

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

AGENDA

Monday, October 19, 2020, START TIME 6pm

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81242668798 877 853 5257 US Toll-free 888 475 4499 US Toll-free Meeting ID: 812 4266 8798
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1. Approve Agenda
2. Comments from the Public
3. Approve Minutes – 9-21-20
4. Review of Publicly-Owned Land in Norwich
5. Discussion of potential op-ed
6. Other topical updates
 - a. Fundraising / Land
 - b. Education / Outreach
 - c. Policy
7. Webpage for Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee
8. Announcements, Reports & Correspondence
9. Other Business
10. Comments from the Public

Enclosures:

1. 9-21-20 AH Draft Minutes

Town of Norwich
Affordable Housing Sub-committee
Draft Minutes
September 21, 2020

Location: Act 92 compliant virtual Open Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Jeff Lubell (Chair), Jeff Goodrich, Paul Manganiello, Kathleen Shepard, Creigh Moffatt, Ralph Hybels

Public Present:

Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting called to Order: 6:25pm

- 1) Approve Agenda: Goodrich moved and Manganiello seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5 – 0.
- 2) Comments from the Public: Karen Wynkoop thanked Kathleen Shepherd for extending an invitation to the meeting.
- 3) Approve Minutes of August 17, 2020: Manganiello moved and Goodrich seconded a motion to approve the minutes of August 17, 2020. Motion carried 5 – 0.

- 4) Discussion was led by Lubell on the following topic areas:

Education/Outreach: How to promote awareness of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as a viable housing solution?
> short videos
> brochure / fact sheet that would also contain cautions re: VT wastewater requirements
> Op-Ed to the *Valley News*

Fundraising/Land: Informal discussions with UVLT around collaborating where possible have been positive

Members agreed work on a draft for subsequent review and approval by the AHSC

- 5) Webpage for Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee: Lubell encouraged members to visit and provide feedback.
- 6) Announcements, Reports & Correspondence: None
- 7) Other Business: None
- 8) Comments from the Public: None
- 9) Meeting Adjourned 7:10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Rod Francis

Draft Op-Ed

[NOTE: One option is to release this op-ed shortly after publication of the upcoming housing needs assessment from the Keys to the Valley regional housing initiative. We would of course adapt the piece to the final findings and recommendations in the report.]

Increasing Housing Options in Norwich

The recently published Keys to the Valley Report on Upper Valley Housing Needs confirms that the Upper Valley has a severe shortage of housing units that is holding back the economic growth and vitality of our region. As documented in the report, there is an important role to be played by all of the Upper Valley Communities in addressing this challenge as well as for collaborative action at the regional level.

While Norwich is only one of many Upper Valley communities, it's important for Norwich to do our part to address the regional housing shortage. 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, helping to address Climate Change. Expanding the range of housing options in Norwich would also strengthen our community directly by giving existing residents more options to age in their community, providing housing options affordable to the adult children of residents and those who work in Norwich, and increasing the diversity of our community.

A year ago, the Norwich Planning Commission approved the Norwich Housing Strategy as a blueprint for how Norwich will work to expand the diversity and affordability of housing within Norwich. 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 Commission meetings. It was subsequently included as an Appendix to the Norwich Town Plan. The Strategy is designed to achieve three main objectives: (1) **Affordability** – Ensuring that people of all incomes can find quality housing they can afford in Norwich; (2) **Diversity** – Increasing the diversity of the housing stock so that it includes a range of housing types suitable for people of different incomes and backgrounds and at different stages of their life; and (3) **Environmental sustainability** – 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: (1) Encouraging the development of dedicated affordable housing; (2) Facilitating the development of lower-cost housing types; (3) Reducing barriers to the development of new housing; and (4) Expanding public understanding of housing issues. The Plan articulates three numerical goals for the 2020-2024 period: (1) Construct at least 10 Accessory Dwelling Units; (2) Construct at least 10 units of “missing middle” housing (duplexes, triplexes, etc.); and (3) Construct at least 25 units of dedicated affordable housing.

Some may argue that these goals are not ambitious enough in light of the extensive housing need identified by the regional needs assessment. This is a reasonable argument, but we have to start somewhere, and we wanted to articulate 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 to make progress.

We call on Norwich residents and regional housing professionals to join us in these efforts! Here are three ways you can help Norwich achieve its housing goals: (a) read the Norwich Housing strategy and provide feedback on how to advance or improve the strategy; (b) if you are Norwich resident, consider donating land or funds to help support more affordable housing options in our community; (c) 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, please visit the Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee page at <http://norwich.vt.us/affordable-housing/>. To provide feedback or explore ways to help, contact one of us by email: Jeff Lubell (jefflubell@yahoo.com) or Kathleen Shepherd ([add email]).