

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Agenda**

**Monday, Nov. 28, 2022 START TIME 6:30 pm**

Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meeting

Time: Nov. 28, 2022 at 6:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting Info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81242668798>

833 548 0282 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 812 4266 8798

Note: The Affordable Housing Subcommittee will be meeting concurrently with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will separately warn its agenda.

1. Approve Agenda
2. Comments from the public (concurrent with Planning Commission public comment)
3. Joint discussion with Planning Commission on status of New Boston Road Parcel
4. Approve minutes
  - a. 8-15-22
  - b. 9-19-22
  - c. 10-17-22
5. Adjourn

Enclosures:

1. 8-15-22 AH Draft Minutes
2. 9-19-22 AH Draft Minutes
3. 10-17-22 AH Draft Minutes

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

Monday, Aug 15, 2022 Meeting

Lubell called meeting to order at 6:03 pm

In Attendance: Paul Manganiello, Jeff Lubell, Brian Loeb, Creigh Moffatt, Jeff Goodrich. Moffatt took notes in lieu of Kathleen Shepherd.

Moffatt made a motion to approve agenda with addition of an item related to inviting a guest to the next meeting (placed as #7), Loeb seconded, but vote superseded by Manganiello motion to approve agenda with addition of an item related to preparation of written materials (placed as #8). Moffatt 2<sup>nd</sup> motion and all approved.

**1. Comments from the public** – No public present

**2. Approve minutes – 7-18-22** – Manganiello moved, Moffatt seconded motion to approve minutes of July 18, 2022 – all approved

**3. Meeting times:** should we switch to 6:30 pm in future? Manganiello moved, Lubell seconded switch of future meetings to 6:30 – all in favor

**4. Planning for public forum on Accessory Dwelling Units** - discussion of prior guest who spoke about ADUs; Article in today's Valley News about Woodstock and other VT towns assisting in the creation of ADUs to provide housing for local workers, and/or to attract workers to jobs available in the towns, using some town funds and other funds from the state to assist homeowners to create ADU's that will be used for prescribed amounts of time for AH. Discussion of planning for public forum shifted to next meeting as the optimal speakers have not yet been identified.

**5. Quick updates**

a. Application for VCDP Planning Grant – Selectboard has memo from planning commission requesting submission of planning grant.

b. Fire-District Owned Land – Lubell will go to the fire district prudential committee meeting in September to speak about the affordable housing subcommittee's request.

**6. Selectboard questions for affordable housing subcommittee:**

- What is the committee's charge as you all understand it?
- What are the committee's current initiatives (provide timelines if applicable)?
- What are the committee's goals and/or principal activities for the next three years?

The subcommittee worked on draft responses based on the town's Housing Strategy and passed a motion directing the chair, Jeff Lubell, to complete and share the responses to the planning commission for review, with a copy to Roger Arnold. Goodrich motion to approve, Moffatt Seconded, all approved.

**7. Inviting representative from Conservation Commission to September AH meeting** – The subcommittee discussed that this would be desirable to discuss the value of adding affordable housing in Norwich as we embrace thoughtful and sustainable use of the land and resources.

**8. Topics AH is currently, or will be in the process of, considering, and writing about** - deferred to next meeting

**7. Zoning for affordable housing** – deferred until September meeting

Motion to adjourn at 7:04 by Moffatt, seconded by Manganiello, all in favor

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE  
DRAFT MINUTES**

Monday, Sept. 19, 2022 START TIME 6:30 pm  
Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meeting  
Time: SEPT 19, 6:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)  
Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81242668798>  
833 548 0282 US Toll-free  
Meeting ID: 812 4266 8798

Subcommittee Members Attending: Jeff Lubell, Jeff Goodrich, Creigh Moffatt, Brian Loeb, Kathleen Shepherd

Norwich Staff: Aaron DeNamur

Guests: Nick Clark, Nathan Margolis,

1. Motion to approve the agenda, with the addition of an item related to an update on the idea of siting affordable housing on land owned by the fire district. Moffatt moved, Loeb seconded, all approved the revised agenda.
2. Update on Loeb's meeting with the Fire District Prudential Committee. The Committee expressed the opinion that the current agreement between the Fire District and the Town related to transferring development rights to the Town does not permit housing development, but a subcommittee of the Prudential Committee that addresses land issues may be a place to consider further the possibility that this agreement might be modified in the future. There is a larger conversation about the possibility of a merger between the Town and Fire District that is unresolved and forms an important context for this issue.
3. Accessory Dwelling Units. The Norwich Housing Strategy includes items to promote ADUs and missing middle duplexes/triplexes. Clark (who grew up in Norwich and currently lives in Thetford) described work of a cooperative he and others have formed to shepherd

homeowners in the Upper Valley through the process of building and permitting an ADU. The cooperative's goal is to work where traditional developers and Twin Pines do not to promote creative housing solutions like ADUs. They are in the process of working on one ADU in Wilder where they will act as a developer and the homeowner is applying for a grant from the state for construction costs. They are talking with a number of additional homeowners about developing ADUs. He mentioned that Woodstock Community Trust has prepared a guide for ADU, and said it might be helpful for Norwich to consider preparing a similar guide for Norwich.

4. The Subcommittee decided to devote the next subcommittee meeting (Oct 17) to a public discussion of ADUs that would highlight the availability of grant funding from the state as well as discuss the ADU process more generally. Loeb will reach out to two individuals with whom he has discussed ADUs to invite them to participate.

5) Conservation-Housing committee cooperation. Moffatt aims wants to reestablish connection between the commissions, to help each other and will aim for the November meeting.

6) Lubell asked DeNamur to provide ideas for how Norwich could strengthen its zoning rules to promote housing affordability, such as through making it easier to build duplexes, triplexes and quadraplexes and other missing middle housing.

5. The 8-15-22 minutes were not reviewed and approved. This will need to be taken up at the October meeting.

6. Comments from the public. None.

7. Adjourn meeting at 7:04. Moffatt moved and Shepherd seconded. All approved.

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Monday, Oct. 17, 2022 Meeting**

**Public Forum on Accessory Dwelling Units**

**Members present:** Jeff Lubell, Brian Loeb, Jeff Goodrich, Paul Manganiello

**Meeting notes taken by:** Paul Manganiello

**Invited speaker:** Tyler Maas, facilitated by Brian Loeb

**Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM**

**Agenda:** Paul Manganiello made the motion to approve the agenda, Brian Loeb seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

**Forum:** The meeting consisted of a public forum on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Maas described his background in ADU beginning in the Brattleboro area and now in Montpelier. As Maas indicated, an ADU is a separate unit on the same property as a main unit, and can either be constructed through internal division and renovation of the main structure or as a stand-alone structure. The maximum size of an ADU is based on local standards. The costs to construct will vary, largely determined on whether it is new construction, versus an internal rehab, which is usually less expensive.

One of the primary hurdles for the construction of an ADU is the need to ensure that the septic system is adequate for both the main property and the ADU. Brattleboro and Montpelier both have municipal septic which makes ADUs easier to implement.

According to Maas, home equity is a common form of financing for ADUs; construction loans are more complicated since many banks don't envision ADU as an investment.

There are State grant funds available to help with the costs of creating an ADU – the Vt. Rental Rehab Program, which can offer up to \$50,000 in assistance. This state program is administered in the Norwich area by the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust. More information on this program is available here: <https://www.homemattershere.org/rental-rehab/>. There are a number of specific rules that apply to this program, including a requirement that homeowners benefitting from this grant agree to rent the ADU for an amount that does not exceed the Fair Market Rent for at least five years. Benefitting homeowners must also attempt to rent these units during this time to households earnings less than 80% of the Area Median income. There are no restrictions on rent after this five-year period.

The Windsor & Windham Housing Trust also administers the Healthy Homes Initiative that can help upgrade or replace a septic system. These funds are intended to be add-on funds to grants for ADUs under the Rental Rehab Program.

Funds for both of these programs are limited and will be available only until they run out.

Aaron DeNamur, the new Norwich Zoning Administrator, provided an overview of Norwich's regulations regarding ADUs. Norwich defines 2 types of ADU: First, an Accessory Dwelling Unit (defined as an accessory dwelling structure with one dwelling unit) cannot exceed the lower of 50% of the primary dwelling's square footage or 1600 square feet. Second, a detached apartment (defined as an apartment in an existing accessory structure) cannot exceed the lower of: 30% of the primary dwelling's square footage or 1200 square feet. Norwich doesn't consider any structure on wheels ( i.e., an RV) to be an acceptable housing unit (and thus they cannot serve as an ADU). DeNamur offered to meet with any Norwich resident that has questions about the town's policies on ADUs.

According to DeNamur, 16 ADUs have been permitted in Norwich in recent years, with 11 coming just since 2020.

Jeff Goodrich related that local zoning topography needs to be seriously considered. As he discussed in the forum, a structure's septic requirements are based on the number of bedrooms in the structure. The rules require 140 gallons per day (gpd) for the first three bedrooms and 70 gpd for each additional bedroom. The rules require 140 gpd for a one-bedroom "apartment" or ADU. That means that a 3-bedroom home could potentially be reduced to 2 bedroom-occupancy along with an ADU without requiring an upgrade to the existing septic system. However, if a home has four or five bedrooms and a septic system that just meets the minimum requirements for a home of this size, it would likely need to give up two bedrooms in order to accommodate an ADU without changing the size of the existing septic system.

A number of mechanisms exist to help address these septic challenges, including enlarging an existing septic system or installing a pre-treatment system or other method (e.g., composting toilet) to reduce the burden on the wastewater system.

This summary of septic rules is just an overview of a complicated topic. Homeowners interested in developing an ADU should consult experts who can advise them on how the septic rules will apply in their situation.

**Discussion opened to the public for questions:**

Concerns about the effects of an ADU on taxation were raised; one idea that was discussed was to base the expectations for future rental income on either a past history of actual rents or on a promise by the homeowner not to rent above a certain level. This would provide a modest incentive to rent ADUs at below-market levels. Another individual recommended that the

current size limitations on ADUs be eliminated as they could act as an impediment to constructing ADUs.

**Unfinished business:** One of the subcommittee members left around 8 p.m., which marked the formal adjournment of the meeting. The subcommittee therefore did not have a quorum to approve the minutes of the prior two Affordable Housing Subcommittee meetings.

**Discussed ceased at approximately 8:10 p.m.**