

Rhode Island State Planning Council
Draft Minutes of Thursday, June 12, 2014 Meeting
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

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| Mr. Richard Licht, Chair | Director, RI Department of Administration |
| Mr. Kevin Flynn, Secretary | Associate Director, Division of Planning |
| Ms. Jeanne Boyle | President's Designee, RILOCAT |
| Ms. Meredith Brady | Representing Mr. Michael Lewis, Director, RIDOT |
| Mr. Roy Coulombe | Public Member |
| Dr. Michael Fine | Director, RI Department of Health |
| Mr. Ruben Flores-Marzan | Providence Department of Planning & Development |
| Mr. Scott Millar | Representing Ms. Janet Coit, Director, RIDEM |
| Mr. Thomas Mullaney | RI Department of Administration, Budget Office |
| Mr. L. Vincent Murray | RI LOCAT, Government Official Representative |
| Ms. Anna Prager | Public Member |
| Ms. Amy Rainone | Representing Richard Godfrey, Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing |
| Mr. Jan Reitsma | Representing Steven Hartford, Policy Director, Governor's Office |
| Mr. Peder Schaefer | Representing Mr. Dan Beardsley, Executive Director, RILOCAT |
| Mr. Mark Therrien | Representing Mr. Raymond Studley, RIPTA |
| Mr. John Trevor | Environmental Advocate |
| Ms. Janet White-Raymond | Public Member |
| Mr. Michael Walker | Representing Mr. Marcel Valois, Executive Director, RI Commerce Corporation |
| Mr. Scott Wolf | Environmental Advocate |

2. Members Absent

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|-------------------------|--|
| Ms. Jeanne Cola | Chair, RI Housing Resources Commission |
| Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells | West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation |
| Mr. Sam Shamoon | Governor's Designee |

3. Guests

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| Ms. Karyn Lowe | RI Senate |
| Ms. Barbara Maley | Federal Highway Administration |

4. Staff – Division of Planning

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| Ms. Melanie Army | Supervising Planner, Statewide Planning Program |
| Ms. Siobhan O'Kane | Principal Planner, Statewide Planning Program |
| Mr. Jared Rhodes | Chief, Statewide Planning |
| Ms. Dawn Vittoriosio | Executive Assistant, Division of Planning |

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Licht called the meeting to order on June 12, 2014 at 9:09 a.m. He took a moment to reflect on the recent passing of Mr. Henry Sherlock and acknowledged his steadfast service to the state throughout the years.

2. Approval of the May 8, 2014 Meeting Minutes – *for vote*

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 8, 2014. Mr. Trevor moved to approve the minutes of May 8, 2014 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reitsma. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were none.

4. FY 2015 Unified Transportation Planning Work Program – *for vote*

Mr. Rhodes presented the proposed FY 2015 work program as distributed with the Council's packets. He explained that the document had minor revisions and noted that the only major revision since the last draft was that the appendices were included in the current draft. Mr. Rhodes asked if anyone had any questions or comments. There being none, he asked the Council to adopt the proposed FY 15 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning as drafted.

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to adopt the proposed FY 15 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning as drafted. Mr. Walker moved and Ms. Gold seconded the motion to adopt the proposed FY 15 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning as drafted. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Licht thanked Mr. Rhodes and indicated that the Associate Director's report would be presented out of order. He then asked Mr. Flynn to provide an update.

5. Associate Director's Report – *for discussion*

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

- Grow Smart RI – Power of Place Summit;
- RhodeMap RI;
- Additional Technical Council meetings scheduled on 7/17 & 8/26 in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings which will be held on 8/1;
- CDBG Disaster Recovery funding;
- Budget update – Loss of Historic Tax Credit;
- Legislative – micro enterprise zone;
- Staffing update – Ronnie Sirota's retirement, Chelsea Siefert's pregnancy, Melanie Army's return from maternity leave, Amanda Martin's departure.

6. RhodeMap RI, Draft Economic Goals, Policies and Strategies – *for discussion*

Mr. Licht introduced Ms. O'Kane who provided a general overview of the RhodeMap RI, Draft Economic Goals, Policies and Strategies for the Housing Plan as distributed in the Council Packets. Ms. O'Kane next provided an overview of the grant's major components which include the following:

Changing Demographics

- Population and household growth is stagnant;
- The growth RI has derives from immigrants with greater diverse populations;
- Growing population of people of color had an increase from 7 to 24 percent between 1980 - 2010 and growing specifically within RI's urban communities with different cultural preferences and needs for housing;
- Elderly population increasing significantly over the next 20 years; RI already has a large 'aging population'.

Affordability

- Incomes have dropped and cost burden has increased particularly for renters;
- Housing values have dropped since 2004 and they are beginning to recover, but rents remain high;
- Homeownership challenges are increasing with a housing finance system that is changing, which makes it more difficult to access student debit/credit requirements, as well as the continuing repercussions of the foreclosure crisis;
- Minorities and the elderly face disproportionate housing burdens;
- Homeless numbers have been on the rise over the past seven years.

Funding

- Federal funding has dropped significantly and is likely to remain low;
- Inconsistent state investment in housing and homelessness from year to year;
- Fewer sources of funding available to produce deeply subsidized housing, particularly for the elderly.

Preservation/Existing Housing stock

- Disinvestment in public housing risks the loss of some of those units;
- Risk of existing affordable apartments going on the market;
- One of the oldest market rate housing stocks in the country – an opportunity and a challenge, particularly as costs for rehabilitation are high.

Fair Housing

- Ensuring fair access for everyone in all regions of RI;
- Part of this project entails working with Rhode Island Housing and the six entitlement communities on a regional analysis of impediments for fair housing.

Climate Change

- Policies and strategies needed to protect future risk to coastal developments and prevent future housing to be built in at-risk areas.

Special Needs Populations

- Homelessness – coordinated and well-resourced approach to implement the Opening Doors RI plan – which is the State's current plan to end homelessness;
- Homelessness – a shift from shelter to permanent supportive housing;
- Disabled populations – Ensuring greater access for integrated and supportive living within the community.

Governmental

- Cabinet level affordable housing presence;
- Better defined roles of housing agencies;
- Improved coordination between state agencies on housing & homelessness issues;
- State-wide standards for public housing authorities (ie. State-wide waiting list).

Regulatory and Land Use

- Growth Centers: How do we encourage a greater diversity of housing stock through zoning? Could we set thresholds for multi-family by right and density? and couple this with priority state funding investment in Growth Centers;
- Comprehensive Plans: require meaningful regulatory changes and consequences for not implementing the Plan;
- Standardize regulations at a statewide level when possible; eliminate contradictory state and local level requirements... particularly around building/fire code.

Funding

- Short and long term strategy for state investment in housing and homelessness that addresses capital, operating and service costs;
- A long term permanent funding stream is required;
- Advocate for federal funding to:
 1. Restore funding levels;
 2. Housing trust fund;
 3. Expand rental assistance demonstration program to allow RI participation.

Equity and Fair Housing

- Fair housing support center as a go-to place to assist tenants with their rights and provide landlord/tenant training;
- Fund a program such as 'family self-sufficiency' which aims to increase economic opportunities for very low income residents in a partnership approach;
- We set policies that aim to improve upon areas identified as low opportunity as well as give low income residence access to areas of higher opportunity.

Next Steps

1. Continue to obtain feedback from the Technical Council & State Planning Council;
2. Digest the feedback that came in via the public outreach during the month of May;
3. Joint Housing Council and Consortium on June 19th.

Ms. O'Kane asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Mr. Reitsma referred to governance issues and asked for further clarification as to what organization would house the proposed redevelopment agency. In response, Mr. Flynn indicated that the intent is to provide a higher level of assistance to cities and towns. He noted that there are a few communities that have the capacity to staff redevelopment agencies but that others do not. He then pointed out that RI does not have cabinet level housing functions and said that these functions are currently handled by RI Housing and the Housing Resources Commission; discussions as to which specific organization would house the proposed agency are still ongoing.

There being no further comments or questions, Ms. O'Kane and Mr. Rhodes explained that the Council would be split into two groups to discuss and contribute ideas to the Housing Goals listed below:

1. Rhode Island will have a diverse stock of market-rate housing that will match residents' needs and preferences for affordability, type, and location.
2. Rhode Island's developed areas, particularly urban locations, will be revitalized and strengthened for the benefit of existing residents.
3. Low and moderate income households will be able to secure affordable, adequate, conveniently located housing in all regions of the state.

4. Rhode Island will be a state where no one experiences homelessness, and no one is without a stable, safe place to call home.
5. All people with disabilities in Rhode Island have the opportunity to live integrated lives in the community.
6. Housing investments will be coordinated with planning for infrastructure, jobs, and services.
7. Seniors will have more housing choices that meet their changing needs, including supports that enable them to age in place.
8. Housing in Rhode Island will be free of disparities along race, class, gender and other dimensions of diversity.
9. All residents will live in safe and healthy homes and neighborhoods that are active, energy efficient, and resilient to climate change.
10. State and local governments will have the capacity and funding needed to carry out the action items in this Housing Plan.

The groups divided the goals to and convened for fifty minutes to answer the following:

1. What do you feel is missing?
2. What do you like? What resonates with you?
3. What do you feel is off base or of less importance?
4. What strategies could you or your organization add expertise or value to? Do you know of other groups already doing good work on these things? What strategies might you be able to help implement?

As the meeting came to a close, Ms. O’Kane took a moment to thank everyone for their input and indicated that the Council’s suggestions would be submitted to the consultant team which, in turn, would be incorporated as part of the draft.

7. Other Business – for discussion

There was none.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Licht was unsure if he would be in attendance for the next SPC meeting given his potential judicial position. Therefore, he took a moment to thank the Council and expressed his enthusiasm for being a part of the Council during his tenure as the Chair and the Director of Administration.

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to adjourn. Council member Fine motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member Mullaney and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Flynn
Secretary