

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

AGENDA

Monday, December 21, 2020, START TIME 6pm

Act 92 Compliant Zoom Meeting

Topic: Affordable Housing Subcommittee

Time: December 21, 2020 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81242668798>
Meeting ID: 812 4266 8798
877 853 5257 US Toll-free
888 475 4499 US Toll-free

1. Approve Agenda
2. Comments from the Public
3. Approve Minutes - 11-16-20
4. Next Steps -- Outreach
5. Exploring potential sites and suggestions for affordable housing
 - a. Follow-up on fire district properties
 - b. McLane house
 - c. Doug Wilberding's suggestions re duplex
 - d. Other
6. Announcements, Reports & Correspondence
7. Other Business
8. Comments from the Public

Enclosures:

1. 11-16-20 AH Draft Minutes
2. Final published Op-ed

Town of Norwich
Affordable Housing Sub-committee
Draft Minutes
November 16, 2020

Location: Act 92 compliant virtual Open Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Jeff Lubell (Chair), Jeff Goodrich, Paul Manganiello, Brian Loeb, Kathleen Shepherd, Ralph Hybels, Gordon Greenfield

Public Present: Doug Wilberding, Pamela Smith, Andrew Winter

Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting called to Order: 6:05pm

- 1) Approve Agenda: Manganiello moved and Shepherd seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6 – 0.
- 2) Comments from the Public: none.
- 3) Approve Minutes of October 19, 2020: Manganiello moved and Shepherd seconded a motion to approve the minutes of October 19, 2020. Motion carried 6 – 0.
- 4) Review of Publicly-Owned Land in Norwich: Francis presented maps showing lands owned by the Norwich Fire District. Members discussed attributes of various parcels and their potential for affordable housing development.
- 5) Discussion of potential op-ed: members discussed the revised op-ed intended for submission to *The Valley News*, and agreed to send it with three signatures on behalf of Affordable Housing Subcommittee.
- 6) Announcements, Reports & Correspondence: The Subcommittee agreed to discuss the material submitted by Doug Wilberding in more detail at the next meeting, where they will continue their investigation of possible sites suitable for affordable housing development.
- 7) Other Business: none
- 8) Comments from the Public: Doug Wilberding made an offer to show anyone interested the land near Gile Mountain on Turnpike Road that he suggested was potential site for development.

Andrew Winter (Twin Pines Housing Trust) thanked the Subcommittee for allowing him to join the meeting and commented that the latest discussions around guidelines for accessing Federal and Vermont government funding for affordable housing indicate that development will be more firmly directed to designated village centers and neighborhood development areas and away from ‘greenfield’ dispersed or remote development.
- 9) Meeting Adjourned: the subcommittee identified the following items for inclusion in the next agenda:
 - a) Other Public Lands
 - b) Fire Department Lands
 - c) Other land options including donated landManganiello moved and Loeb seconded a motion to adjourn at 7:15pm. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,
Rod Francis

Bid to boost Norwich housing needs your help

REGIONAL SHORTAGE

By **JEFFREY LUBELL, KATHLEEN SHEPHERD and BRIAN LOEB**

For the Valley News

There is a severe shortage of housing in both Norwich (our town) and the broader Upper Valley region. The shortage has important ramifications.

In Norwich, the lack of affordable housing options makes it difficult for the children of residents or the people who work in Norwich to live here, complicates efforts of residents to age in their community and reduces diversity in multiple ways.

In the broader region, the overall shortage of housing leads to higher rents and home prices, which make it difficult for businesses to attract workers, holding back the region's economic growth.

The lack of affordable housing options in Norwich and other centrally located communities also harms the environment and contributes to climate change.

Norwich is adjacent to two of the regional job centers — Hanover and Hartford — and a short commute from the third, Lebanon. Developing housing close to jobs and retail is one of the most important ways to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation.

While we have a long way to go, we are trying to expand housing options in Norwich and do our part to make our region more accessible and dynamic. Because of the constraints of geography and infrastructure, it would be difficult for our town to develop enough new housing units to make up for the region's overall housing supply shortage, but that does not reduce the value of the contributions we can make.

A year ago, the Planning Commission approved the Norwich Housing Strategy as a blueprint for how the town will work to expand the diversity and affordability of housing.

The strategy was the culmination of many listening and learning sessions, as well as research by members of Norwich's Affordable Housing Subcommittee and discussion and debate at subcommittee and Planning

of new housing, and expanding public understanding of housing issues.

The plan articulates three numerical goals for 2020-2024: Construct at least 10 accessory dwelling units, at least 10 units of "missing-middle" housing (house-scale buildings with multiple units, such as duplexes and triplexes), and at least 25 units of dedicated affordable housing.

Some may argue — reasonably — that these goals are not ambitious enough in light of the extensive housing shortfall being documented through the regional needs assessment. But we have to start somewhere, and we wanted to set goals that were feasible and capable of broad support.

A year into our plan, we have not made measurable progress toward our goals, so we need to redouble our efforts. We call on Norwich residents and regional housing professionals to join us.

Here are three ways you can help Norwich achieve its housing goals:

- Read the Norwich Housing Strategy and provide feedback on how to advance or improve the strategy. (It's available at norwich.vt.us/affordable-housing. To request a printed copy for pickup outside Tracy Hall, contact Pam Mullen at 802-649-1419, ext. 4, or email pmullen@norwich.vt.us.)
- If you are a Norwich resident, consider donating land or funds to help support more affordable housing options in our community.
- If you are a housing professional, look for options to build lower-cost housing in Norwich, including duplexes, triplexes and other missing-middle housing, as well as dedicated affordable housing.

To learn more, visit the Affordable Housing Subcommittee page on the town website. To provide feedback or explore ways to help, contact one of us by email: jefflubell@yahoo.com, kkshepherd447@gmail.com or loebbrian@gmail.com.

The writers are members of the Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee. While the writers prepared this

Commission meetings. It was subsequently included as an appendix to the Town Plan.

The strategy is designed to achieve three main objectives:

- Affordability, to ensure that people of all incomes can find quality housing they can afford in Norwich.
- Diversity, by increasing the types of the housing stock so that it includes a range of housing options suitable for people of different incomes and backgrounds and at different stages of their lives.
- Environmental sustainability, by reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by increasing housing in areas served by public transit and with easy access to employment and retail centers, as well as through the use of green building materials and practices.

The strategy proposes to advance these objectives through four main approaches: Encouraging the development of dedicated affordable housing, facilitating the development of lower-cost housing types, reducing barriers to the development

column themselves, it has been reviewed and is supported by subcommittee members Gordon Greenfield, Ralph Hybels, Paul Manganiello and Creigh Moffatt.