

**Deborah Carney**  
**Town Council President**  
Charlestown Town Hall  
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Charlestown, RI 02813



TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN

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July 2, 2021

Kevin Nelson  
Supervising Planner  
Division of Statewide Planning  
235 Promenade St., Suite 230  
Providence, RI 02908

Re: Charlestown – Comprehensive Plan Update ID#: CHA-CP-21

Dear Mr. Nelson,

I write to you as the President of the Charlestown Town Council and as one of the two Town Councilors who voted against adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

I write to express my concerns with the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update currently before RI Statewide Planning. I ask that the plan not be approved and instead be sent back to the town of Charlestown for corrections, revisions and inclusion of the results of the Town wide survey.

I have attached the following documents for your review and consideration:

- A) The 21 page document that I submitted on May 3, 2021 for the Charlestown Public Hearing which includes specific concerns with this Comp Plan Update.
- B) May 4, 2021 email from Diane Keith, Program Manager Northeast Region Federal Lands to Parks, requesting that the National Park Service be given more time to review the Plan. Her request was denied by three members of the Town Council.
- C) The Chariho Regional School District's presentation outlining the necessity for school construction, which was ignored by the majority of the Council.
- D) The excerpt from the minutes of the June 11, 2012 Town Council meeting - Presentation by Elyse Laforest of the U.S. National regarding Ninigret Park.

Below is a list of reasons why the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan should not be approved by the state.

1) The Comp Plan update should not be approved until the results of the Town wide survey are known.

The Charlestown Comprehensive Plan should reflect the current needs of the community while planning for the future. In 2019, the voters of Charlestown approved \$75,000 to hire a professional polling company to conduct a Town wide survey to be sent to every resident and taxpayer in Charlestown. That is approximately 10,000 surveys. This survey will be mailed out within the next week and will evaluate “public support, attitudes, and perceptions towards Town services, programs, and capital assets”.

The upcoming survey is six pages and asks a wide variety of questions which will get the pulse of our community.

The Comp Plan update relies on responses from a questionnaire mailed in the Town’s Pipeline (a Town newsletter) five years ago and asked 4 questions. Only 87 responses out of 5377 questionnaires were received. This is a response rate of 1.5%. It must be noted, the 87 responses were varied, but only certain viewpoints were incorporated in the Comp Plan Update.

2) The Plan places a heavy emphasis on passive recreation, but lacks a balance with active recreation. The Plan also mis-states the allowed uses at Ninigret Park, the Town’s largest park. By adopting this Plan, the Town Council failed to allow for appropriate review and approval by the National Park Service.

Ninigret Park has long been considered the “Jewel of Charlestown” and a potential source for economic opportunity. The 2021 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan is written so that development of Ninigret Park is restricted, and includes information that is factually incorrect. Additionally, the majority of the Town Council ignored the request from Diane Keith, Program Manager National Lands to Parks, for more time to review the Plan. She was made aware of the Comp Plan rewrite less than a week before the Plan was adopted. (Full email correspondence included in attachments) The Town does not know if she has any additional concerns with the Comp Plan Update.

3) The Charlestown Comprehensive Plan lacks any true Economic Opportunities

A review of this Chapter shows a lack of any real economic opportunities in Charlestown. Yard sales are not an economic driver. The Charlestown Economic Improvement Commission submitted multiple Economic Opportunity Action Items for inclusion in the plan. Their recommendations for Action Items were not included. (Full list included in the 21 Page attachment- Carney correspondence to Weinreich)

4) The inclusion of conservation easements without provisions for compensation.

In the past, the Charlestown Planning Commission has required a property owner to give a conservation easement to the Town, without compensation, as a condition of

approval. This is the equivalent of extortion and should not be codified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Language has been added to this Comp Plan regarding "Conservation easements" yet compensation for these easements is not referenced at all. Language needs to be added to ensure property owners will not be forced to give their land to the Town as conditions for approval of plans.

5) The "People" Component is missing from this Plan.

The 2021 "Vision Statement" (Page 1-3) is heavy on statements about the natural, cultural and historic resources and that limited facilities and service keep our property taxes low. The "People" component is missing from this statement, and the "people" component is lacking in this Comp Plan.

The "Major Goal" or Vision Statement, from the 1991 Comp Plan reads as follows: "The Goal is to protect the natural and cultural resources and rural character of the Town while providing the housing, economic base and services necessary for the broad range of residents to enjoy the high quality of life associated with the Town."

The 1991 Vision Statement places the focus of the Comprehensive Plan on the people of Charlestown, which in my opinion, is where it should be.

5) The information regarding the need for improvements with regards to the Chariho School District is factually incorrect.

The Charlestown Comp Plan Update states, "the school district does not anticipate the need for additional educational facilities." This statement is not correct. Attached is a copy of the January 12, 2021 presentation by the Chariho School District showing the need for construction. The cost for the options under consideration range from \$59.4 million to \$137 million (before state aid reimbursement).

These are just a few highlights of all the concerns I have with the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update. The complete document I submitted to the Town Council and Planning Commission which includes my recommendations, is attached for your review and consideration. I voted against this Comp Plan because it is not a true Plan for addressing the needs of our community.

Thank you for considering my request to not approve the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update and instead send it back to the town of Charlestown for corrections and inclusion of the results of the Town wide survey.

Sincerely,

Deborah Carney

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Charlestown Town Hall  
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Charlestown, RI 02813  
401-533-2811  
[deb.carney@charlestownri.gov](mailto:deb.carney@charlestownri.gov)

Attachments:

- May 3, 2021 Communication from Deb Carney to Amy Weinreich, Charlestown Town Clerk
- May 4, 2021 email from Diane Keith, Program Manager Northeast Region Federal Lands to Parks
- Chariho Regional School District's presentation outlining the necessity for school construction
- Excerpt from the minutes of the June 11, 2012 Town Council meeting - Presentation by Elyse Laforest of the U.S. National regarding Ninigret Park.

**From:** [Deb Carney](#)  
**To:** [Amy Weinreich](#)  
**Cc:** [Mark Stankiewicz](#); [Peter D. Ruggiero \(peter@rubroc.com\)](#); [Jane Weidman](#)  
**Subject:** Comp Plan  
**Date:** Monday, May 3, 2021 3:43:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [COMP PLAN -May 3.docx](#)

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Hi Amy,

Please forward the attached document regarding the Draft 2021 Comp Plan to my fellow Councilors and the Planning Commission members.

Thank you,  
Deb

*Deborah Carney*  
*President*  
*Charlestown Town Council*

May 3, 2021

To: Charlestown Town Councilors  
Charlestown Planning Commissioners

From: Deborah Carney, Charlestown Town Council President

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At the request of my fellow Councilors, I am submitting my comments, suggestions, and requests for supporting documents regarding the Draft 2021 Comprehensive plan ahead of the joint public hearing scheduled for May 4, 2021.

The Town Council is weeks away from mailing the Town wide survey to every resident and taxpayer.

A brief history of the Town wide survey is as follows. In 2019, the majority of the Town Council voted to place an item in the Town's budget for a new community center for approximately \$3.1 million. Some of the funding for this was to come from unassigned surplus money that was in excess of the 25% reserve amount recommended by the Town's Auditors. The \$3.1 million community center was overwhelmingly defeated by the voters. In response, the Town Council held meetings to discuss what to do with the surplus. Eventually, a revised budget was proposed, some of the money was used to reduce the tax rate and approximately \$75,000 was budgeted to conduct a Town wide survey. The original intent was to ask our residents and taxpayers what to do with the excess \$3.1 million unassigned surplus.

Some of that surplus was expended last year. During the meeting when this was discussed, a member of the public asked the Council if they would actually listen to what the residents recommended through the survey. The Council assured those in attendance, they would listen to the results of the survey.

The upcoming survey will get the pulse of our community. The Comp Plan should reflect the wants and needs of our Community.

Throughout this Comp Plan, reference is made to "surveys" that allegedly support the statements made in the Comp Plan. Aside from the 4 question "Survey" that was sent out in the Pipeline approximately 5 years ago, I am unaware of any other surveys that were conducted. The questionnaire from the Pipeline 5 years ago asked 4 questions and received only 87 responses out of 5377 copies.

That's a response rate of **1.5%**. 200 of these copies were left at the library and at Town Hall. Anyone could have picked up and submitted multiple responses. Of the responses, the answers were varied. If Charlestown wants to be a vibrant community with young families and thriving businesses and parks for people to

enjoy, then we need to grow. The problem is many young families can not afford to move to Charlestown with the high housing costs. We need to grow with an eye towards balancing development and conservation. We need to take into account the needs of the entire community. We need to support development that allows young families that can afford to move here. We need to support businesses to employ those looking for jobs.

The Town is now undertaking a far more intricate survey which will be mailed within the next month to every resident and taxpayer in Town. The Comp Plan expired 8 years ago. The Comp Plan is supposed to reflect the most current wants and needs of the Town and include a Plan on how to achieve those goals. This current Plan relies on input from 5 years ago from 1.5% of the population. When the responses to the pre-survey postcard were sent out, many respondents expressed a need for balancing growth , the economy and revitalization. This Plan lacks the balance.

With regards to Ninigret Park, the Draft 2021 Comprehensive Plan is written so that development of Ninigret Park is restricted. Chapter 9, Policy 2.2 specifically states, "Utilize Ninigret Park in a manner that is compatible with the adjacent Ninigret Wildlife Refuge". This statement seems to be in violation of the deed.

While this may be what some in Town envision for Ninigret Park, this may not be what the majority in Town envision for the park.

This plan also fails to acknowledge the difference between the Town owned 55 acres of Ninigret and the 172 acres also owned by the Town but subject to restrictions by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. This draft 2021 Comp Plan is heavy on passive recreation, and light on active recreation. While some may favor passive recreation, there are also those in Town that favor active recreation and their voices deserve to be heard too.

Recommendations:

- 1) Introduction -Page 1-2 - REWORD THE FOLLOWING UNDERLINED SENTENCE AND PROVIDE COPIES OF THE "COMMUNITY SURVEYS" THAT WERE CONDUCTED

"Community surveys have consistently shown that residents favor limited, sensitive development and maintaining the rural character of the Town".

What surveys? Aside from the 4 question survey that was sent out approximately 5 years ago that received a 1.5% response rate, I am unaware of any other surveys that were mailed out. While most people in Town may not favor large development, the sentence implies that multiple surveys were done, which I do not believe is factual.

- 2) Introduction - Page 1-3 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE-

“To maintain what residents desire and tourists seek, namely active recreational facilities, relatively quiet and undeveloped beaches, open spaces to walk, hunt or watch birds, and clean waterways to canoe and kayak or fish, vigilance is needed in terms of future development and actions. Growth that happens must be sensitive to the character of Charlestown and preserve the environment on which the quality of life of residents depends.” There are many people in Town that support active recreation and their voices should be represented as well.

3) Introduction - Page 1-3 -REWRITE THE “VISION STATEMENT”- REPLACE WITH THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

The current draft vision statement is heavy on statements about the natural, cultural and historic resources and that limited facilities and service keep our property taxes low. The “People” component is missing from this statement. I propose utilizing the “Major Goal” from the previous Comp Plan which is as follows:

**“The Goal is to protect the natural and cultural resources and rural character of the Town while providing the housing, economic base and services necessary for the broad range of residents to enjoy the high quality of life associated with the Town”**

This shifts the focus of the Comprehensive Plan to the people of Charlestown, which in my opinion, is where it should be.

4) Natural Resources - Page 2-1 - REMOVE THE STRIKE THROUGH LANGUAGE IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE AT THE END OF PARAGRAPH 3-

“Over generations, this has led to a shared vision for Charlestown as a place to celebrate its outdoors and its history, ~~and to plan for a future that relies on the protection of the natural environment rather than growth or overdevelopment to sustain the economy.~~”

Charlestown has an unemployment rate of approximately 10%. This is not sustaining the economy. The Town cannot rely strictly on the natural environment to sustain the economy. There needs to be balanced growth. During the April 29 public hearing I noted there were items in the Comp Plan that could be used as “weapons” to promote certain philosophies. This is one of these them. This could be used to stop balanced “growth” in Town.

5) Natural Resources - Page 2-1 - ALL REFERENCES ARE PASSIVE RECREATION - THE ACTIVE COMPONENT IS MISSING- ADD REFERENCE TO NINIGRET PARK

## **“Recreation Chapter and Economic Opportunity Chapter**

Recreational programs and assets are described in the Recreation chapter, with an emphasis on outdoor activities that rely on Charlestown’s exceptional and varied natural resources. The main source of economic activity in Charlestown is tourism, which is directly tied to the natural environment and the recreational activities it supports – boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, crosscountry skiing, bird watching, stargazing and sight-seeing. The tourist economy is described in detail in the Economic Opportunity chapter.”

6) Natural Resources - Page 2-4 & Page 2-21, indicates 45% of land is “conservation or open space land”. Were these constraints to development considered anywhere in the Comp Plan (as referenced below) with regards to total percentage of land that cannot be developed?

I did not see this calculation noted in the Comp Plan.

“Map NR-1 Soils Constraints to Development, indicates the areas of Charlestown with moderate constraints to development, with seasonal high water table and with ledge and slopes over 15%. It also identifies those areas with hydric and subaqueous soils, as well as those with rock or sand, including the entire barrier beach. Areas with these soils are considered to be areas with severe constraints to development.”

7) Natural Resources - Pages 2-27 -2-28- REWORD- THIS WHOLE SECTION HAS A NEGATIVE IMPLICATION- IT SHOULD MENTION PROPERTIES SOUTH OF ROUTE 1 WITH NON-POTABLE MAY NEED A WATER SOURCE AT SOME TIME AND THIS WATER COULD BE UTILIZED

## **Groundwater**

“Water Resources Board purchased land in the Cross Mills section of Charlestown with state bond money to “land bank” it as a possible future water supply source. If developed, this public water supply could potentially be used for other towns in Washington County. In 2017, the Town of Charlestown was also confronted with the possibility that groundwater from one of the aquifer deposits could be removed, trucked out of town and sold as a commodity. This possibility resulted from an agreement that members of the Narragansett Indian Tribe made with a company proposing to build a natural gas power plant in the Town of Burrillville to supply cooling water in the event that the agreement with the principal water supplier could not be executed.

Protecting land from development that may or may not someday become a source for public water is supported by the town, with conditions. One condition is that any such water drawn from the aquifer be returned to the groundwater (by means of on-site septic systems) and not transferred out of Charlestown and the watershed. This condition should be applied town-wide to prevent any property owner, public or private, from utilizing

the groundwater as a commodity.

Another concern with the availability of public water is that it allows for greater densities than that with private wells; the presence of public water lines puts development pressure on the land areas that could connect to the water supply.”

8) Natural Resources Page 2-31 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

“Conservation easements are a method of maintaining land in open space or agricultural use by obtaining the rights to development. A land trust, conservation organization or municipality holds the development rights with future development prohibited by deed restriction. The organization that holds the conservation easement monitors the property and in some cases manages it as wildlife habitat, as farmland, for wood lots, etc. Conservation easements should identify all restrictions and address the placement of structures related to permitted uses, such as signage, nature blinds, accessory farm buildings, and even alternative energy facilities like wind turbines and solar panels. Property owners cannot be forced to give conservation easements to the Town or other agencies without compensation.” Property owners should not be forced to give their property to the Town or any other agency without receiving compensation.

9) Natural Resources - Page 2-35- ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

“Action 2 Provide for the permanent protection of wetlands as part of the land development and subdivision review process:

a. Require peer review, or staff review for all major developments, particularly those involving new road construction, on parcels with significant areas of wetlands;”

Certain reviews could be handled by Town staff and may not need a “peer review”

10) Natural Resources - Page 2-36 – ORDER SHOULD BE REARRANGED. Dark Skies are given priority over other natural resources. Groundwater protection, OWTS regulations and other areas that more directly impact people should be given higher consideration than dark skies. “Dark skies” skies is given its own “In particular”. Groundwater protection should be of more importance.

Additionally, item “f” gives more importance to wildlife than to people. This should be the People’s Plan.

“Action 4 Periodically review all town regulations that are in place to protect natural resources in order to ensure effectiveness and that all standards are up to date. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Dark sky ordinance;
- b. On-Site Wastewater Management System (OWTS) regulations;
- c. Groundwater protection district;
- d. Soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance;

- e. Energy siting regulations; and
- f. Noise ordinance, particularly as it relates to protecting wildlife (**what about people?**)

In particular the Dark Sky Lighting ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that it reflects current scientific understanding of the impacts of blue light on both humans and wildlife, and includes recommended lighting standards to mitigate these impacts.”

11) Natural Resources - Page 2-37 - ADD AND DELETE THE FOLLOWING

Action 4. Consider the establishment of a water source protection ordinance which requires that water drawn from aquifers within Charlestown remain within ~~the watershed~~ Charlestown and prohibits the withdrawal and sale of groundwater as a commodity.”

With sea-level rise, no one can predict exactly who will have non-potable water and what will be required to provide potable water. The Town should not actively restrict the access to potable water.

12) Recreation - Page 3-1 - The “Introduction” highlights passive recreational activities with minimal reference to active recreation. Due consideration should be given to active. ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

“With its miles of barrier beaches, large salt ponds, open bodies of fresh water and a boundary along a major river; hundreds of acres of conservation land available for passive recreation; and its active recreation parks and extensive recreational programming, Charlestown has many outdoor recreational opportunities. Many activities are available all year long; the beaches are accessible year round for fishing and walking, the dark skies afford stargazing at any time of the year, and in the winter, snow shoeing, skiing and bird watching are possible on a number of trails. Ninigret Park offers active recreation for soccer, basketball and tennis”

13) Recreation -General comment - The draft 2021 Comp Plan places a high emphasis on passive recreation. The Plan should include a definition of what is considered “passive” and what is considered “active”. This would provide clarity to the reader.

14) Recreation - Page 3-2 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

Economic Opportunity Chapter

Recreation relates directly to economic opportunity in Charlestown as the abundant outdoor recreational activities support tourism, the main source of economic activity, and enhance the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Ninigret Park is ideal for events that bring tourists to Town and

support our local businesses. Activities like swimming, beach combing, boating, fishing, bicycling, hiking, sightseeing, stargazing and bird watching make the community attractive to visitors and tourists, support businesses, and attract new residents, some of whom retire in Charlestown. The tourist economy is described in detail in the Economic Opportunity chapter.” Events at Ninigret Park bring tourists to Town which support our local businesses and should not be excluded

15 ) Recreation - Page 3-3 - LANGUAGE CORRECTION-

“The department is advised by a Parks and Recreation Commission, consisting of ~~nine residents~~ seven to thirteen residents as defined by ordinance of Charlestown appointed by the Town Council. The commission discusses and advises on recreational and cultural programming, acquisition and maintenance of facilities, and setting of budgets and fees for recreational programs and facilities”

16) Recreation - Page 3-7 - Recreation Table - ADD THE NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PARKING SPOTS AT EACH LOCATION

17) Recreation - Page 3- 14 - NOTE - “STARGAZING” IS ONCE AGAIN MENTIONED.

Rhode Island’s climate does allow for year round hiking except for a few weeks of most years. Hunting and fishing are also popular year round, as is **stargazing**.

18) Recreation - Page 3-14 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE AND REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE

Year Round Access to Recreation Charlestown has long been known as a place for summer recreation because of its beaches, salt ponds and freshwater ponds. However, the numerous and large areas of open space and conservation lands with diverse habitats north of Route 1 provide ample opportunities for fall, winter and spring activities such as hiking, foliage tours, horseback riding, bicycling, hunting and fishing, cross country skiing, ice skating, bird watching and stargazing. Year round recreational activities are ~~also provided by making use of indoor facilities~~ limited due to minimal indoor facilities.

19) Recreation - page 3-14 - The facilities listed below do not allow for active recreation, and even passive recreation is limited. REMOVE THE EXISTING LANGUAGE AND REPLACE WITH THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

~~“Opportunities to provide indoor recreation can be found by making uses of facilities already in place in Charlestown and surrounding communities. These include the public schools, the Cross Mills Public Library, the Senior/Community Center, the Quonochontaug Grange (owned by the Dunn’s Corner Fire District), area YMCAs and even facilities at the University of Rhode~~

Island”

PROPOSED -“Opportunities to provide indoor recreation in Town are not abundant. Limited opportunities exist at the public schools, the Cross Mills Public Library, the Senior/Community Center, the Quonochontaug Grange (owned by the Dunn’s Corner Fire District). Area YMCAs and facilities at the University of Rhode Island offer opportunities outside of Charlestown”

20) Recreation - Page 3-16 - REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE AND “APPENDIX REC3” IN ITS ENTIRETY

Inclusion of this language is inconsistent with the presentation made by Elyse LaForest from the U.S. National Parks Service during the June 11, 2012 Town Council meeting. The language as written can be used in the future to prevent implementation of the Master Plan for Ninigret Park. It is not accurate and needs to be removed.

“Ninigret Park consists of two parcels. One is a 175 acre lot owned by the town but subject to restrictions by the National Park Service (NPS) that it be used “exclusively for public park or public recreation purposes in perpetuity by the Town of Charlestown”. This land use must complement that of the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge abutting the property to the southwest. The other is a 55 acre lot owned by the town and not subject to the administrative restrictions of the NPS. ~~However, records indicate that the award of the entire 230 acres was predicated on using it compatibly with the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge (see Appendix REC-3, which contains documentation sent from the Refuge Manager to the Charlestown Town Council in 2012).”~~

21) Recreation - Page 3-16 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE - Recommendations are passive related

Master Planning

The development of Ninigret Park has been guided by three utilization/master plans: the 1980 Utilization Plan and the 1994 Utilization Plan, both approved by the NPS, and the 2008 Ninigret Park Master Plan. The 2008 plan proposed separating the concert venue from the recreational uses. Recommendations included entrance improvements, relocation of Park Lane, treed parking and camping areas, construction of additional soccer fields, little league fields, a future indoor skating rink, a concert / festival center, introduction of design techniques to reduce paved surfaces and other Low Impact Development (LID) principles, and invasive species management. A naval air museum and a new community center were proposed, as well as expansions that would allow additional athletic and public events.

22) Page - 3-17 - The proposed language is restrictive and leans towards halting development of the park. The four bullet items listed below are all passive related. The Park is intended for people and active recreation as well as passive. Again, dark skies are stressed in the Plan. ADD UNDERLINED LANGUAGE,

## REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH

### Park Facility and Improvement Needs

Ninigret Park has hosted over thirty years of music, circus, sporting and other types of events. These special events require basic facilities such as restrooms, potable water access, electricity, fencing and other functional elements that assist in working effectively with large crowds. These are currently provided by the event promoters. The town ~~must~~ should balance any expansion of facilities for accommodation of large public events with such concerns as daily public access to the park, spring and fall bird migrations and the nesting season at the adjoining Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge. Permanent lighting in the park ~~is of particular concern~~ should be dark sky compliant because of potential effects on the refuge and its mission to protect birds and other wildlife, and interference with the dark sky activities at the Frosty Drew Observatory and Science Center. Noise pollution affecting wildlife, residents and visitors is another concern.

Improvements and enhancements have taken place over the years, most recently using funds from a \$1 million bond approved by voters in 2015 and from the Ninigret Park Fund, which is dedicated to the development, operation and maintenance of the park. Wayfaring signs and an entry area/welcome kiosk will be in place by 2020. Ninigret Park is in need of additional physical improvements, some of which depend on remediation of areas in the park by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Aside from the ongoing maintenance needs of the various recreational facilities, these include:

- More areas with shade, and tables and benches for people to congregate, relax or take in a scenic view
- Additional walking and multi-purpose trails

#### Additional ball fields

- Removal of the aging macadam (original service areas, runways and roads of the naval air station)
- Removal of invasive plant species coordinated with transplanting or planting of native and hardy vegetation to enhance open and stark areas within the park, create wind barriers and serve to direct people through natural means.

23) Recreation - Page 3-17 - The proposed language for Ningret Park is restrictive. The park is for people to enjoy. The language as presented reads as if only passive recreation is allowed. The language as presented does not differentiate between the Town owned 55 acres and the additional 172 acres. There is a difference between the two parcels and the correct language should be inserted. STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE SHOULD BE REMOVED

~~“Future Use The town has an obligation to the National Park Service to manage all of Ninigret Park compatibly with the adjacent Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge. This obligation not only arises out of the historical record, but is based on the critical importance of the refuge as a stopover habitat during bird migration. Bird banding station data collected at the Ninigret~~

~~National Wildlife Refuge indicates that the number of birds using Charlestown as a stopover in the Atlantic Flyway is higher than any other refuge in New England, and birds that are displaced from the refuge are much less likely to survive. An understanding of the sensitivities of the wildlife refuge is needed to ensure that future improvements at the park are consistent with this obligation, which includes avoidance Charlestown Comprehensive Plan RECREATION 2021 Public Hearing Draft 3-18 of activities, noise or lighting that would cause birds to avoid the refuge, particularly during spring and fall migration. Surveys have indicated that the majority of residents in Charlestown want Ninigret Park to be available for year round use, but to stay relatively undeveloped with more walking and biking trails. There is support for public events of a moderate scale. There is also support for community oriented events such as arts and craft festivals and antique shows, or even a once a year community yard sale."~~

Additionally - the following language included in the paragraph above is also incorrect, "**Surveys have indicated that the majority of residents in Charlestown want Ninigret Park to be available for year round use, but to stay relatively undeveloped with more walking and biking trails. There is support for public events of a moderate scale. There is also support for community oriented events such as arts and craft festivals and antique shows, or even a once a year community yard sale.**" What surveys is this statement referring to? Please sight the specific surveys. This is a park for both active and passive recreation. Noting support for "arts and crafts festivals, antique shows and even a once a year community yard sale" ignores any sort of active recreation at the park. This could be used in the future to prevent activities or development of the park.

24) Recreation - Page 3-20 - The draft 2021 Comp Plan is heavy on passive recreation and light on active recreation. Language should be inserted to encourage both. ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

#### RECREATION: GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS GOALS

GOAL 1 "Provide Charlestown residents and visitors with a wide range of active and passive recreation opportunities to meet both current and future needs."

25) Recreation - Page 3-20 - Policy 1.1, focus' on activities outside of Charlestown and opportunities provided by other Towns and the University of Rhode Island. Emphasis should be given to providing these opportunities within Town. **Consult with Charlestown's Parks and Recreation Director for input.**

Policy 1.1 Continue to provide active recreational programming for all ages. Recreational programs and sports should continue to be made available for all ages in Charlestown. Organized activities such as field trips and family programming that reinforce intergenerational connections in the community should be expanded if possible. Recreational opportunities can also be enhanced

by coordinating with other programs and facilities in the region. These include recreational activities provided by other towns and organizations such as the YMCA, as well as the University of Rhode Island.

26) Recreation - Page 3-21 - REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- This language assumes the existing Plan for Ninigret Park needs to be redone and made to be consistent with the Wildlife Refuge as previously indicated. This is not based on fact.

~~Action 2 Review the previous plans developed for Ninigret Park to determine the best utilization of the park.~~

~~REMOVE Any plan for Ninigret Park must take into consideration the impact of park activities and facilities on the adjoining wildlife refuge, on other recreational uses in the park, and on residential areas and streets, including the need for traffic control and emergency management. Implementation of the agreed upon design solutions should occur as funding is available.~~

27) Recreation - Page 3-22 - ADD UNDERLINED LANGUAGE - The four Action items under Policy 2.1 all revolve around passive recreation. Due consideration needs to be given to active recreation.

Policy 3.1 Maintain and expand the varied recreation opportunities on Ninigret and Quonochontaug Ponds, on the freshwater ponds and the Pawcatuck River, for boating, swimming shellfishing and fishing, while protecting the resources from the adverse impacts of overuse

28) Recreation - Page 3-24 - REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH ITEMS - Those events have not occurred at the Park in many years. They should not be included as they no longer occur

“Events

The park hosts many events such as:

- Bicycle races
- Disc golf • 5Ks to support non-profits
- Seafood Festival, Rhythm and Roots Festival, ~~Harvest Festival~~
- **Special Olympics**
- Easter egg hunt, Halloween program and New Year’s Eve bonfire
- Summer concert and movie series”

29) Recreation - Page 3-25 - ADD UNDERLINED LANGUAGE –

Town Hall Athletic Field / Puchalski Field

- Chariho Cowboys football and cheerleading August through mid-November

30) Recreation - Pages 3-42 - 3-44 -REMOVE ENTIRE APPENDIX –

LETTER FROM CHARLIE VANDEMOER , REFUGE MANAGER OF THE RI NATIONAL WILDLIFE COMPLEX DATED FEBRUARY 23, 2012- **OR ADD THE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES FROM JUNE 11, 2012 INCLUDING THE COMMENTS FROM ELYSE LAFOREST OF THE U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.** The content of the correspondence from February 23, 2012 does not convey the same information as that which was presented on June 11, 2012.

31) Historic Resources - Page 4-2 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE OR EXPLAIN HOW THIS SUPPORTS THE LOCAL ECONOMY

“Economic Opportunity Chapter

Charlestown’s cultural history and wealth of historic resources are essential to its economy. Tourism, which is the main source of economic activity, is enhanced not just by the abundant recreational activities, but by cultural resources and landscapes which directly draw tourists. ~~Adaptive reuse of older buildings and sensitive use of natural and scenic landscapes support the local economy.~~

32) Historic Resources - Page 4-7 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE - it is not factual

“Around 1942, the US government purchased 600 acres consisting of farm land and summer homes along the shore of Ninigret Pond for a naval air station where pilots were trained for night flights in World War II. The base later became the Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field, an adjunct to the Quonset Point Naval Air Station. In 1974 the field was closed and declared surplus property by the federal government. The site was considered for development as a nuclear power plant, but this proposal was dropped after many years of significant local opposition and litigation. By 1979, following the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement, the General Services Administration (GSA) announced it would distribute the property to the Department of Interior, to be utilized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the national wildlife refuge system; and to the Environmental Protection Agency (who subsequently transferred title) for purposes of environmental research with holdings around Foster Cove. The remainder was awarded to the Town of Charlestown, ~~for passive recreation and use compatible with the wildlife refuge.~~”

33) Services and Facilities - Page 5-7 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE - the language is subjective.

“The condition of the schools and supporting facilities are generally considered to be good. The high school and middle school were renovated and updated in 2010. A new building to house the Alternative Learning Academy was completed in 2018 allowing the program to be moved from ~~dilapidated~~ portable trailers. Ongoing updates to Chariho Tech were also completed in 2018. Charlestown Elementary has developed an outdoor learning program which utilizes an all-weather area, outdoor learning centers, a nature trail and a rain garden that

can be utilized for education as well as absorbing runoff from surrounding asphalt. The district maintains an ongoing program for building and system upgrades and for renovations in cooperation with the RI Department of Education.”

34) Services and Facilities - Page 5-7 - Table SF-1 - ADD INFORMATION FOR 2019- 2020

35) Services and Facilities - Page 5-7 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH INFORMATION – The Chariho Regional School District Committee is currently considering construction Options

“Overall, school enrollment declined steadily in the Chariho School District in the period between the 2009-10 and the 2018-19 school years, dropping by 476 students, a decrease of about 13%. At the same time, the percentage of Charlestown students among the total enrollment in Chariho also dropped slightly (Charlestown enrollment dropped by 229 students, a decrease of about 22%). Barring major demographic shifts in the district, enrollments are projected to be generally flat or modestly decline over the 20-year planning horizon of the comprehensive plan. ~~As a result, the school district does not anticipate the need for additional educational facilities within this period.~~ However, enrollment numbers could rise if significant additional residential development occurs within any of the three towns.”

36) Services and Facilities - Page 5-8 - THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED - Not all of the Fire Districts provide fire protection. Corrected information needs to be included.

“Fire Districts

Fire protection in Charlestown is provided through quasi-municipal fire districts chartered by the State of Rhode Island. Fire districts collect taxes from property owners to support operations and provide fire protection, either directly or under contract with another fire district. The Dunn’s Corners Fire District, Shady Harbor Fire District, Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District (sometimes simply referred to as the Central Beach Fire District) and Charlestown Fire District are the districts serving Charlestown’s residents. The Shady Harbor and Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire Districts have fee-based contracts with the Dunn’s Corners Fire District, which is headquartered in Westerly and also provides contract services to two other fire districts in that town.”

37) Services and Facilities - Page 5-20 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE - SENTENCE IS NOT TRUE

~~“There are no capacity and few maintenance issues in any of the schools in the district.~~ It is important that Charlestown maintain active communications with

Richmond and Hopkinton over the course of the planning timeframe of this plan so that demographic changes within the district can be adequately planned for and accommodated as necessary.”

38) Services and Facilities - Page 5-20 - CORRECT UNDERLINED YEAR  
“Road Network The DPW has worked over time to upgrade all town roads to a minimum standard so that they are maintained more easily and effectively, and costly repairs are avoided. These objectives have been accomplished, with the exception of improvements to Old Mill Road (center-eastern area of town off of Route 2). Old Mill Road is slated to be reconstructed in ~~2020~~ 2021”

39) Services and Facilities - Page 5-24 - BESIDES BURRILLVILLE, WHICH OUTSIDE PARTIES ARE “INTERESTED IN EXPLOITING” OUR RESOURCES?

**“Charlestown’s abundant water resources have attracted the attention of outside parties interested in exploiting those resources.** At present, there are no restrictions on water withdrawals for export from the community. Heavy pumping volumes for withdrawals to provide water supply to other communities, for commercial water bottling and sales, or to be sold as a commodity has the potential to disrupt the natural hydrology and threaten the long-term viability of the local water supply. The review of options for restricting large-scale water withdrawals for export outside the town is an important issue in the 20-year planning horizon of this plan.”

40) Services and Facilities - Page 5-24 - PROVIDE BACKUP DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT THE BOLDED STATEMENT

“The state purchase of property in Charlestown in Cross Mills as a potential future water source provides a protective measure for potable water availability in this densely developed village setting. The yield from the well is projected to be sufficient to supply water to homes and business in Cross Mills and the Charlestown Beach area. **However, the well head protection area includes at least two active OWTS and does not meet the minimum RI Health Department standards for a public water supply. Before developing this water supply, a variance would have to be granted by the Health Department.** It is also the position of the Town of Charlestown that any water drawn from the aquifer be returned to the groundwater (by means of on-site septic systems) and not transferred out of the watershed, and that any public water supply be carefully considered in terms of its potential to increase development pressure.”

41) Services and Facilities - Page 5-28 - ADD UNDERLINED ACTION ITEM 1 TO POLICY 1.6 –

Charlestown relies on volunteers to staff our fire departments and to some extent our ambulance service. Having a volunteer fire department instead of a paid department saves our Town a considerable amount of money.

Tax incentives for volunteers should be considered

“Policy 1.6 Encourage and recognize volunteerism in the fire, rescue, ambulance service, library, Parks and Recreation Department activities, town boards and commissions, and other volunteer services.”

Action 1 - Provide tax incentives for volunteer firefighters and first responders

42) Energy - Page 6 -3 - PROVIDE BACK UP TO SUPPORT THE BOLDED SENTENCE

“Energy use in Charlestown is typical, consisting predominantly of electricity provided by National Grid and propane and fuel oil for space and domestic water heating. As a rural community, **Charlestown also has many homes where wood is the primary or secondary heat source.**”

43) Energy - Page 6-7 - HOW DOES THIS NUMBER DIFFER FROM THE 45% OF THE LAND NOTED AS CONSERVATION ON PAGE 2-21. WHERE ARE THE ADDITIONAL BIKE PATHS BEING CONSIDERED?

“As a community outside of the Urban Services Boundary as described in the RI State Land Use Policies and Plan (“Land Use 2025”)8 , Charlestown is already meeting the above strategies of the GHG emissions plan. **Over 35% of the town is protected conservation land that includes forest and farmland.** The existing land cover indicates that approximately 70% of the town is forested with many areas in un-fragmented tracks of over 100 acres. Many of these forested areas are managed for firewood production. The town has maintained its traditional development pattern of density in villages and low density residential development outside the villages and commercial areas. **Bike paths have been created and more are planned.** The dark sky ordinance and policies encourage energy efficient lighting.”

44) Energy - Page 6-7 - REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- Charlestown already has at least 45% undevelopable land, the number is higher when constraints to development are taken into consideration. What percentage is considered enough?

“In order to achieve the GHG emissions plan goal of no net future loss of forest or cropland, Charlestown will need ~~to continue to acquire land for permanent conservation, direct development away from the remaining undeveloped land, and continue to concentrate development in the villages and existing neighborhoods~~ using tools such as transfer of development rights and neighborhood infill, as well as mandating cluster or conservation development that protects most of the land that is slated for residential subdivisions.”

45) Transportation - Page 8-15 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- How long is a standard fire hose?

“New private roads, which are referred to as residential compound common private ways, are permitted for certain subdivisions which are constructed at half the density allowed by zoning for a conventional subdivision on the same parcel, provided that the parcel to be subdivided has a minimum frontage of 50 feet on a public street. These common private roads require a minimum of 12 feet of travel way, constructed of gravel or pervious surface, within a 24 foot right-of-way. Concerns about access for more than one fire engine at a single emergency event have pushed residential compound road widths to 20 feet in some subdivisions. Solutions that maintain the narrower and treed aspect of rural roads, but also provide access for fire safety, such as occasional road turnouts, ~~or limiting the road length to the equivalent of that of the standard fire hose, are needed.~~”

46) Transportation - Page 8-16 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- This 20' may not be wide enough to allow for appropriate fire protection. Safety of Charlestown's property owners should be the main concern.

“In general, the Planning Commission recognizes the benefits of narrower roads, and the gravel surface of private roads, in maintaining Charlestown's rural character. Flexibility in road design is as important in the design of new subdivisions and compounds as is lot configuration; flexible roadway standards can include the following: ~~• Allowing reduced roadway widths in low population and low traffic developments, particularly for new subdivision streets that are serviced by rural collector roads with a width of 20 feet.~~”

47) Transportation - Page 8-19 - PROVIDE BACKUP FOR THE BOLDED STATEMENT

“Under consideration for many **years and strongly supported by the Town of Charlestown is a coastal bike route which would parallel Routes 1 and 1A**, from Westerly to Narragansett, and which would eventually link with the existing South County Bike Path. This path, also known as the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, connects the Kingston Station in South Kingstown with the pier area of Narragansett, passing alongside the Great Swamp Management Area, through the Village of Peace Dale and downtown Wakefield, and under Route 108 to its end near Route 1A.”

48) Transportation - Page 8-19 - EXPLAIN HOW THE MULTI-USE PATH IS A PROTOTYPE FOR A SHORELINE BIKE ROUTE

“Since then, Charlestown has taken the lead in advocating for a shoreline bike route, including hiring a consultant in 2007 to undertake a corridor study. In 2016 Charlestown formed a tri-town committee in partnership with Westerly and South Kingstown to evaluate alternative routes and to promote the project within the communities and with the state. In 2018 the town hired a consultant to undertake

a feasibility study of the Charlestown section of the project, referred to as the Coastal Route Bikeway, to identify the most desirable route connecting Ninigret Park to the village center near the South Kingstown town line, and to determine design and construction costs. **The multi-use path completed in Ninigret Park in 2016 serves as a prototype for the shoreline bike route.**”

49) Transportation - Page 8-21 - NOT PRACTICAL - MANY OF OUR ROADS ARE NOT WIDE ENOUGH FOR SAFE TRAVEL

“In particular, the establishment of bike routes along town roads (to complement the existing designated bike routes along state roads) is an effective way to promote bicycling as an alternative means of travel in Charlestown. **Finally, Charlestown’s extensive trail system, described in detail in the Recreation chapter, provides an opportunity for not only hiking and passive recreation use but an alternate means of traveling within town.**”

50) Transportation - Page 8-22 - WILL THIS LEAD TO REDUCED LOT SIZES? IS THIS THE INTENT?

“Action 3 Require, to the degree possible, compact development in the form of cluster or conservation subdivisions, to reduce the length of new roadways.”

51) Transportation - Page 8-25 - THIS PROMOTES THE BIKE PATHWAY FOR ROUTE 1A- THAT WAS NEVER APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL

“Policy 3.1 Work locally, regionally and at the state level to expand options for bicycling in Charlestown. Charlestown will continue its efforts to expand bicycling opportunities, in particular by coordinating with the RI DOT regarding existing and proposed bike routes, bike lanes and bike paths, and implementing the goals of the Bicycle Mobility Plan as it relates to bicycle infrastructure and operations. Action 1 Communicate with RI DOT to ensure that roadways suitable for bicycle travel are properly signed.

Action 2 Collaborate with RI DOT to expand the designated state bike route network by identifying additional roadways suitable for bicycle travel.

Action 3 Work towards the development of the shoreline bike route, including collaboration with the Towns of Westerly, South Kingstown and Narragansett.

Action 4 Work with RI DOT to develop safe crossings of Route 1 for bicyclists, with a focus on the area between Narrow Lane and Prosser Trail.”

52) Economic Opportunity - Page 9-12 - THIS SEEMS TO BENEFIT A MAP MAKING BUSINESS

“Maps that identify any number of nature and heritage trails can be created and made available online, and at the tourist information kiosk run by the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce. Migratory bird-watching activities during the fall and winter months could be part of this effort. Linking recreational opportunities to businesses can be done through synergy in marketing. For

instance, maps could be created that link hiking, biking and kayaking trails with nearby restaurants and specialty business stores.”

53) Economic Opportunity - Page 9-12 - EXPLAIN HOW DARK SKIES PROVIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

“Dark Skies Charlestown has the darkest night skies between New York and Boston, which draws many thousands of visitors year round to the Frosty Drew Observatory and Science Center in Ninigret Park, where on unclouded nights people can view star clusters, the moon’s surface and the planets. In addition to the observatory, a star theater was constructed in 2006 to expand viewing opportunities and provide a space for lectures and a gallery of astrophotography. The town also has a “dark sky” ordinance to regulate the installation of outdoor commercial lighting to protect”

54) The following suggestions were recommended by the Economic Improvement Commission- I recommend all the suggestions be incorporated.

1) Economic Opportunity -Page 9-17 - Under Policy 1.3 ADD UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

Action 4 - "Develop regulations and standards that allow the establishment of mixed use land developments on parcels which are suitable for economic expansion and/ or re-development". This is a logical Action item that should be included

2) Economic Opportunity -Page 9-17 - Policy 2.1 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- REPLACE WITH UNDERLINED LANGUAGE

~~“Action 1 Identify and rank open space land that provides additional passive recreation opportunities”~~

REPLACE with "Provide additional facilities and improve existing recreation facilities at Town owned Parks/ properties".

3) Economic Opportunity - page 9-17 - - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- This policy will be used to prevent activities at Ninigret Park.

~~Policy 2.2 "Utilize Ninigret Park in a manner that is compatible with the adjacent Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge"~~

4) Economic Opportunity Page 9-18 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH LANGUAGE- ADD UNDERLINED LANGUAGE- Yard sales at Ninigret Park does not do much for economic opportunity.

~~“Action 1 Investigate the possibility of establishing public events at the park such as a community yard sale, an arts festival or an antique show.”~~  
Expand and promote public events at the Park such as festivals, shows and active recreation.

5) Economic Opportunity- Page 9-18 - The draft 2021 Comp Plan focuses much of the Economic Opportunity on dark skies. EXPLAIN

Action 2- "Promote year round tourism based on Charlestown's dark skies and the night sky viewing opportunities at the Frosty Drew Observatory".

6) Economic Opportunity pPage 9-18 - REMOVE STRIKETHROUGH WORD – REPLACE WITH UNDERLINED WORD

Policy 2.5- Action item #3 , ~~Develop~~ Explore a coastal bicycle route along RoUte 1A corridor in conjunction with Westerly and South Kingstown (see Transportation Chapter).

7) Economic Opportunity - Page 9-19 - REMOVE THE STRIKETHROUGH WORDS- the Charlestown Land Trust is a private organization. Should not be singled out.

Goal 3 - Policy 3.1 - Action 1, "Work with ~~the Charlestown Land Trust and /or other~~ conservation agencies or groups to identify and preserve prime agricultural lands, with funding available from local and state bond money."

8) Economic Opportunity -Page 9-19 - DEFINE "PARTNER WITH"

"Goal 3 - Policy 3.1- Action 2. Partner with active farms and/or community groups to develop an agricultural lease program to assist new farmers."

55) Land Use - Page 11-17- PROVIDE A COPY OF THE BUILD- OUT ANALYSIS

56) Land Use - Page 11-33 - PROVIDE DEFINITION FOR "ACTIVE" AND "PASSIVE" RECREATION

"Open Space – Conservation: Land protected for conservation and **passive** recreation purposes. This includes land owned by the town and by state and federal agencies, and land owned by private conservation organizations for the purpose of protecting significant plant and animal habitat areas, landscapes, wetlands, groundwater resources and other valuable open space from development. It also includes most common open space associated with cluster residential developments. Use of such areas are limited to passive outdoor activities, such as hiking, plant study and bird watching.

Open Space – Recreation: Open space intended to be used for **active** recreation with improvements in the form of structures, playing fields and courts permitted. It encompasses areas of open space not protected exclusively for conservation purposes including recreation camps, bathing beaches and common open space specifically set aside for recreational use, as well as active recreation areas.

Although it can be used recreationally such land may also be preserved for conservation purposes.”

57) Land Use - Page 11-34 - ADD THE UNDERLINED LANGUAGE - property owners should not be forced to give conservation easements to the Town

“Action 2 Work with the Charlestown Land Trust, RIDEM, US Fish and Wildlife Service and organizations such as The Nature Conservancy to identify and preserve land with important natural features and wildlife habitat, farmland, and land with recreation potential by means of outright purchase, acquisition of development rights or through the purchase of a conservation easement.”

58) Land Use - Page 11-36 - REPLACE STRIKETHROUGH WORD WITH UNDERLINED WORD

“Action 4 ~~Utilize~~ Consider transfer of development rights (TDR) to conserve land in rural areas of town while allowing construction of traditional neighborhood designs on small lots in designated village areas, including multifamily and affordable housing, without increasing the overall buildout of the town.”

59) Future Land Use Map - MAP LU-4 - CHANGE “INSTITUTIONAL” TO “MUNICIPAL” - Municipal more accurately describes the areas for the Municipal property, Example - Town Hall, Police Station, Elementary School, etc)

## Re: [EXTERNAL] Ninigret Park / Charlestown Comprehensive Plan

Keith, Diane J. <Diane\_Keith@nps.gov>

Tue 5/4/2021 1:16 PM

To: Jane Weidman <jweidman@CharlestownRI.gov>

Cc: Mark Stankiewicz <mstankiewicz@CharlestownRI.gov>; Deb Carney <Deb.Carney@CharlestownRI.gov>; Bonnie Van Slyke <bonnie.vanslyke@CharlestownRI.gov>

 4 attachments (2 MB)

Charlestown RI Comprehensive Plan NPS Request for Changes 20210504.docx; 1 - 1981 FLP deed - 172.41 acres.pdf; 4 - 1982 FLP Amended POU.pdf; 3 - FLP application red.pdf;

Hi Jane,

Thank you for discussing the Draft Charlestown Comprehensive Plan and the relation of the Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) program that is administered by the National Park Service to the 174 acres that are part of Ninigret Park in Charlestown.

As we discussed, the National Park Service has an administrative responsibility to monitor uses of FLP properties to ensure that there is public recreation provided in perpetuity.

There are two primary documents which govern the use of Ninigret Park - the application used to acquire the land (attached), and the deeds. The application includes a section called the Program of Utilization (POU). The POU, and any subsequent amendments approved by FLP (attached), describes how the Property will be built out and used for public park and recreation purposes. FLP has stewardship responsibilities to ensure the Town is using the Park in accordance with all FLP policies, the application, as well as all terms, conditions, and covenants contained in the deeds.

The National Park Service was made aware of the Comprehensive Plan last week and was never contacted by Charlestown to review information about Ninigret Park in the plan.

After a quick review, I am requesting that some small changes to the text be made before the plan is approved by Charlestown and that the legal documents associated with the property be included in the Appendix to guarantee that there is an awareness of the Town's commitments that were made when the property was acquired from the FLP program.

I was told that changes presented before the May 4 Town Council meeting would be considered so I have attached the text changes and the documents that, at a minimum, be included in the draft report before it is adopted by the Town.

We respectfully request that NPS be given more time to review the plan over the next two weeks as we were never notified about the plan over the last few years of its development.

Thank you for your assistance and we look forward to working with the Town in the future to continue to develop Ninigret Park into a recreational amenity for the public.

Diane Keith

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Diane Keith  
Program Manager  
Northeast Region  
Federal Lands to Parks  
15 State St.  
Boston, MA 02109

617.981.2154

Federal Lands to Parks



Interior Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT

Interior Region 3: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI

Interior Region 4: IA, MO

Interior Region 5: KS, NE, ND, SD

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**From:** Jane Weidman <jweidman@CharlestownRI.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 4, 2021 11:07 AM  
**To:** Keith, Diane J. <Diane\_Keith@nps.gov>  
**Cc:** Mark Stankiewicz <mstankiewicz@CharlestownRI.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ninigret Park / Charlestown Comprehensive Plan

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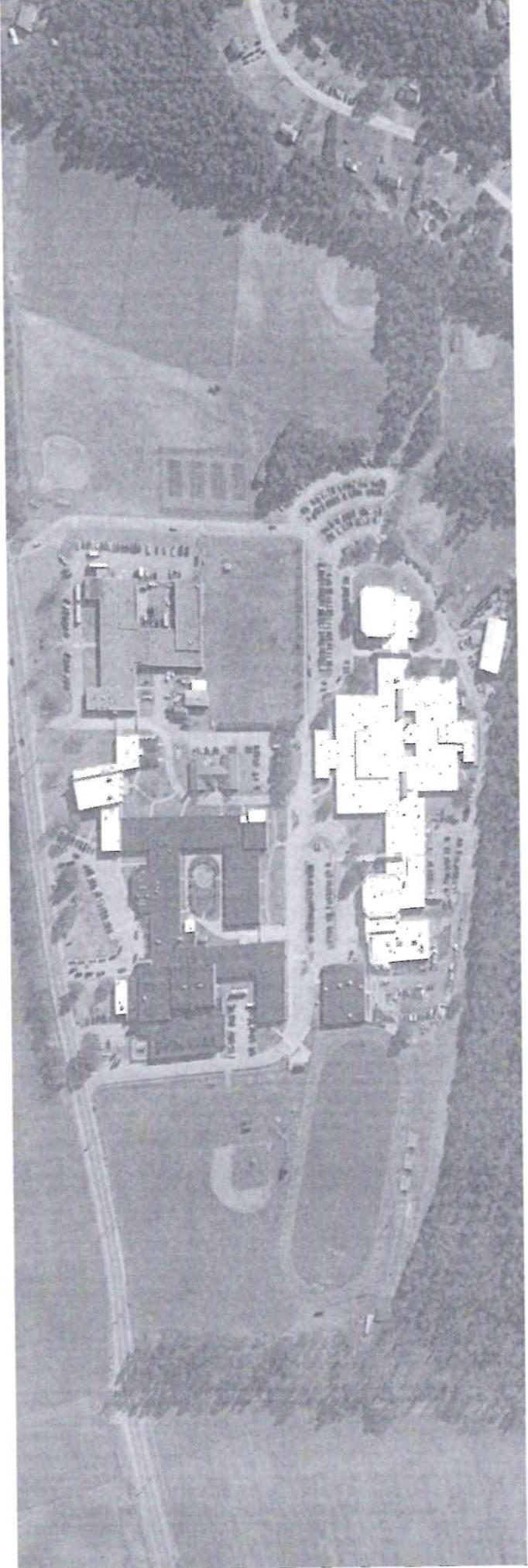
Ms Keith

Awaiting your call. In the meantime please find a 2012 letter regarding "consistent" use of the town park to our council president at the time from your predecessor.

Thank you

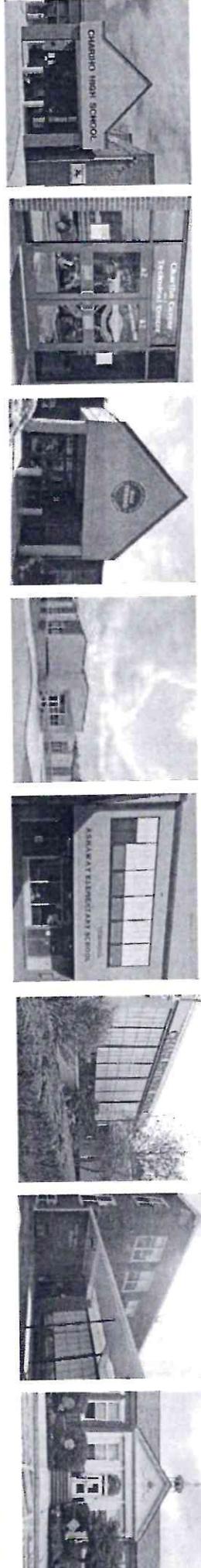
Jane Weidman  
Town Planner  
401-364-1225

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# Chariho Regional School District

## Information Session



PREPARED BY:  
**RGB ARCHITECTS**  
January 12, 2021



# Demographics Summary

## CRSD Increase in Enrollment

- The overall district enrollment is projected to **increase** over the next five years.
- Forecast to increase by **+2.5%** (83 students) between FY19-20 and FY24-25.
- Elementary Student increase 82**
- Middle School Students decrease 41**
- High School Student increase 42**
- The primary factors driving district demographics over the next 10 years:
  - The slowing in the increase in empty nest households
  - The relatively higher number of elderly housing units turning over
  - A sustained rate of in migration of young families.

## Charlho Regional School District Total Enrollment Chart

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
PK	48	48	48	48	48	48
K	229	223	222	221	219	218
1	211	235	231	229	228	226
2	199	221	244	240	238	237
3	241	206	228	250	246	244
4	205	235	200	223	246	242
<b>Total: PK-4</b>	<b>1133</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1215</b>
5	244	216	247	211	235	258
6	255	244	216	247	211	235
7	237	254	243	215	246	210
8	265	248	265	254	226	257
<b>Total: 5-8</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>960</b>
9	308	343	320	343	328	291
10	346	308	342	319	342	327
11	273	319	283	315	293	315
12	252	268	313	278	309	288
<b>Total: 9-12</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>1238</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>1255</b>	<b>1272</b>	<b>1221</b>
<b>Total: PK-12</b>	<b>3313</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>3402</b>	<b>3393</b>	<b>3415</b>	<b>3396</b>
<b>Total: PK-12</b>	<b>3313</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>3402</b>	<b>3393</b>	<b>3415</b>	<b>3396</b>
<b>Change</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-19</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>

1. Orange cells are current enrollment; Blue cells are forecasted enrollment; Red box is design enrollment

2. This chart is an excerpt from "Charlho Regional School District Total Enrollment Chart" compiled by McKibben Demographic Research, LLC



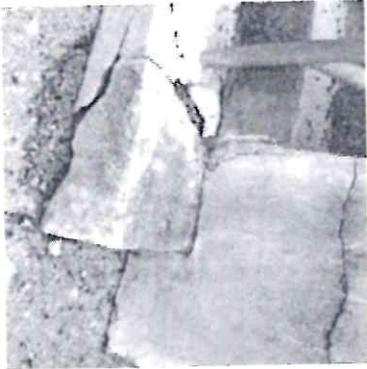
Charlho Regional School District



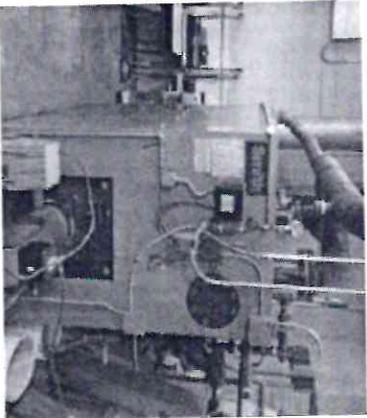
# Facility Assessment Summary



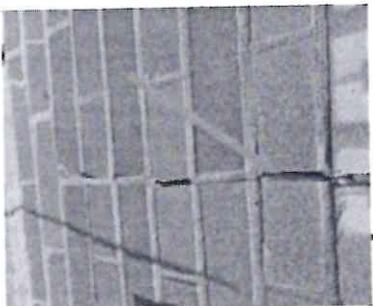
**Charlho High School** Heating hot water oil fired boiler reached life expectancy and is need of replacement.



**Hope Valley** concrete stairs are deteriorating and should be replaced.



**Ashaway** heating steam gas fired boiler plant has reached its life expectancy and needs to be replaced



**Charlestown** brick and mortar cracking/missing at several locations. Brick should be repointed.



**Charlho Middle School** has signs of water ingress at several locations throughout the building. Exploratory analysis/repair is needed.



**CHARHOTECH** Built-Up Roof Systems past its life expectancy and needs to be replaced.



**Richmond** original plumbing fixtures should be replaced with ADA compliant fixtures and upgraded finishes.

**RGB and Consultants (Design Team) conducted site assessments and completed Facility Reports of all schools.**

## Charlho Regional School District Facility Assessment Chart

School	Year Built	Gross Square Feet	Current Grades	Current Enrollment	Current Utilization	Facility Condition Index (FCII)	Jacobs Reported Total Five-Year Need	Design Team Reported Facility Assessment Cost
Charlho Regional High School	1956/2010 Addition	159,676 SF	9-12	1,254	90.0%	19.05%	\$10,751,294.00	\$14,005,294.00
CHARTHOTECH	1959	41,000 SF				(Included above)	\$3,937,134.00	\$5,017,165.00
Charlho Regional Middle School	1960	154,936 SF	5-8	903	80.0%	22.87%	\$11,699,314.00	\$14,203,544.00
Charlho Alternative Learning Academy	2018	12,000 SF	1-12	56	78.0%	N/A	\$2,551,697.00	\$29,100.00
Ashaway Elementary School	1906	35,750 SF	K-4	212	87%	40.24%	\$5,331,103.00	\$6,311,899.00
Charlestown Elementary School	1954	54,226 SF	K-4	240	54%	32.57%	\$6,191,066.00	\$9,328,542.00
Hope Valley Elementary School	1935	28,735 SF	PK-4	159	62%	29.59%	\$3,089,256.00	\$4,192,894.00
Richmond Elementary School	1935	55,300 SF	K-4	300	73%	37.04%	\$7,109,819.00	\$5,888,649.00
<b>Total</b>							\$470,691,576.00	\$58,977,089.00



Charlho Regional School District



# Option Comparison

OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
\$32.5 M Cost to District after reimbursement	\$20.3 M Cost to District after reimbursement	\$20.8 M Cost to District after reimbursement
<p><b>RIDE reimbursement bonus incentives:</b> Health &amp; Safety (5%), Educational Enhancements (5%), and Newer &amp; Fewer (5%)</p> <p><b>Takes 4 Elementary Schools offline;</b> Approximately 174,000 SF of building space would be offline, lowering operating &amp; maintenance cost.</p> <p><b>5 Schools to maintain:</b> 1 High School, 1 Career Technical School, 1 Middle School, 1 Alternative Learning Academy, 1 Elementary School</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> grade moves to the Elementary School. Creates a true model of grades 6-8.</p> <p>Efficiency in consolidating elementary education school (PreK-5). Creates one campus with all school programs</p> <p>New Elementary School on main Campus Site. <b>OR</b> purchase land near the Campus Site.</p> <p>Potential 15% additional RIDE reimbursement</p> <p>+213,000 SF of New Construction</p> <p>New Challenges: maintain high quality in new school feel</p>	<p><b>RIDE reimbursement bonus incentives:</b> Health &amp; Safety (5%), Educational Enhancements (5%), and Newer &amp; Fewer (5%)</p> <p><b>Takes 1 Elementary School offline;</b> Approximately 29,000 SF of existing building space would be offline. Not efficient in lower operating &amp; maintenance cost.</p> <p><b>7 Schools to maintain:</b> 1 High School, 1 Career Technical School, 1 Middle School, 1 Alternative Learning Academy, and 3 Elementary Schools</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> grade moves to the Elementary Schools. Creates a model of grades 6-8.</p> <p>Consolidates elementary education into three (3) schools resources to be allocated to three elementary schools.</p> <p>Upgrades at three elementary schools. Each township is elementary school.</p> <p>Potential 15% additional RIDE reimbursement</p> <p>+78,100 SF of New Construction</p> <p>Requires Charho Act change, aging infrastructure</p>	<p><b>RIDE reimbursement bonus incentives:</b> Health &amp; Safety (0-5%)</p> <p><b>No Educational Enhancements, left with 8 buildings with years.</b></p> <p><b>Maintain all 8 Schools:</b> 1 High School, 1 Career Technical School, 1 Middle School, 1 Alternative Learning Academy, and 4 Elementary Schools</p> <p>Requires continual investment to maintain 8 original aged</p> <p>Minimizes amount of construction at all schools. Allows directed towards Health &amp; Safety improvements and enhancements</p> <p>Work must be underway by 2022</p> <p>Potential 5% additional RIDE reimbursement</p> <p>Does not address failing aged school buildings</p> <p>Aging infrastructure, no room if school becomes</p>

\* If projects do not commence by December 2022, bonus incentives decrease by 10%.



Charho Regional School District



# School Planning – Option A

1 Elementary Model – brings 5th grade to elementary (PK-5)

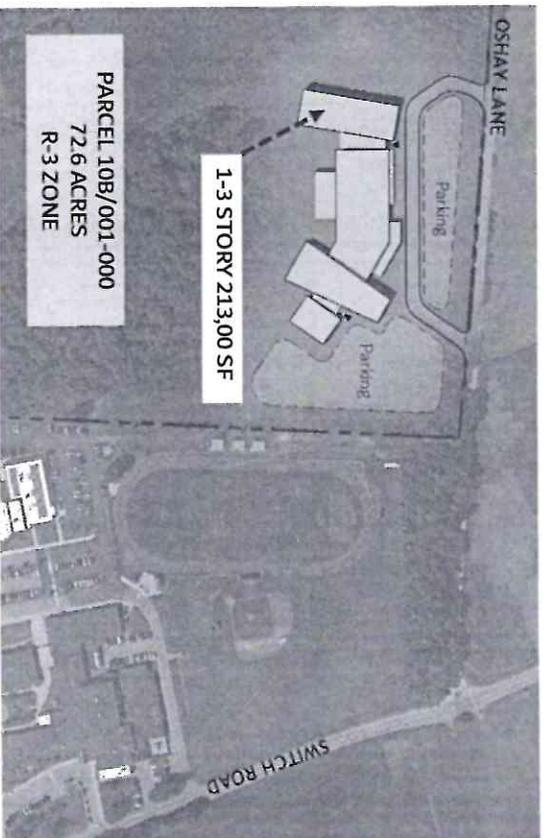
CHS / Tech / CMS / CALA / Admin  
Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments \$ 33.8 M +/-

New Elementary School \$ 103.1 M +/-  
Grades PreK-5 : 1,466 students  
Building 213,000 SF

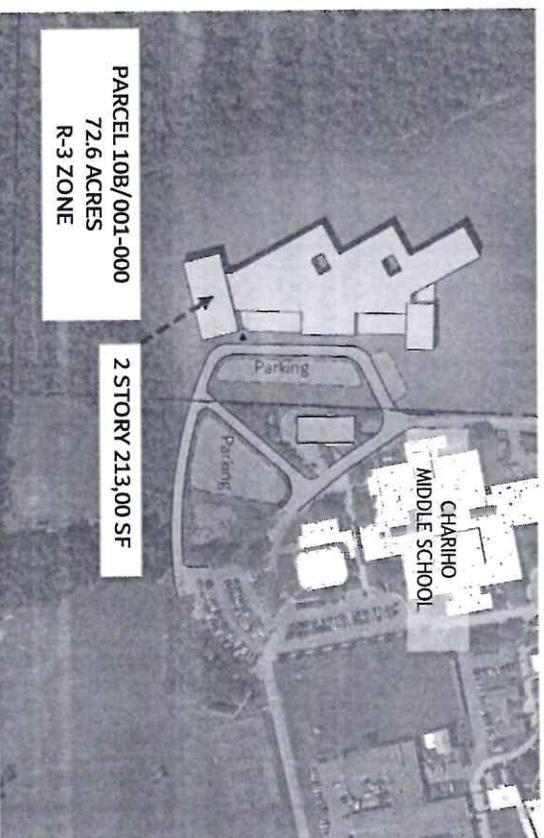
RIDE anticipated reimbursement 65-80%

<b>Project Total</b>	\$137 M +/-
CHS/Tech/CMS/CALA/Admin	\$22.0 M +/-
New Elementary School	\$82.5 M +/-
<b>Cost to District</b>	32.5 M +/-

## (DRAFT) SCHOOL DIAGRAMS



- Options for Aging Consolidated Elementary Schools -



Chariho Regional School District

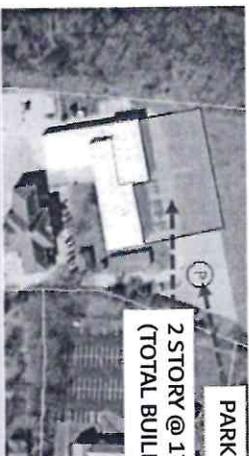


# School Planning – Option B

3 Elementary Model: 3 Existing - brings 5th grade to elementary (PK-5)

CHS / Tech / CMS / CALA / Admin Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 33.8 M +/-
Ashaway Elementary School Grades PK-5 : 420 students; Bldg: 35,750 SF w/ Addition of 34,000 SF Health & Safety Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 16.4 M +/-
Charlestown Elementary School Grades PK-5 : 410 students; Bldg: 54,235 SF w/ Addition of 14,240 SF Health & Safety Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 10.5 M +/-
Richmond Elementary School Grades PK-5 : 570 students; Bldg: 55,300 SF w/ Addition of 29,650 SF Health & Safety Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 15.8 M +/-
<b>RIDE anticipated reimbursement 65-80%</b>	
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$76.5 M +/-</b>
CHS/Tech/CMS/CALA/Admin	\$22.0 M +/-
3 Elementary Schools	\$34.2 M +/-
<b>Cost to District</b>	<b>20.3 M +/-</b>

- Options for Aging Elementary Facilities -



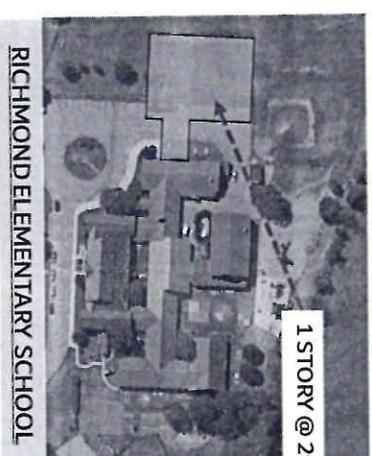
**PARKING RELOCATION**  
2 STORY @ 17,075 SF each  
(TOTAL BUILDING – 34,150 SF)

ASHAWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



1 STORY @ 14,250 SF

CHARLESTOWN ELEMENTARY



1 STORY @ 29,700 SF

RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Charlho Regional School District



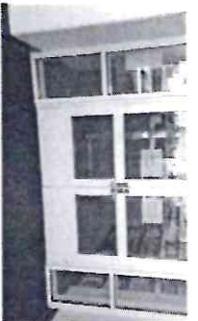
# School Planning – Option C

Maintain ALL Schools in current grade configuration

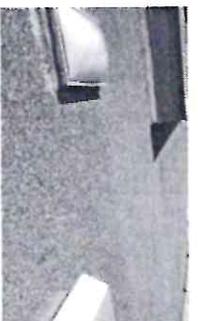
CHS / Tech / CMS / CALA / Admin Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 33.8 M +/-
All Elementary Schools Improvements & 5 Year - CIP Investments	\$ 25.6 M +/-

RIDE anticipated reimbursement 65%

<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$59.4 M +/-</b>
CHS/Tech/CMS/CALA/Admin	- \$22.0 M +/-
All Elementary Schools	- \$16.6 M +/-
<b>Cost to District</b>	<b>20.8 M +/-</b>



Replace door hinges in the Library at Charho High School



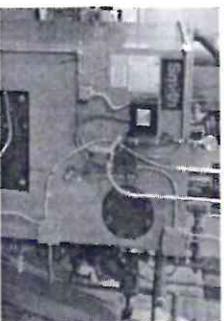
Replace roofing at CHARHOtech



Replace asphalt shingle roof at Richmond Elementary School



Replace Aluminum windows and rusted frames at Charho Regional Middle Schools



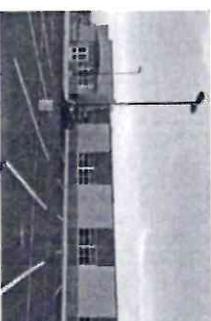
Ashway School gas fired boiler system has reached its life expectancy and needs replacement.



Replace built-up roof at Charlestown Elementary School



Replace roof on 1955 addition at Hope Valley Elementary School



Provide Security film on windows at CALA



Charho Regional School District



The **regular monthly** meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, duly advertised and posted, was held on June 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Charlestown Town Hall, 4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI.

Meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Council President Thomas Gentz at 7:16 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, preceded by a moment of silence to honor our military that are serving us around the globe. ROLL CALL: Town Council members present were Thomas B. Gentz, Daniel J. Slattery, Marjorie F. Frank, Lisa A. DiBello and Gregory J. Avedisian. Also in attendance were Acting Town Administrator Patricia M. Anderson, Town Solicitor Peter Ruggiero, Town Clerk Amy Rose Weinreich and Acting Chief of Police Michael Paliotta.

**Motion made by Mr. Slattery, seconded by Mrs. Frank and approved unanimously to move items 17a, 15c, 8a, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 11c, 11d, and 12 to be heard next on the agenda.**  
**ROLL CALL: Mr. Gentz-Yes; Mr. Slattery-Yes; Mrs. Frank-Yes; Ms. DiBello-Yes; Mr. Avedisian-Yes**

**17. APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**a. Acceptance of Col. Jack M. Shippee's retirement, effective June 5, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. and presentation of commemorative plaque**

Mr. Gentz presented a commemorative plaque to Col. Shippee as follows:

Presented to  
Colonel Jack M. Shippee  
Chief of Police  
Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island

In recognition of his years of loyal dedication and support to the  
Charlestown Police Department  
June 2012

CHARLESTOWN TOWN COUNCIL

**15. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS**

**c. Commendation for Joseph S. Dolock**

Mr. Gentz presented the following commendation to Mr. Dolock:

WHEREAS, The Town Council has been notified that Lt. Dolock served in Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader, serving with the First Battalion 46 Regiment, 196 and 198 Light Infantry Brigades of the American Division, working out of Chu Lai, approximately 40 miles south of Da Nang, and

WHEREAS, the 1/46 was assigned to LZ Professional, to search the Area of Operation and seek out the Viet Cong and elements of the North Vietnamese Army, covering an area of 75 square miles, and

WHEREAS, Lt. Dolock was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, one Bronze Star for Heroism while under enemy fire, one Bronze Star for meritorious service, and two unit Citations for Valor, and

WHEREAS, Joseph S. Dolock served as the Grand Marshall for the Charlestown Memorial Day Parade.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown hereby wishes to thank Mr. Dolock for his service to the United States of America.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Presentation by Elyse LaForest of the U.S. National Park Service

Elyse LaForest of the U.S. National Park Service introduced herself as the program manager for the Federal Lands to Park portion of the U.S. National Park Service; her territory includes 450 parks throughout twenty states. She stated that she came to answer any questions that the Council and residents might have and clear up any misconceptions. She provided some recent history of her involvement with Ninigret Park, stating that in late 2010, when the Town proposed wind generators in the Park, she turned down the Town's request because wind turbines are not a recreational use of the property. In February of this year she explained that she became aware that the Town submitted a grant application to construct a football stadium with lights at Ninigret Park. In March, she wrote the Town a cautionary letter; she did not say "No", but she did outline how the Town would have to proceed with the project, including an Environmental Screening Form which would be the first step in an environmental analysis of the project. She stated that she has had several conversations with several Town Council members, suggesting that the Town should proceed with caution because of the location of the Park. She also addressed in her letter the potential to cross the line between recreational use and one that may be considered a commercial use; this would be based on the size of the audience, the intensity of the use and the potential to generate funds.

Whenever there is a major change in use to a park, the National Park Service is mindful of the abutters' and the public's reaction to the proposal. She found this project troublesome because of the location directly adjacent to the Wildlife Refuge; the Fish and Wildlife Refuge is a sister agency of the National Park Service and she would not favor acting inconsistently with the Department of the Interior's mission.

Mr. Avedisian asked if the project were to install lights on an existing field, would Ms. LaForest find that more less threatening. Ms. LaForest stated that this project would still be a change in use.

Mr. Avedisian inquired about the Town's 55 acres at Ninigret Park; Ms. LaForest stated that the National Park Service has no jurisdiction over this property, unless something on the adjacent property was to adversely affect the recreational use of the 172 acres.

Paula Andersen, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission, asked for an explanation of the difference between the Town's 55 acres and the 172 acres. Ms. LaForest explained that when the property was put up as surplus from the government in the 1970's, the General Services Administration did an environmental assessment of the property. Some was given to the Town, but all of the property was to be used consistently with the adjacent National Wildlife Refuge. 55 acres was transferred to the Town for municipal uses; 172 acres was transferred at no cost to the Town in agreement that the Town would use the property for recreation in perpetuity in accordance with the Program of Utilization, which can be amended. She recalled one proposal to build a school on the municipal acreage with a parking lot on the Park property.

Frank Glista, Chair of the Economic Improvement Commission, asked for further clarification that the National Park Service has no jurisdiction over the Town's 55 acres regarding wind turbines, ball fields or an entertainment center on that property. Ms. LaForest stated that this was correct unless there were to be a major adverse affect to the recreation potential of the 172 acres.

Francis Topping asked for clarification regarding uses that are not inconsistent with the National Wildlife Refuge. Ms. LaForest stated again that her purpose was to ensure that there was no major adverse affect to the recreation potential of the 172 acres.

Ron Areglado of 2 Partridge Run asked for clarification regarding uses of the Town's 55 acres that would cause a major adverse affect to the recreation potential of the 172 acres. Ms. LaForest stated that if a proposal were being considered by the Town that would create an adverse affect to the recreation potential of the 172 acres,

she would have a conversation with the Town to ensure that the 172 acres would continue to be used as recreation.

Bonnie Van Slyke of 80 South Arnolda Road expressed her confusion regarding the original disposal of the property by the federal government, asking who decides the consistency of the use of the property as a Wildlife Refuge. Ms. LaForest suggested that the question could be directed to the General Services Administration, as they were the author of this decision.

Cheryl Dowdell, Vice Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission, asked if the Town has been a good steward of the Park. Ms. LaForest stated that if the Town were not being good stewards of the Park, the Town would have heard from her.

Mr. Avedisian asked if Ms. LaForest was aware of the Ninigret Park Master Plan. She stated that the 1994 Ninigret Park Master Plan was received by the National Park Service in 2008 and placed on file.

## **10. COUNCIL SITTING AS BEVERAGE LICENSING**

Motion made by Mrs. Frank, seconded by Ms. DiBello and approved unanimously to Sit as the Beverage Licensing Board

- a. Motion made by Mrs. Frank, seconded by Ms. DiBello and approved unanimously to open the public hearing on the application for a Class BV Full beverage license: CRAIG T. MARR d/b/a "The Breachway Grill LLC" to apply to premises located at 1 Charlestown Beach Road – Class BV Full. Designated Premises: Indoor Restaurant Space and Outdoor Patio Space only; daily from 11:00 am to 1:00 am.**

The Town Clerk and Acting Chief of Police stated that there were no issues that that needed to be addressed by the applicant.

Craig T. Marr stated that when he originally applied for his license, he was granted the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. from Friday through Sunday until the operating hours of his closest competitors could be confirmed. The current application before the Council was to change the hours to daily from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Mrs. Frank asked about the previous seat restriction issue; Joseph Warner, Building Official confirmed that the outdoor seating has been ruled to not be included in the number of seats and the applicant is in compliance.

David Archambault of 2206 Matunuck Schoolhouse Road spoke regarding noise concerns.

Mary Taylor of Town Dock Road stated that she supported the 1:00 a.m. daily closure time as the restaurant draws a quiet crowd.

Mr. Archambault inquired about the Town's noise ordinance. Lt. Paliotta stated that there have been no complaints concerning this business. Mr. Gentz asked that Mr. Marr take his neighbors' concerns into consideration. Mr. Marr stated that his business is currently operating from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. from Friday through Sunday. His request for an extension of hours would allow him fair competition with other businesses in the area, although he does not anticipate any change in his business. He emphasized that he has an open door policy and would encourage the input of his neighbors. Ms. DiBello asked the applicant if he would be having any outdoor entertainment; Mr. Marr stated that he would not.

**Motion made by Mr. Slattery and seconded by Ms. DiBello to grant a Class BV Full beverage license: CRAIG T. MARR d/b/a "The Breachway Grill LLC" to apply to premises located at 1 Charlestown**