

June 2, 2016

This is in reply to questions concerning the status of the Comprehensive Plan:

Comprehensive Plan: Rhode Island currently has 23 municipalities in the Expired or Denied category. None met the 2011 Comprehensive Planning Act requirement for an updated 10-year plan by June 1, 2016 due date. These 23 include Smithfield, Lincoln and Cumberland.

- Legislation is anticipated to pass that will change the Comp Plan submission requirement date **to July 1, 2017**. This avoids a legal problem, because Statewide Planning did not get new Comp Plan standards approved until January 14, 2016, and so could not require submission until January 2017 (One year later by law).
- North Smithfield, East Providence and West Greenwich have **Denied** status. The state has not approved their plans. That has no effect on its legal status within the Town and no effect on grant application scoring or receiving grants. In fact, we have received more grants in the last 7 years than ever before.
- The Town Council in 2006 approved a Comp Plan that included a (future) Land Use Map with 64 changes in land use. That is an extraordinary number to get changed within the 18 month limit that was allowed.
- The state denied approval for the NS Comp Plan in March 2007. Among other things, they wanted higher land use densities by right.
- By 2009, the Town Council still had not approved any of the proposed 64 changes. That oversight exposed the Town to serious legal challenges. We avoided the problem by seeking repeated 90-day extensions from Statewide Planning, on providing revisions for state approval. Statewide Planning eventually gave us an open-ended extension.
- In 2011, Statewide Planning encouraged municipalities look beyond immediate *compliance* issues and focus on updates for the 10-year plan. Statewide Planning then began developing new standards.
- All the materials on the website are from the 2006 Comp Plan, which is still in effect. The concept of *compliance* has become moot.
- The new Comp Plan is in development with draft chapters and maps. The 2017 version will include new chapters, most notably on energy. The Planning Board has held workshops. Meetings have been held with the Conservation Commission to reach agreement on the natural resources chapter. The Town is holding a charrette on planning for the National Park on June 11 in development of the Blackstone River Valley chapter. All are welcome!
- If anyone has questions as to retaining the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan process, we will be happy to meet and discuss the specific issues that may be bothering some folks in town.