

Rhode Island State Planning Council
Draft Minutes of Thursday, March 13, 2014 Meeting
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

Mr. Richard Licht, Chair	Director, RI Department of Administration
Mr. Kevin Flynn, Secretary	Associate Director, Division of Planning
Ms. Janet Coit	Director, RIDEM
Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation
Mr. Ruben Flores-Marzan	Providence Department of Planning & Development
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	RI Department of Administration, Budget Office
Ms. Amy Pettine	Representing Mr. Raymond Studley, RIPTA
Ms. Amy Rainone	Representing Mr. Richard Godfrey, Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing Governor's Designee
Mr. Sam Shamoon	Representing Mr. Michael Lewis, Director, RIDOT
Mr. Bob Shawver	Environmental Advocate
Mr. John Trevor	Representing Dr. Fine, RI Department of Health
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	Representing Mr. Marcel Valois, Executive Director, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Mr. Michael Walker	Public Member
Ms. Janet White-Raymond	Environmental Advocate
Mr. Scott Wolf	

2. Members Absent

Mr. Dan Beardsley	RILOCT, Executive Director
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	President's Designee, RILOCAT
Mr. Stephen Cardi	Cardi Corporation
Ms. Jeanne Cola	Chair, RI Housing Resources Commission
Mr. Roy Coulombe	Public Member
Ms. Marion Gold	Executive Director, RI Office of Energy Resources
Mr. Steven Hartford, Vice Chair	Policy Director, Office of the Governor
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	RI LOCAT, Government Official Representative
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member

3. Guests

Ms. Linda George	RI Senate Policy Office
Mr. Steve Devine	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Andrew Koziol	RI Department of Transportation

4. Staff – Division of Planning

Mr. Kevin Nelson	Supervising Planner, Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Karen Scott	Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Dawn Vittorioso	Executive Assistant, Division of Planning

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Licht called the meeting to order on March 13, 2014 at 9:17 a.m.

2. Approval of the January 9, 2014 Meeting Minutes – *for vote*

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 9, 2014. Mr. Walker moved to approve the minutes of January 9, 2014 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coit. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were none.

4. Draft 2014 Rhode Island State Rail Plan – *for action*

Mr. Licht introduced Ms. Karen Scott who began discussing the revisions to the Draft 2014 Rhode Island State Rail Plan as distributed in the Council's packets. Instances where the Council engaged in discussion are summarized as follows:

Mr. Licht asked which project received the most public support. Ms. Scott said the Pawtucket Station and stated that a great deal of support was received from the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls to explore the construction of a station in Pawtucket.

Next, she discussed other projects that were frequently discussed, which included improvements to the Providence Station and tunnel configuration, which will address freight trains carrying hazardous materials being precluded from movements through the Providence Station area when passengers or passenger trains are at the platform.

In addition to the above improvements, Ms. Scott said that several comments were received for commuter rail expansion, which would include a potential in-state rail shuttle which would provide more frequent

connections between Providence and T.F. Green Airport's InterLink facility in Warwick and to Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. She indicated that the project is included as part of the Plan.

Lastly, Ms. Scott said that the Plan addressed the need to replace the five (5) key bridges over the Blackstone River in Massachusetts to support freight movement from Rhode Island into the greater region. The Providence & Worcester Railroad has recognized the need to replace five of its bridges located in Massachusetts on its mainline between Worcester and Providence. These bridges, which carry the mainline over the Blackstone River, do not have the load capacity to accommodate today's 286,000 lb. rail car weights.

Mr. Licht referred to the Pawtucket & Central Falls infill station project and asked how difficult the project will be. In response, Ms. Scott explained that the original station was eliminated as a possibility through the feasibility study because the curve of the existing rail tracks was an issue. As part of the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis stage, two sites are being considered. This stage will determine the project's feasibility based on ridership and how much time it will add to the commute between Boston and Providence; however, the construction is not guaranteed. Mr. Devine added that, operationally, the site will need to work with MBTA Trains, Amtrak Trains and Freight Trains that will operate through the same route. Mr. Licht asked how much the project would cost. Mr. Devine said roughly \$25-\$30 million dollars; the track work is the biggest expense. Mr. Flynn said that the potential sites are South of the current station location.

Ms. White-Raymond referred to the public comment made by Grow Smart relating to the high-speed rail having a stop in Providence and asked if this was considered as part of the State Rail Plan. In response, Mr. Devine explained that Amtrak's original Plan to bypass Providence has been changed. He said that the USDOT is doing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Northeast corridor, which includes Boston to Washington to improve high-speed rail; all of the alignments except two would include service through Providence.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Licht asked for a motion to repeal existing State Guide Plan Element 661 titled Rhode Island Freight Rail Plan dated June 1993 and approve Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014 as its replacement. Ms. White-Raymond motioned to approve and was seconded by Mr. Walker and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. White-Raymond motioned to amend the repeal to the existing State Guide Plan Element 661 titled Rhode Island Freight Rail Plan dated June 1993 and approve Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014 to include high-speed rail alignment with a stop in Providence. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coit and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Licht asked how the bottlenecks at the Providence Station will be addressed. In response, Ms. Scott said the improvements to the Providence Station and tunnel configuration, which will address freight trains carrying hazardous materials being precluded from movements through the Providence Station area when passengers or passenger trains are at the platform. She indicated that this project will be moving forward as a short-term project. Mr. Devine added that RIDOT received a \$3 million dollar grant to analyze the long-range issues at the Providence Station, which include station amenities and increased parking.

Before moving on to next agenda item, Mr. Flynn took a moment to acknowledge Ms. Scott, Ms. Callaghan and the staff at DOT for their efforts.

5. Recreation Resources Review Committee Appointment – for action

Next, Mr. Licht introduced Mr. Flynn who explained that Mr. Walter Burke, Director for the Town of Bristol's Department of Parks & Recreation was referred by Representative Raymond Gallison to become a member of the Recreation Resources Review Committee. In addition to Representative Gallison's referral, Mr. Burke also comes highly recommended by Ms. Coit.

There being no questions or comments, Mr. Licht asked for a motion to appoint Mr. Walter Burke, Director of the Town of Bristol's Department of Parks and Recreation Department to the State of Rhode Island's Recreation Resources Review Committee with a term expiring on December 31, 2017. Ms. Coit moved to approve and Ms. White-Raymond seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Associate Director's Report – for discussion

Mr. Flynn addressed the following items under the Associate Director's report:

- Quadrennial recertification of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Public hearing will be held on March 27, 2014;
- Sea Level Rise update;
- Technical Committee Member Jane Austin's retirement and replacement by Topher Hamblett of Save the Bay;
- OWTS & Wetlands Taskforce;
- Climate Change Legislation update;
- Budget hearings;
- Rhode Map update;
- Parking Issues;

7. Other Business – for discussion

There were none.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to adjourn. Council member White-Raymond motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member Flores-Marzan and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Flynn
Secretary