

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
Tuesday October 11, 2022, 6:30pm

MINUTES

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Zoom Meeting:

<p><a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89339717735">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89339717735</a> Meeting ID: 893 3971 7735</p>
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Members Present: Jaci Allen, Brian Loeb, Ernie Ciccotelli, Melissa Horwitz, Jeff Goodrich, Marc Aquila  
Public Present: Linda Cook  
Staff: Rod Francis, Aaron DeNamur

**Meeting Opened:** 6:32pm

- 1. Approve Agenda:** Ciccotelli stated he had asked for a copy of an email he had sent addressing an OML violation be included in the packet for the meeting and did not see it. DeNamur explained an updated packet for the meeting had been posted to the PC webpage that morning and the email was included in that. This resolved the concern raised by Ciccotelli.

Goodrich stated he could not support the agenda and disagreed with the 8<sup>th</sup> item stating there was no refresh of OML because the PC has not abided by it and asked that OML be discussed. Aquila stated that OML was an agenda item. Goodrich continued to express disagreement with the phrase "refresh" in the title of item #8. Loeb expressed he saw no reason to change the agenda as presented.

Loeb moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4-2. For: Allen, Loeb, Horwitz, Aquila. Against: Ciccotelli, Goodrich.

- 2. Public Comment:** Goodrich read from a prepared written statement expressing dissatisfaction with PC leadership and process.

- 3. Density Study Update**

Francis provided an update on the progress of the study stating he had met with the consultants to prepare final maps and do a final analysis. He stated the study would likely provide 2 recommendations, the first encouraging the creation of a new zoning district around the village center area and then renaming the remaining area of the current Rural Residential district to Rural. Additionally, it would recommend that the minimum parcel size of the renamed Rural district be 20 acres. Francis stated that this would create similar lot sizes to the average coming from subdivisions in the current Rural Residential district. Francis stated the data is still preliminary and he will provide updates once further information is compiled and available. The consultant is also experiencing staffing shortages.

Ciccotelli expressed that he wanted the PC's to have input on the report and would like to see the data before recommendations were made by the consultant. Allen expressed she did not see an issue with this.

- 4. Wastewater Study Update**

Francis indicated that he was still working with the consultant and did not have any additional updates at this time.

- 5. Recommendation to SB for ZA Appointment**

Aquila wanted to clarify that once DeNamur is appointed as Zoning Administrator Francis would no longer be the Zoning Administrator, this was confirmed. Goodrich expressed displeasure that the PC is no longer involved in hiring staff and that he does not know DeNamur and would have to vote no not as a reflection of DeNamur but disagreement with process. Loeb stated that he was sure DeNamur would be happy to meet with Goodrich. Goodrich stated that his disagreement was about due process.

Horwitz moved and Loeb seconded a motion to recommend to the Selectboard that DeNamur be appointed as ZA for Norwich. Vote 4-2 For: Loeb, Aquila, Horwitz, Allen Against: Goodrich, Ciccotelli

**6. Appoint Clerk**

Goodrich stated he did not have experience with DeNamur in regard to minutes other than the minutes from the previous meeting. He stated he did not feel the minutes from the previous meeting was a full reflection of the discussion and wants minutes to be fair and balanced.

Loeb moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to appoint DeNamur as Clerk of the Planning Commission.

Vote: 5-1, For: Ciccotelli, Horwitz, Aquila, Loeb, Allen Against: Goodrich

**7. Announcements, Reports, Directors Update, AHSC Update, and Correspondence**

Francis stated he had been working with DeNamur to train him and familiarize him with Norwich and that was going well. He also discussed commitments from larger employers in the Upper Valley to dedicate funding for affordable housing in the area and thought this could be an interesting topic for future PC meetings. Goodrich stated that as a participant in the creation of this fund he would be happy to discuss it with people.

Loeb reported that the AHSC will be having an information session on Accessory Dwelling Units for those who are interested during their next regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>.

**8. Open Meeting Law Refresh**

Allen stated that a link to a training on OML was embedded in the agenda and the PC were sent a packet from the Secretary of State's Office discussing OML. Horwitz stated she felt the PC had done a good job abiding by the OML. Loeb stated he had not observed anyone on the PC acting in such a way so as to obscure information from the public. Ciccotelli discussed his email that is attached to the meeting packet and regarding the previous OML violation along with his discussion with the SOS's office on the matter. He also expressed that he felt there were inappropriate influences on the Selectboard and PC and that the email he was responding to when the violation occurred invited a policy discussion. Goodrich stated he felt the Selectboard and PC had attempted to subvert the OML over the last 5 years. He also stated that the training from the Town attorneys on OML was not helpful. He expressed disagreement with conduct of previous meetings and treatment of Ciccotelli at such. All PC members should be able to share their thoughts without being attacked. Aquila asked a question to verify the process for curing an OML violation.

**9. Approve Minutes**

Goodrich stated he had not had enough time to review the minutes to suggest edits but had several and would have to vote no as of now, he made clear this was not to undermine DeNamur. Allen expressed that PC members receive the minutes in advance and need to be ready for meetings. Goodrich expressed that he did feel 5 days was sufficient time. Francis stated that draft minutes are posted well in advance of the meeting to abide by state statute.

Loeb moved and Horwitz seconded a motion to approve the minutes from September 13, 2022. Vote 4-1-1

For: Ciccotelli, Horwitz, Loeb, Allen Against: Goodrich Abstain: Aquila

**10. Other Business: none**

**11. Future Meeting Schedule, Work Plan, and Agenda**

Allen pointed out that the authorization from the legislature to meet completely remotely will expire in January and the PC needs to prepare to resume in person meetings. She asked if the PC would like to start meeting in person in November. Loeb stated he would like to wait until they are required to meet in person and would like to see the meeting time pushed back if meeting in person was going to resume. Goodrich stated he saw no problem with accommodating those who would prefer to attend the meeting remotely. Ciccotelli expressed support for moving meetings back to 7pm. DeNamur recommended waiting until the December meeting to return to in person so that he could have time to prepare and make sure the needed equipment is working properly to hold a hybrid meeting. Aquila offered to attend the November meeting in person to assist DeNamur with testing the hybrid meeting layout.

Francis stated he can aim to have a report on the work done by the consultant on the density study ready by the next meeting. DeNamur will be starting the process of the Community Rating System (part of the NFIP) in November and is currently reading the manual for the program.

**12. Public Comment:** none

**13. Adjourn:** 8:42pm, unanimous

**Future Meetings:**

**Tuesday, November 8, Regular Meeting**

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron DeNamur

APPROVED 11-08-22