

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday July 12, 2022, 6:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Zoom Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 893 3971 7735

Members Present: Jaci Allen, Brian Loeb, Ernie Ciccotelli, Melissa Horwitz, Vince Crow, Marc Aquila
Public Present: Linda Cook
Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting Opened: 6:32pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Ciccotelli moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to approve the agenda.

2. Public Comment: none

3. General Section of Land Use Regulations

Francis presented a Google Earth on screen showing Norwich zoning districts. He and explained the five different zoning districts and explained that the rural residential district accounted for 97 percent of the land area and included a large variety of development uses, form, and intensity of development from edge of village with higher density development to parcels of several hundred acres. Francis then presented a use table and discussed omissions, internal contradictions, missing or contradictory definitions and areas no longer in compliance with state statute.

Ciccotelli told the meeting that he was opposed to the idea of the commission responding to a draft document prepared by staff. He wants the document to support agriculture and forestry, and to ensure that Norwich does not become more suburban. At the same time, he wants to see taxes reduced. Ciccotelli stated that contrary to what many people think increased population and development do not reduce taxes per household but rather the reverse, so anti-sprawl and growth controls are important measures in land use regulation.

Allen said she was looking for a more diverse housing stock, not just development tied to current use eligible lots (25 acres and over), preserving forest blocks, research and development facilities (R&D) and appropriate economic development so that commercial property taxes could offset residential tax rates, and facilitating the supply of childcare centers.

Aquila, Loeb and Horwitz are looking forward to a clear document that is consistent with both the 2020 town plan and Vermont statute.

4. Wastewater Feasibility Study Steering Committee update

Francis informed the group that the consultant team now had the list of steering committee appointees and he expected to meet with them soon to initiate work.

5. Scoping Document for Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Paths Master Plan

Commissioners reviewed the document and were in broad agreement that the scoping document was ready for transmittal to the Selectboard.

Allen moved and Loeb seconded a motion that the planning commission approve the scoping document and transmit it to the selectboard for consideration. Motion carried 5-1. For: Allen, Loeb, Horwitz, Crow, Aquila. Against Ciccotelli.

6. Announcements, Reports, Updates, and Correspondence

Loeb referenced the memo from Jeff Lubell in the packet and informed the meeting that the affordable housing subcommittee (AHSC) is anxious to hear from the selectboard regarding the force of deed language and related agreements between the town and the Fire District. The AHSC still wants to conduct feasibility studies on the land while this matter is being resolved. Francis cautioned that it wasn't yet clear if the Fire District and the Land

Management Council (LMC) were in agreement with the concept of residential development, that no proposed lot boundaries had been identified to facilitate any study within a very large area and that the possibility remained that any change to the language of the deeds or related agreements may need to be ratified by annual town meeting. Work on answering these questions was ongoing.

Commissioners then turned their attention to the town highway garage site. Francis used a Google Earth map and imagery to facilitate discussion of the property. Loeb indicated that the AHSC was interested in pursuing a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) with the assistance of Two Rivers Regional Commission (TRORC) to conduct a feasibility study for locating housing at the top of the steep slope to the north of the highway garage, where the towns telecommunication tower is located.

Ciccotelli suggested that the planning commission do a housing study. Allen noted that the housing chapter of the 2020 town plan and housing strategy

Loeb moved and Crow seconded a motion that the planning commission transmit the memo from Jeff Lubell to the selectboard for consideration. Motion carried 5-1. For: Allen, Loeb, Horwitz, Crow, Aquila. Against Ciccotelli.

Francis reported that he had advertised the Planner position.

7. Approve Minutes of June 14, 2022

Deferred to next meeting.

8. Other Business: none

9. Future Meeting Schedule

Next meeting is September

10. Comments from the Public: none

11. Meeting adjourned: 8:37pm

Future Meetings:

Tuesday, September 13, Regular Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Francis