RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, November 13, 2014
Rhode Island Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

MINUTES

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

Mr. Bob Azar, Chair	City of Providence
Mr. Michael DeLuca, Vice Chair	Town of Narragansett
Mr. Jared Rhodes, Secretary	Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Ames Colt, Ph.D.	Bay, Rivers, & Watershed Coordination Team
Mr. Steve Devine	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Thomas Kogut	RI Public Utilities Commission
Ms. Nicole LaFontaine	Town of North Kingstown
Mr. Patrick Malone, Ph.D.	Brown University
Mr. Jason Pezzullo	American Planning Association RI Chapter
Mr. Jeff Willis	RI Coastal Resources Management Council
Mr. Ronald Wolanski	Town of Middletown

2. Members Absent

Ms. Ashley Hahn	Town of West Warwick
Mr. Topher Hamblett	Save the Bay
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano	City of Woonsocket
Mr. Robert Vanderslice, Ph.D.	RI Department of Health
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Commerce Corporation

3. Staff Present

Mr. Jeff Davis	Statewide Planning
Mr. Kevin Flynn	Division of Planning
Ms. Siobhan O'Kane	Statewide Planning
Ms. Dawn Vittorioso	Division of Planning

3. Guests Present

Mr. Tim Faulkner	ecoRI News

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Azar called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. Approval of October 21, 2014 Meeting Minutes – *for action*

Mr. Azar asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 21, 2014. Mr. Willis moved to approve the minutes of October 21, 2014 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. DeLuca. The following members voted aye Azar, Colt, DeLuca, Devine, Kogut, LaFontaine, Malone, Pezzullo, Rhodes, Willis and Wolanski all voted to approve. There were no nay votes, abstentions or further discussion.

3. RhodeMap RI, Draft Economic Development Plan – *for action*

Chairman Azar introduced Mr. Davis who delivered a presentation summarizing the outcomes of the public hearing and comment period orchestrated for the draft RhodeMap RI Economic Development Plan (see attached). Items where Committee members engaged in discussion were as follows:

Mr. Azar asked why the finalization of the Plan is not being deferred until after the governor elect has taken office. Mr. Flynn noted that the intent to finalize the Plan meets the requirements of state law (§42-64-17) which specifies that the Plan be in place by October 31, 2014 and noted that the draft document was delivered on that date.

Mr. DeLuca asked if the Plan is adopted, could its content be amended by a new administration. Mr. Flynn indicated that it could and then referred to Mr. Ken Payne's letter within the public hearing report where he indicated that the updated Plan complies with RIGL §42-64.17-1, which says such a plan shall include but not be limited to:

1) A unified economic development strategy for the state that integrates business growth with land use and transportation choices;

2) An analysis of how the state's infrastructure can best support this unified economic development strategy;

3) A focus and prioritization that the outcomes of the economic development strategy be equitable for all Rhode Islanders;

4) Reliance on comprehensive economic data and analysis relating to Rhode Island's economic competitiveness, business climate, national and regional reputation, and present economic development resources;

5) Suggestions for improving and expanding the skills, abilities, and resources of state agencies, municipalities, and community partners to speed implementation of the plan's recommendations; and

6) The inclusion of detailed implementation plans, including stated goals, specific performance measures and indicators.

Mr. DeLuca next inquired as to when the previous Plan was adopted. Mr. Flynn said that it was dates from 2000.

Next, Mr. Azar asked whether the governor elect's office has requested that action on the Plan be delayed. Mr. Flynn said that it had not. He then said that Grow Smart RI published a candidate's briefing book and comments from all candidates supported the Plan. He also noted that the governor elect mentioned the Plan during one of the public debates but noted that the candidates were not individually briefed on the Plan.

Mr. DeLuca expressed his support for the Plan and stated that it is reasonably written to allow the new administration the opportunity to work with the legislature to set the priorities and determine where they will want to target resources.

Mr. Colt stated that the position of RI Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC) as noted in the Providence Journal seemed unrealistic to him. Mr. Flynn said that individuals from RIPEC were members of the Economic Development Subcommittee. Comments from RIPEC were received pertaining to taxation issues, which were incorporated into the Plan; however, formal comments during the public comment period were not received from RIPEC.

Mr. DeLuca commented that an underlying objective of the Plan is to create opportunity for greater economic growth and questioned if some language relative to this point should be included. Mr. Davis commented that additions to this effect were made to the final draft under the discussions of job creation and focusing on RI's strengths.

Mr. Kogut noted that from his perspective, the critical comments in the public hearing report showed that it is a well-written Plan and it will be a useful launching point for future action given that it focuses on what RI's strengths are and how to improve them. In particular, Mr. Kogut commented on how well the vision captures where we are. In short, the negative comments caused him to look deeper into the plan, which in turn made him further realize that it is a solid Plan. Mr. Malone said that criticism is a good thing that causes us to rethink our perspectives and said that he too revisited the content as a result and now feels, more than ever, that it is the right document at the right time.

Mr. Pezzullo asked what the biggest critique received through the process was. Mr. Flynn said that comments were received indicating that the state didn't need a Plan and others indicated that the Plan would lead to federal takeover of local and state control.

Mr. Colt expressed the need to continue educating the public on what the State Guide Plan is and how it should be utilized. He also noted the need moving forward to continue monitoring and evaluating how the Plan is implemented and how it may need to change based on the results of the evaluation process.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Azar asked for a motion to recommend that the State Planning Council:

1) Adopt the State of Rhode Island Draft RhodeMap RI Economic Development Plan Public Hearing Report dated November 2014 as distributed with the Committee packets as its own;
2) Repeal the State Guide Plan's existing Economic Development and Industrial Land Use Elements;
3) Adopt the Final Draft RhodeMap RI Economic Development Plan content as distributed with the Committee packets as the newest State Guide Plan Element;

Mr. Pezzullo moved to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. DeLuca. The following members voted aye Azar, Colt, DeLuca, Devine, Kogut, LaFontaine, Malone, Pezzullo, Rhodes, Willis and Wolanski all voted to approve. There were no nay votes, abstentions or further discussion.

4. <u>Associate Director's Report</u> – *for discussion*

This item was deferred.

5. <u>Other Business</u> – *for discussion*

Mr. Rhodes asked the Committee if they would like to receive regular emails that contain a web link to obtain the monthly meeting materials as opposed to receiving a hard-copy mailing each month. The Committee indicated that it would. Mr. Rhodes thanked the Committee for their input and noted that they could always request individual hard copies where helpful in the future.

6. <u>Public Comment on Agenda Items</u> – *for discussion*

There was none.

7. <u>Adjourn</u>

There being no further discussion, Committee member Kogut motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Committee member DeLuca. The following members voted aye Azar, Colt, DeLuca, Devine, Kogut, LaFontaine, Malone, Pezzullo, Rhodes, Willis and Wolanski all voted to approve. There were no nay votes, abstentions or further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 9:53 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jared L. Rhodes, II
Secretary

Attachment 1

Attachment

RHODE MAP RI

Building a Better Rhode Island

Technical Committee

November 13, 2014

Economic Development Plan

- Update on Public Hearings and other Public Comment
- Structure of public hearing report and attachments
- Major categories/topics discussed in the hearing report summary

Update on Comments

- Hearings: October 27 & 28
  - About 150 attendees altogether
  - 62 people provided spoken comments
- Written Comments from Sep 26-Oct 31
  - 47 submissions from organizations and individuals
- Comments from Partners
  - Technical edits from GWB, DLT, RIEMA, etc.

Structure of Public Hearing Report

I. Introduction
II. Summary of Comments & Responses
III. All Written Comments
IV. Full Hearing Transcripts
V. Responses to SEAC Comments
VI. Copy of Public Hearing Notices

Structure of Edited Plan

- "Track Changes" Version
  - Shows every edit made since Sep 26
  - Implementation matrix reflects all edits made to policy and strategy text
- "Clean" Version
  - Still unformatted. Will go into graphic design once approved

Types of Edits

- Technical Corrections
- Text added to clarify points
- Text added to provide additional information
- Substantive additions/edits to policies and strategies . . .

Substantive Additions/Edits

- Health bullet under the Vision
- Rewrite of Goal 6, Policy 4 re Health
- New strategy on food waste diversion
- New strategy on enabling legislation for combined zoning/planning review
- Some explicit edits related to equity (i.e. broadband accessibility)

Major Comment Categories

Comments fell under 2 umbrellas:

1. Approaches to Economic Development
   - 11 categories
2. Specific Topics/Content
   - 8 categories w 3 sub-categories

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

Governance

- Concerns over ceding governance authority (Federal over State, State over Local, etc.)

Property Rights

- Concerns over diminishing personal property rights/eminent domain

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

Approach to Public Participation

- Concern that this was a top-down approach/Praise for having a more bottom-up approach

Request for Additional Analysis

- How do we know the strategies will work? How have they worked elsewhere?

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

How the Plan is Implemented

- How will implementation will be funded? Overreliance on federal funds – how do we raise local revenues?
- Desire for strong leadership vs. desire for decentralized decision making.
- How are strategies prioritized?

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

Regulatory Reform

- Regulations hinder the economy
- Regulations are vital for protecting public health, safety and welfare
- Regulations are confusing, and often enforced inconsistently

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

Taxation

- Taxes need to be cut
- Taxes need to be raised
- The tax system is too complicated

Job Creation

- What is the role of this plan in creating jobs?

Comments Related to Approaches to Economic Development

Future Growth Assumptions

- Are the plan's assumptions for growth too low or too high?
- Is the assumed growth sustainable?

Urban Focus

- Does the plan's urban focus discriminate against rural communities?

Comments Related to Specific Topics/Content

Education

- Suggestions for public education reform
- Thoughts on the role of education

Energy

- Support for role of energy in the plan.
- Desire to see more/technical edits

Comments Related to Specific Topics/Content

Environment

- More language on protecting critical natural resources
- More language on food systems, agriculture, and food resilience
- More language/emphasis on climate change and resiliency

Comments Related to Specific Topics/Content

Equity

- Extensive comments received from the SEAC, also many public comments in support of an equity approach.
- Comments confused about the definition of equity and opposed to any government role in promoting equity.

Comments Related to Specific Topics/Content

Health

- Elevate role of health and connect public health with workforce productivity

Housing/Homelessness

- More support for affordable housing
- Connect stable homes with the ability to find jobs

Comments Related to Specific Topics/Content

Libraries

- Elevate the importance of libraries for education and workforce

Tourism

- Elevate the importance of the tourism industry on the economy

Final Thoughts?

- Is this ready to go before the State Planning Council?
- If so, any final caveats to go along with the Consortium's recommendation?