amendments to the Rivers Policy and Plan have been scheduled for a public hearing. That hearing has been scheduled for April 21st in the Training room at 4:00 P.M.

Mr. O'Brien stated that work on the Transportation Plan Update continues and each of the 6 Focus Groups has completed its work. Staff is working on the reports and those will be presented to the TAC in April and to the Technical Committee in May. In addition, work on a survey to be distributed to 2000 recipients is complete and the Council is invited to participate in the survey. Mr. O'Brien noted that it is also available on Statewide Planning Program's web site and staff is encouraging Committee members to participate.

Mr. O'Brien stated that as reported earlier, RI Statewide Planning was one of a handful of MPO's in the nation to be selected to host a series of workshops on walkable communities. These half day workshops will take place between May 24-28 at selected communities around the state. A listing was distributed to the Committee. Mr. O'Brien encouraged members of the Council to attend one of the workshops.

Mr. O'Brien referred the Council to the recently released report of the Governor's Growth Planning Council, "Vacant and Abandoned Property – Effective Solutions for Rhode Island." He noted that the report attempts to document the extent of the problem and presents a number of recommendations directed at both state and local government as to how to address this situation. One of the recommendations is that the state develop uniform standards for GIS parcel based information. Mr. John Stachelhaus of the staff presented those standards to the Technical Committee at the February meeting. The report includes numerous case studies that illustrate potential solutions.

In March, staff awarded state certificates of approval to both Hopkinton and Warren for their initial comprehensive plans. Staff is waiting to schedule a similar presentation for Exeter.

Mr. O'Brien noted that there will be a workshop on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process on April 14th at 10:00 a.m. in conference room B. The Chief of the Economic

Development Administration's New England unit will attend to answer questions and give his agency's perspective on the availability of funding, eligibility and agency priorities.

Mr. O'Brien noted that the local city and town population projections by five year intervals up to 2030 have been developed and presented to the Technical Committee. Staff has also sent them to local chief executives and planners for their input. In the meantime, staff is preparing municipal breakdowns of those projections by sex and five year age cohorts.

Mr. O'Brien concluded by reviewing the recently released draft of legislation that would replace the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.

Discussion:

Mr. Flynn noted that, in reference to the proposed housing land trust, the solution required a dedicated source of funding. He suggested that the real estate transfer tax was a possibility.

4. Amendment: Handbook 16 – Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan

Mr. O'Brien noted that the proposed amendments to Handbook 16 would allow for the incorporation of the description and designation criteria for growth centers into the land use element of the local comprehensive plan.

He referred the Council to a revised draft of the amendment that responded to a number of comments received from the Technical Committee. Mr. O'Brien reviewed the definition of growth centers as well as the process that was envisioned for their designation. He noted that this would be entirely voluntary on the part of communities. He further stated that the Growth Planning Council had recently approved the concept of forming state technical assistance teams that would work with communities in both developing the local growth center concept and the implementation of the same.

Discussion:

Mr. Shawver asked why the Growth Planning Council would have to accept a growth center after it was approved by Statewide Planning. Mr. O'Brien responded that the Council membership includes state agency directors that could marshal the resources required to implement the growth center concept.

Mr. Sherlock asked if designating a growth center was something new or if communities could do it under current regulations. Mr. O'Brien replied that the difference in state acceptance was the priority it would provide for funding and technical assistance.

Action:

Mr. Flynn moved to:

ACCEPT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HANDBOOK 16 FOR A PUBLIC HEARING.

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

5. Amendment: Work Program FY 2004

Mr. O'Brien noted that RIDOT is requesting an amendment to include planning tasks funded by the Federal Transit Administration that were inadvertently omitted from the current program. Mr. Shawver described the tasks in more detail.

Action:

Mr. Flynn moved to:

AMEND THE FY 2004 WORK PROGRAM AS REQUESTED.

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

6. Work Program FY 2005

Mr. O'Brien reviewed Parts 2 and 3 of the draft work program. He stated that Part 2 of the program discusses performance measures for the current year and the upcoming year. Mr. O'Brien reviewed the results for the current year with particular attention to progress on State Guide Plan elements and approvals of local comprehensive plans. Staff is working with a number of other agencies such as the Airport Corporation and the Resources Recovery Corporation on the update of elements. The updates are expected to be completed and available for review and adoption during the next fiscal year.

Progress was noted on approval of initial comprehensive plans as well as five year updates. Mr. O'Brien noted that he expected next year will be busy with both five year updates as well as comprehensive plan amendments that address affordable housing. He noted that another major task for FY 05 was the update of the Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. O'Brien concluded by noting that he would return in May with a budget and staffing resources.

Discussion:

Mr. Flynn asked about the status of the 2003 air photo flight. Mr. O'Brien responded that the western part of the state was scheduled to be re flown this month with release of the photos in the fall.

Mr. Shawver provided a status report on the federal transportation reauthorization bill. He stated that the House and Senate had passed their own versions and that each provided a substantial increase for Rhode Island. Mr. Sherlock suggested that there may not be a conference resolution before the elections.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Adjourn.

Dr. Griffith adjourned the meeting at 10:22 a.m.

Respectively Submitted,

John P. O'Brien, Secretary

JPO'B:pag