

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday October 12, 2021, 6:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Zoom Meeting:

<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89339717735 Meeting ID: 893 3971 7735</p>
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Physical meeting location: multi-purpose room, Tracy Hall

Members Present: Jaci Allen, Brian Loeb, Jeff Lubell, Melissa Horwitz, Jeff Goodrich, Ernie Ciccotelli, Leah Romano
Public Present: Linda Cook, Claudette Brochu, Richard Stucker, Don McCabe, Linda Gray, Arline Rotman, Matt Stuart
Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting Opened: 6:31pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Horwitz moved and Goodrich seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Horwitz, Ciccotelli, Goodrich, Romano.

2. Public Comment: none

3. Discussion with DRB on experiences with 2009 Zoning Regulations and 2013 Subdivision Regulations

Chair Allen introduced members of the Development Review Board (DRB) present to the meeting (Rotman, Stucker, McCabe, Stuart, Gray) and invited comments from the DRB on their experiences with the land use regulations.

Arline Rotman (DRB Chair) suggested that the regulations are old she would prefer a comprehensive rewrite that avoided the vague language present now, reduced the incessant need to cross-reference and filled existing gaps in definitions and procedures. Her review of other town's regulations revealed that many were more concise, more clearly formatted. and more user-friendly.

Richard Stucker empathized with the planning commission, and said that he had been on the commission the last time they were revised. He shared his frustrations with the challenges of enforcement.

Don McCabe echoed Rotman's remarks, calling for clearer formatting, and a more accessible document for town officials and the public alike.

Linda Gray reminded the meeting that the energy coordinator was working on a climate energy plan and that this plan may have suggestions for land use regulations.

4. Planning Commission By-laws:

Loeb (re)introduced the item set aside at the meeting last month. Commissioners discussed the scope of the changes,

Loeb moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to adopt the planning commission bylaws as revised and previously discussed. Motion carried 5 – 2. For: Allen, Loeb, Horwitz, Lubell, Romano. Against: Ciccotelli, Goodrich.

5. Affordable Housing Subcommittee memo:

Lubell presented the memo from the Affordable Housing Subcommittee (AHSC) reporting out on the work done by AHSC and staff to review publicly-owned land in Norwich suitable for affordable housing, He said that the research failed to located the 'perfect property', while some showed potential and warranted further investigation.

Parcels that justified further research included: i) the DPW Highway Garage/Transfer Station site (also a capped landfill) and ii) lands on Beaver Meadow Road that are currently part of large holdings of the Norwich Fire District (NFD).

Staff indicted that the regulatory context for redeveloping the landfill site was unclear and that the answer(s) may carry risks for the town with regard to any subsequent development. Potable water and wastewater system designs could also confront related challenges.

Ciccotelli voiced concerns about the Beaver Meadow properties (if developed) would be distant from town and contribute to suburban sprawl.

Brochu told the meeting that the town does not have the authority to release NFD sites, only the NFD does.

6. Announcements, Reports, Updates, and Correspondence

Francis gave a verbal Director's Report.

- In discussions with a RFQ respondent for the density study
- Wastewater Feasibility Study RFQ has been published, closing date for responses is November 5, 2021, expect to have this under contract by Thanksgiving
- Alerted the meeting to the short timelines for completing ARPA funds

7. Approve Minutes of August 10, 2021:

Horwitz moved and Loeb seconded a motion to approve the minutes of July 13, 2021. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Horwitz, Ciccotelli, Romano.

8. Other Business: none

9. Future Meeting Schedule & Agendas:

- Draft Land Use Regulations, Administration section
- Affordable Housing Public Land memo
- Town Plan milestones
- Vision document (previously included)

10. Comments from the Public: none

11. Adjourn

Romano moved and Loeb seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Romano, Horwitz, Ciccotelli.

Meeting adjourned: 8:45pm

Future Meetings:

Tuesday, September 14, 6:30pm Regular Meeting
Tuesday October 12, 6:30pm Regular Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Francis