

March 2009 Monthly Report

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

There were no budget deficiencies or anomalies. Financial expenditures are on target.

BUDGET BALANCE:

- Planning Division 32%
- Zoning Division 27%
- Community Development Division 43%
- Inspection Division 26%

Permit Revenue: Building \$54,105; Plumbing \$2,241; Mechanical \$6,179; Electrical \$7,184; Late filing/re-inspection \$1,000.

PROJECTS:

- Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update (CLUP): The Planning Board established a standing subcommittee charged with the technical work on the CLUP and which includes members from the Waterfront Commission, Zoning Board, Historic District Commission, and Redevelopment Agency. Staff and Planning Board Chair met on March 12th to refine the project approach for 2009. The Comprehensive Planning Update Subcommittee initial meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2009.
- Broadway Streetscape Project: PZD&I and Public Services department staff continued coordinating on this project. Interviews were previously completed with four short-listed engineering firms. The firms were ranked and informed of their position in the ranking in accordance with the Rhode Island Qualification Based Selection (QBS) process. The Louis Berger Group, Inc. was selected as the premier engineering firm in March. The scope of work and budget were finalized for this "Preliminary Engineering" streetscape effort. The City Council will be asked to approve the recommended contract award in April.
- Sign Ordinance Amendment: The proposed amendment was approved by the Planning Board and forwarded to the City Council for review, public hearing and approval. The City Council held a Work Session on March 31st at which comments were provided to staff and the City Solicitor. The first public hearing is anticipated in April.
- Sheffield School: Preliminary information on the development proposals was provided to the City Council via the City Manager's Office. Staff is still in discussions with developers.
- Historic District Ordinance Task Force: A City Council Work Session was held on March 4th to hear a presentation by the Historic District Ordinance Task Force. All of the recommendations were heard and discussed. The proposed ordinance amendment is being sent to the Planning Board for review.
- U.S. Navy Hospital (West Side): A bus tour was conducted on March 24th to visit all of the U.S. Navy properties that are being excessed. Representative from local, state and federal agencies attended. The Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) has provided the AIPC preliminary approvals for funding a future Project Manager position. Resumes were sought for this position.
- SAMP Plan (West Side): The draft document has been released by CRMC for review prior to their approval. The plan provides a regulatory framework from which developers will work in redeveloping the West Side of Aquidneck Island. For more information, go to this website: <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/samp/aquidneck.html>

- SAMP Plan (Ocean): Staff continues to participate at ongoing meetings at URI (March 19th) for the CRMC Ocean Special Area Management Plan that will address aquaculture, fishing, boating, and alternative energy including wind farms. For more information, visit the SAMP web site at <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/>
- J.T. Connell Development Parcel: The Coastal Extreme Brewing (CEB) lease was signed by the Mayor. Staff worked to finalize the "Development Plan Review" process. Also, staff has been working with CEB to gain a Physical Alteration Permit (PAP) from RIDOT for this development. Building plans are expected this spring for groundbreaking during mid- 2009.
- Pell Bridge Realignment Project: The City received additional correspondence from RIDOT stating that the RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority is reviewing a third possible option for this project. This option relates to the removal of the "road to nowhere" while satisfying the transportation engineering "Level of Service" (LOS) standards for the project.
- Island wide Transportation Study: Rhode Island Statewide Planning and RIDOT have provided a large grant to the AIPC for this island wide consulting project. This project will study issues and multi-modal options for all state roadways on the island. Staff participated on the panel to interview three planning/engineering firms and eventually select the top firm. Discussions with this firm to address scope of work and budget are ongoing.
- Waterfront Planning: Meetings with URI and other partners are ongoing regarding waterfront planning initiatives. Grant funds have successfully been awarded for this project to URI to conduct a market analysis for the waterfront. Staff is coordinating with URI staff to accurately map waterfront parcel zones, public access ways (local and CRMC), current land uses and likely activity along the water, and to study harbor walk options. Staff attended a Rhode Island Ports and Harbors meeting in Providence on March 31st.
- Harbor Shuttle Landside Improvements: The Structural Division of RIDOT has approved final revisions to the plans and specifications. The RIDOT administrators have given approval to issue the RFP for facility construction. Planning Department personnel are working with the Purchasing Division to finalize scheduling. A contract award is anticipated this spring for work to be completed during the summer and fall of 2009.
- U.S. Census 2010: Staff has been in contact with the U.S. Census Boston office and will be scheduling a training session regarding the use of the new 2008 database which is now available in the American Community Survey. This annual survey is now available to communities under 30,000 in population.
- Perrotti Park Dredging: Planning personnel, the Harbormaster, and Grants Coordinator are working to finalize the CRMC dredging permit prior to its submittal.
- Deputy Zoning Officers: For March, the DZOs responded to 10 noise calls. There were 5 noise citations issued and three short-term rental posting registration violations and 1 over capacity violation issued.
- Scanning & Document Retrieval: The lease of the large-format Xerox scanner/copier/printer ended in March. Staff researched the options (new lease, new machine, other) and found that the purchase of this machine was the best choice. Utilizing existing software and hardware, the department has begun the process of digitizing all plans and records in its possession. Work has already begun on the scanning of development plan review files and building permit records. Once scanned, these documents are immediately available for viewing using the Vision and Opal software. Discussions have begun with MIS on the best way of making these records available to the public via the city's website. The goal is to complete the scanning process by the end of 2009.
- GIS: Update of plat maps continued. Interactive maps are now ready for posting to the website. This requires purchase of ArcPublisher which has been postponed due to spending freeze.
- Building/Inspection Division Number of Inspections:

❖ Building	94
❖ Electrical	90
❖ Plumbing/Mechanical	45

❖ Municipal/Minimum Housing 126

Construction Projects Underway

351 Thames St. 41' North new three story restaurant and hotel
Ochre Point Road Salve Regina Chapel
25 America's Cup Avenue Marriott Hotel meeting room and common area renovations
315 Bellevue Carriage House restoration (fire damage)
5 New single family homes on Gibbs Ave., Brenton Road, Hammersmith Road and Evarts Street

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

Historic Preservation and Historic District Commission: Eleven new applications were received in March. One regular meeting was held. A vacancy exists for a Historic Planner.

Critical Area Review Board: One application was received and approved by the Board for condensers at 255 Ocean Avenue.

Zoning Board of Review: One regular meeting was held in March. Thirteen new petitions were received. All new applications are digitized for filing and distribution.

Planning Board: One regular Planning Board meeting was held, four Special Use Permits and seven dimensionally nonconforming Special Use Permits were reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board continued two demolition permit applications.

Building Board of Appeals: One meeting was held and one application for variance of RI State Building Code Section 1612.5,1,1.1-1.3 and Appendix G Section 105 was granted for 10 Brown and Howard Wharf (Ice House).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

2009 Application Round: Staff has been working on the CDBG application submittals in March and drafting the grant proposal for submittal to the State. The kick-off meeting for the next CDBG application round occurred on February 13, 2009. The deadline for submitting the application to RI OHCD is May 8, 2009. The application will need to be reviewed by the Planning Board on April 20th and /approved by the City Council on April 22nd.

In addition to the \$700,000 in requests normally included in the Newport CDBG application, there are two additional funding sources this year. Approximately \$1 million in total will be available to Small Cities CDBG communities (such as Newport) under the Economic Stimulus program. Aside from the information that projects should be of the "shovel ready" variety, communities have not received any information regarding state priorities or the application process for this funding. On the assumption that public infrastructure improvements will qualify, staff are identifying improvement projects which are likely to be eligible for these funds. Additionally, \$500K will be available for activities addressing the "Foreclosure Crisis." Staff will be working with Church Housing Corporation to ensure that some of this money comes to Newport.

Over the past month, staff has worked closely with various City departments to develop CDBG proposals for Equality Park, the Kingston Avenue Tot Lot, the Third Street Tot Lot, a Police foot patrol for the West Broadway neighborhood; and the paving of several streets.

Residential Rehab Loans: A total of \$6,634.22 in rehabilitation loan funds was disbursed in March.

Respectfully submitted: Paige R. Bronk, AICP, Director