

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday June 8, 2021, 6:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89339717735>

Meeting ID: 893 3971 7735

Members Present: Brian Loeb, Jaci Allen, Jeff Lubell, Leah Romano, Melissa Horwitz, Jeff Goodrich,
Ernie Ciccotelli
Public Present: Claudette Brochu, Linda Cook
Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting Opened: 6:31pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Lubell moved and Loeb seconded a motion to approve the agenda as amended by taking "Outreach to other towns" from item four and making it item six (after Town Plan Action Items). Motion carried 5 -- 2. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Romano, Horwitz. Against: Goodrich, Ciccotelli

2. Public Comment: none

3. Review and approve Minutes of May 11, 2021:

Romano moved and Ciccotelli seconded a motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2021 as amended by the following:

- Show Horwitz as present
- Add a second sentence to item six; planning commissioner code of conduct first paragraph: At the end of the first paragraph add: *This topic was important in the context of the following item, the appointment of the commission Chair and Vice-Chair*
- Use **bold** for the title of item eleven, public comment
- Reduce the amount of information in item five, Announcements, Reports, Updates and Correspondence by striking *nor be considered as an option for receiving wastewater from Norwich as part of any wastewater study being undertaken by Norwich.*

Motion carried 6 -- 1. For: Ciccotelli, Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Romano, Horwitz. Against: Goodrich

4. Announcements, Reports, Updates & Correspondence:

Allen explained the new format.

Francis provided an outline of the Director's Report including the Keys to the Valley presentation to TRORC on May 26, the informational session hosted by VLCT on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the work of other Norwich commissions and committees, including Energy, Conservation, and the Historic Preservation Commission.

Loeb informed the meeting that the Childcare Committee was preparing an interim report for the selectboard to be presented in July.

5. Town Plan Action Items

At approximately 6:59PM the meeting was interrupted when another party used the Zoom account thus terminating this meeting. At about 7:15PM the meeting resumed. Goodrich did not return, all other participants rejoined.

Commissioners resumed their discussion of Town Plan Action Items.

6. Outreach to other towns

Commissioners discussed the purpose of the meetings, the goals the Norwich planning commission could set for the meetings, and the scope of any such discussions. Lubell responded that the purpose was to find issues in common and get to know people serving on planning commissions in surrounding towns.

Loeb moved and Lubell seconded a motion to authorize Jeff Lubell to contact the Thetford planning commission Chair on behalf of the Norwich planning commission, inquiring as to their openness to a joint meeting. Motion carried 5-1. For: Romano, Loeb, Ciccotelli, Allen, Lubell. Against: Horwitz

7. Planning Commissioner Code of Conduct

Loeb introduced the item by noting that Goodrich should be present for this discussion, and that the item should be placed on the next meeting agenda. He framed the upcoming discussion by observing that there are gaps in the statutory description of planning commission powers and duties (24 VSA §4325) and relevant selectboard documents. It is these gaps that should be the focus of the discussion. Including:

- a) The formal and informal roles of appointed officials
- b) The process of agenda setting (which ultimately should result in amendments to the planning commission bylaws)

Lubell suggested that at times people have shared concerns about speaking time and being able to speak uninterrupted, and proposed that more formality in the conduct of the meetings may be helpful where there is a lack of trust.

Commissioners agreed that the items should be carried over to the next meeting.

8. Open Meeting Law

Romano welcomed the opinion and suggested that provides a conclusion and other point worthy of discussion.

Lubell also remarked that the opinion was appreciated.

9. Other Business:

Ciccotelli inquired as to whether there could be a policy of having a commissioner call from a planning commission meeting if another commissioner was not present, but was expected. Romano responded that this brought forward the distinction between a policy and a practice, and the item can be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Future Meeting Schedule & Agendas:

- Draft RFQ for density factor study
- Commission Work plan
- Update on consideration of a wastewater study by selectboard
- Outreach to Thetford planning commission
- Commission code of conduct
- Updates from point people (Ciccotelli – Energy; Horwitz – Conservation and Lubell – Affordable Housing)

11. Comments from the Public

Claudette Brochu suggested that the planning commission seek input from the town manager with regard to sharing documents and possible open meeting law implications.

12. Adjourn

Lubell moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Meeting adjourned: 8:26pm

Future Meetings:

Tuesday, July 13, 6:30pm Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 10, 6:30pm Regular Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Francis