

Summary of Meeting 8
Citizens Advisory Committee
Greenwich Bay Special Area Management Plan
Wednesday, January 21, 2003 6:30-8:30 PM
Economic Investment Meeting
Warwick Sewer Authority, RI

At the eighth meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Greenwich Bay SAMP, guest speakers discussed economic investment issues in the Greenwich Bay area. The members also discussed potential policies and regulations for developing economic investment opportunities in the SAMP. A handout summarizing the chapter is available online at the GB SAMP website.

Economic Investment

Beth Collins of the RI Economic Policy Council (EPC) spoke about state efforts to encourage business growth that provides job stability and revenues to local communities while enhancing the character, values, culture and quality of these places. The state wants to focus on helping municipalities, such as the Greenwich Bay SAMP watershed communities of East Greenwich and Warwick, attract businesses that complement and strengthen the area's traditional employment bases, especially shellfishing, and encourage new growth in sectors such as tourism and high technology. The state is working toward these goals primarily by partnering with municipal economic development offices and collaborating with local business organizations such as the Central Rhode Island and East Greenwich Chambers of Commerce. The EPC is working with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation on implementing new programs that make it easier for new and expanding businesses to access support services and government assistance.

Dan Geagan, senior planner of the City of Warwick, provided a powerpoint presentation summarizing the municipality's long-term investment in efforts to clean and protect Greenwich Bay's natural resources. Beyond passing a \$130 million bond issue in 1996, the city has spent nearly \$10 million to improve sewer and stormwater infrastructure, purchase hundreds of acres of open space, support research efforts to investigate pollution problems in Greenwich Bay, and develop a series of plans to implement best management practices for natural resource protection in Warwick. In terms of economic investment, Warwick is currently developing a business reuse plan for a large parcel of land beside T.F. Green Airport. For permission to review the presentation, contact Dan Geagan at 738-2000 ext. 6289.

Representatives from the East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce and the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce (CRICC) described their suites of business services and explained why local businesses are drawn to the Greenwich Bay watershed. Lauren Slocum, of the CRICC, indicated that member businesses are concerned with preserving the environmental and social integrity of the region, but are also striving for a stronger business climate that would provide more tax revenues and keep local property taxes down. Jerry Meyer, of the East Greenwich chamber, said that business people are very

appreciative of the town's waterfront, historic district and recreational boating environment, but that people's interests in economic and preservation issues focus on the immediate areas where they live and work – a “chunk by chunk” approach.

CAC Recommendations/Comments

Recommendations:

- Add duck hunting on the bay as economic use – duck stamp revenues.
- The SAMP should include a site plan for reuse of dredge spoils for beach nourishment.
- The CAC should investigate opportunities that could enhance the value of the watershed to businesses and residents – such as Gorton Pond mini-park.
- The CAC needs to explore the use of buffer zones for environmental and resident protection as more businesses inhabit the watershed – can tax breaks be offered to residents willing to give up property for buffer zones?
- Aquaculture should, to some degree, be incorporated as an economic strategy in the SAMP.
- SAMP should include economic policies that encourage business opportunities that would enhance life for the people of the place rather than make Warwick nothing more than a stop-over for out-of-staters shuttling back and forth to the airport.

Action Items

- ? CRMC/CRC will revise the draft Economic Investment chapter based on feedback provided at the CAC meeting.
- ? CRMC/CRC will confirm the Narragansett Indian Tribe to speak at the CAC meeting on March 3.
- ? CRMC/CRC will recheck boat property tax numbers.
- ? CAC will estimate gas taxes.
- ? CAC member John Williams agreed to check with RIMTA and estimate economic value of marina slips.

Next Meeting

The CAC will meet next on February 4 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Warwick Sewer Authority. The focus of the meeting will be a second discussion on public access and private docks followed by a review of the framework for management chapter.

Attendees

CAC Members

Rich Langseth, Buttonwoods Bay Committee
Carol Fritz, Cedar Tree Point Assoc.
Catherine Murphy, Defenders of GB
Jack Early, Defenders of GB
Karen Way, Buttonwood Beach Garden Club
Leah Robinson, Buttonwoods Bay Comm.
Steve Insana, Buckeye Brook Coalition
John Williams, Warwick Cove Marina
Elaine Trench, EG Historic District
Commission
Nancy Dickerman, Harbor Commission
Ron Bethel, Warwick Marina Alliance
Dave Richardson, Chipiwanoxet N. Assn.
Jerry Meyer, East Greenwich Chamber of
Commerce

Individual Citizens and Speakers

Leo Martin, Harbor Light Marina
Lauren Slocum, Central RI Chamber of
Commerce
Beth Collins, RI EPC
Elizabeth Herron, URI Watershed Watch
Neil Ross, Chipiwanoxet

Management Staff & Technical Committee

Grover Fugate, CRMC Ex. Director
Paul Lemont, CRMC
Virginia Lee, URI Coastal Resources Center
Sue Kennedy, URI Coastal Resources
Center
Michael Campana, URI Coastal Res. Center