



April 20, 2020

**To:** Kevin Aguiar, President  
Portsmouth Town Council

**From:** Sara Churgin, Board Chair  
Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC)

**Re:** Report and Update on AIPC Activities and Finances

As part of its regular reporting schedule to the Towns of Portsmouth and the City of Newport, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) is pleased to submit the attached update on its programmatic activities and finances for the most recently completed quarter, January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2020.

As you are aware, John Shea stepped down from his role as Executive Director of AIPC at the end of February. In my role as Chair of the Board of Directors, with full board support, I am leading the transition and want to assure you AIPC is focused on its mission to preserve and improve the environment, economy and quality of life on Aquidneck Island.

Our organization works to ensure that the communities of Aquidneck Island remain a beautiful place to live, work and play and ready to take on our municipalities toughest challenges with you. Your support of AIPC allows for the discussions that take a hard look at the future of Aquidneck Island.

Amidst the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, your support is more important now than ever. These global issues manifest themselves locally; in the coming months and years, AIPC will be here to facilitate the conversation about how our island, our home, moves forward in a changed world.

Please reach out to me with any questions and know that the AIPC is continuing to build partnerships for coordinated decision making on the Island. We look forward to continuing our work with the Town of Portsmouth to build a smart future for our community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Churgin".

Sara Churgin  
AIPC Board Chair

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### **Programmatic Update for Q1 2020**

AIPC continues implementing programs that align with its mission and move forward important conversations on Aquidneck Island.

In Q1 2020 the AIPC continued to develop outreach and education tools to assist the communities on Aquidneck Island in moving forward with planning for potential West Side development. We have opened many doors and are constantly looking for partners to move forward with the revitalization of relevant elements of the 2006 West Side Master Plan.

A ten-minute video was produced between Q4 2019 and Q1 2020, with aerial footage provided by the generosity of Bird's Eye View Helicopters and a private donor. The video takes the viewer on a tour of the West Side, with interviews of key individuals from all three municipalities such as private business owners, elected officials, and town planners. This video acts as a conversation-starter with potential partners and will serve as an important tool for educating the public and funders about the importance and potential of the West Side of our island. The West Side spans our three municipalities and Naval Station Newport, so it is key that we engage all stakeholders in the decision making of this area.

[You can view the video at this link.](#)

In March with the spread of COVID-19, AIPC pivoted its communications to adapt to the unprecedented, changing times. Our Connect Aquidneck newsletter, which has over 1,400 subscribers, shifted from programmatic updates to providing a wealth of resources for individuals and business to thrive during the COVID-19 outbreak. Our social media outlets have likewise shifted to sharing vital resources that will help everyone in our community during this critical time.

The Island Waters project, funded by the US EPA and RI DEM, continues to move forward, bringing in resources and expertise to aid our communities in addressing stormwater and clean water protection issues. Contracts have been awarded for project sites in Middletown and Portsmouth. Construction is scheduled to begin this month.

Finally, the AIPC continues to support diverse Island initiatives such as housing, climate resiliency, clean energy, green infrastructure, open spaces, transportation, and other areas. AIPC continues to provide a critical voice in bringing all communities on our island together – crossing municipalities, economic, social, and digital barriers. We look forward to facilitating the difficult conversations that are surely to come as we all enter uncharted territory and face a new normal - together.

April 20, 2020

**For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, Portsmouth's \$18k investment in AIPC is on pace to return:**

Island Waters

- Sisson Pond Watershed WVTS Project (Island Farm Drive, Middletown) - \$235k
  - Status: designed, permitted, bid, award, construction completion by end of May 2020
- St. Mary's Pond Watershed WVTS Project (Carriage Dr, Portsmouth) - \$440k
  - Status: designed, permitted, bid
    - \$300,000 RI DEM funding
    - \$100,000 Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
    - \$40,000 US EPA

West Side/Navy property, Burma & Stringham Roads Infrastructure study

- Funding – \$600k
- AIPC role of catalyst & early facilitator
- RI Infrastructure Bank is funder with matching grant from US Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Available to Portsmouth, Middletown & Newport

Climate Resilience

- AIPC's ongoing support of the RIIB Infrastructure Bank development of its Climate Resilience Strategy and subsequent development of 2019 Municipal Resilience Program.
- Congratulations to Portsmouth for its winning application and participation in the first program cohort.



