

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Agenda**

**Monday, July 18 , 2022 START TIME 6:00 pm**

Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meeting

Time: July 18, 6:00 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

1. Comments from the public
2. Vermont homeownership programs; invited guests Andrew Winter and Steve Usle of Twin Pines (6:05 – 6:30)
3. Planning for Public Forum on Accessory Dwelling Units (6:30-6:50)
4. Quick updates (6:50-6:55)
  - a. Application for VCDP Planning Grant
  - b. Fire-District Owned Land
5. Approve minutes – 6-13-22

Enclosures:

1. 6-13-22 AH Draft Minutes
2. 7-3-22 Memo to Planning Commission re VCDP Planning Grant

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE  
Draft Minutes**

Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meeting  
Time: June 13, 6:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)  
No physical location. Zoom Meeting Info:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81242668798>  
833 548 0282 US Toll-free  
Meeting ID: 812 4266 8798

Subcommittee members attending by Zoom access: Jeff Lubell, Paul Manganiello, Brian Loeb, Gordon Greenfield, Creigh Moffatt, Kathleen Shepherd

Guests: Tyler Maas, VSHA (Vermont State Housing Authority), Kevin Geiger, TRORC (Two Rivers ---

Members of the public; Dee Gish; Ralph Hybels

1. Motion: Manganiello moved to approve agenda. Loeb seconded. Approved 6-0.
2. Comments from the public. Gish introduced herself, said she is running to be the VT state representative for Norwich, Sharon, Strafford and Thetford and shared her strong interest in expanding the availability of affordable housing.
3. Accessory Dwelling Units. Invited speaker Tyler Maas described his experience creating ADU's in Brattleboro and Montpelier. He described funding mechanisms including a community development block grant, a \$50K matching grant, and a \$100K loan from Enable, and a partnership with VT Tech design students. He explained that VSHA is not an arm of state government. It provides grants to homeowners interested in developing ADUs that cover a portion of the development costs. Other costs must be borne by homeowners as further loans and grants are not available. Incorporating an ADU within an existing structure is more practical than a separate building in terms of development costs and septic regulation. Owners undertaking this complex project will require a lot of support. Types of homes most amenable for ADU: large older homes; raised ranch.
4. VCDP Planning grant. If requested to do so, TRORC will help write Norwich's application and administer the grant, for a fee to be determined, that is covered by the grant. The VCDP funding is from the federal Community Development Block Grant, under which any housing produced must be affordable to people earning below 80% of the Area Median Income. With a \$6K match from the town, the program can provide up to \$60K. It is very competitive, so Norwich may need to apply more than once. It can be used for feasibility studies, test pits, etc. The anticipated process is for the Affordable Housing Subcommittee to make a recommendation to the Planning Commission, which will then make a request of the Selectboard, which will be the formal grantee. A public hearing is required. A brief pre-application form is required in December for a February application, which seems the most practical timeline.

5. Motion: Manganiello moved, and Moffatt seconded, that the committee empowers the chair to send a recommendation to the Planning Commission for Norwich to proceed with a VCDP planning grant on the northern portion of the transfer station property.
6. Loeb and Lubell described a Selectboard meeting in which they discussed approaching the Fire District about developing housing on their 900 acre +/- parcel along Beaver Meadow Road. During the meeting, a member of the public noted that the agreement transferring the development rights from the Fire District to the Selectboard appeared to contemplate that the land would not be developed. At the same meeting, a member of the Selectboard suggested that it could be appropriate to revise the agreement if the town's needs have changed.
7. The offer of land from a homeowner has run into the obstacle that the conservation easement appears to prohibit a second home on the parcel. The subcommittee will investigate options for modifying the easement.
8. Next month's agenda: invite someone from Twin Pines to discuss the homeownership programs they administer on behalf of the state; identify the next project to work on.
9. Motion: Moffat moved and Manganiello seconded approval of the minutes of 5-9-22.
10. Meeting adjourned at 7:08.

# Memo

**To:** Norwich Planning Commission

**From:** Jeffrey Lubell, Chair, Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee

**Date:** July 3, 2022

**Re:** Vermont Community Development Program Planning Grant for Northern Portion of the Norwich Transfer Station Parcel

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At the last Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting on June 13, 2022 the Subcommittee formally recommended that the Town of Norwich apply for a Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Planning Grant for site planning work associated with the possible development of affordable housing on the northern portion of the transfer station parcel. The subcommittee recommended that we ask TRORC to assist the Town with preparing the grant application and administering the grant on behalf of the Town and empowered me to send a memo to the Planning Commission sharing our recommendation.

The Subcommittee would very much appreciate the Planning Commission taking such actions as are necessary to secure the Town's agreement to proceed with this application, which we would like to submit in time to meet a February 7, 2023 application deadline. A simple pre-application form is due on December 18, 2022 and a public hearing notice must be issued no later than Jan. 18, 2023 for a required public hearing before the application is submitted.

While there is an application round before then due in September 2022, we think the Feb. 2023 deadline is more realistic.

In brief, the VCDP awards planning grants of up to \$60,000 each using the state's allocation of federal Community Development Block Grants. We would propose using the funds to hire a consultant to do the basic site preparation work necessary to confirm that the northern portion of the transfer station parcel is a viable site on which to develop affordable housing, to develop a basic site plan, and to develop a plan for financing the development. Among other things, I expect this would include an assessment of the site's wastewater capacity and an examination of subsurface water quality. TRORC would prepare the application and administer the planning grant, reducing the burden on Town staff. They would charge a fee to be negotiated that could be paid for out of the grant; Kevin Geiger indicated that on a similar planning grant, they had charged a fee of \$10,500.

A 10% match is required, which means the Town would need to pay \$6,000 to receive a \$60,000 grant (for a total amount of \$66,000 in project resources). Also, when CDBG funds are used for housing, the housing must serve households with incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). This amount varies by household size. For example, for Federal

Fiscal Year 2022, 80% of AMI in Norwich (based on the Windsor County median family income) is \$70,500 for a family of four and \$63,4500 for a family of three. While it's not clear if this income limit formally applies to planning grant applications (as opposed to applications for assistance building the housing), as a practical matter, it will be important in submitting the application to document the town's intention to serve households that meet these income guidelines.

Prior to voting to recommend that Norwich move forward with a grant application, the Subcommittee had an opportunity to talk with Kevin Geiger to learn more about the application process and the VCDP Planning Grants. Among other things, he noted that it can sometimes take several rounds of applications for a promising grant application to be funded, given competition for limited funds. This is a good reason to move forward with an application in February 2023, rather than waiting to submit for the first time in April 2023. If we are unsuccessful in our application in February 2023, we could resubmit in April, enhancing our chances of getting funded in 2023.

Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss.

Thank you for considering our request and your assistance in moving this forward for Town approval.