

Norwich Planning Commission Special Meeting – August 22, 2023 6:30pm

To be Held in person in the Tracy Hall Multipurpose Room and via Zoom
Zoom Information:

Topic: Planning Commission

Time: August 22, 2023, 6:30 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81307504748>

Meeting ID: 813 0750 4748

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

1. Approve Agenda
2. Public comment for items not on agenda
3. Correspondence
4. Chair report
 - P&Z files and maps
5. Subcommittee updates
6. Planning Commission staff – Job description and hiring process
 - [\[ZA Job Description\]](#)
 - [\[JOB_DESC_Plan-Dir_ZA-Jan2023\]](#)
 - [\[McLean 5/10/22 memo from 10/12/22 SB packet\]](#)
 - [\[24 V.S.A. §4325 Powers & duties of planning commissions\]](#)
 - [\[24 V.S.A. §4448 Appointment & powers of administrative officer\]](#)
7. Planning Commission work plan
 - Soliciting input on PC priorities – interaction with town groups
 - HPC 9/28 meeting
 - DRB, Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, Listers
 - Residents
8. Approve minutes of August 8, 2023
9. Public comment
10. Adjourn

Job Title: Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Department: Planning and Zoning

1. **JOB SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Understanding and interpreting Town ordinances and regulations.
- 1.2 Assists the Development Review Board (DRB) with understanding and reviewing land use applications.
- 1.3 Assists applicants with understanding Town ordinances and regulations and land use application requirements.
- 1.4 Assists the Planning Commission with its legislative responsibilities.

2. **MAJOR DUTIES**

- 2.1 The ZA's primary function includes understanding and interpreting Town ordinances and regulations to process administrative applications and to assist the DRB with understanding and reviewing land use applications including working with applicants, offering staff review comments, assisting the DRB during project review, assisting with the public notice and administrative requirements of land use applications, assisting the DRB with public and deliberative review sessions including preparation of meeting minutes with testimony and findings following deliberative sessions, development of notices of decision, and memorializing permit applications once approved or denied.
- 2.2 ZA functions include enforcement responsibilities pursuant to Town ordinances and regulations.
- 2.3 ZA functions will include professional and courteous engagement of the public and volunteer board members at all times.
- 2.4 As time allows, the ZA will also assist the Planning Commission (PC) with its legislative responsibilities including municipal plan updates, zoning and subdivision regulation revisions, and assistance with coordinating collaborative efforts the PC may pursue such as Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) input, pursuit of grant funding, and engagement of consultants.
- 2.5 As time allows, the ZA will perform other duties assigned by the Town Manager.

3. **KNOWLEDGE DESIRED FOR THE POSITION**

- 3.1 Knowledge of and experience with the law related to land use permits, ordinances, regulations, and the responsibilities and roles of lay-boards.
- 3.2 Knowledge of and experience with interpreting land use regulations, reviewing land use applications, assisting with land use application review, and addressing both administrative and enforcement land use matters.
- 3.3 Knowledge of and experience with Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) and Regional Development Corporations (RDCs).
- 3.4 Knowledge of and experience with grant writing and administration.
- 3.5 Knowledge of and experience with digital engagement including document publication and in-person and remote meeting assistance. ArcGIS and GIS skills are also desirable with the understanding that TRORC and VCGI provide significant resources in this regard.
- 3.6 The ability to courteously communicate at all times and provide accurate written summaries and documents.

4. **SUPERVISORY CONTROLS**

- 4.1 The ZA's primary function is to assist with land use applications as required by the law and the DRB including enforcement.
- 4.2 The ZA will support the PC with its lawful responsibilities as time allows.
- 4.3 The ZA will report to the Town Manager and perform additional duties that may be assigned by the Town Manager as time allows.

5. **GUIDELINES**
 - 5.1 The ZA's conduct shall comport with the legislative requirements of the position and support the legislative requirements of lay boards.
 - 5.2 Town policies, ordinances, and regulations shall direct the ZA's actions.
 - 5.3 The ZA shall support Town Manager requirements for staff participation in the administration of the day-to-day operations of the Town.
6. **COMPLEXITY/SCOPE OF WORK**
 - 6.1 The ZA must understand current Town ordinances, regulations, and policies to inform all aspects of engaging the public, land use applications, lay board requirements, and enforcement needs including coordination with the Town Manager when legal assistance may be required.
 - 6.2 The ZA's primary responsibility includes addressing land use applications that require guidance to applicants and detailed communication with DRB members who are serving in a volunteer role to understand, review, and vote on materials submitted for each application. This is a complex requirement that requires seeking input and guidance from others (such as regulators; architects; engineers; system analysts for traffic, light, and noise; environmental scientists; real estate professionals; economic specialists; etc.) to help the DRB understand the details associated with each application in the context of existing ordinances and regulations.
 - 6.3 As time allows, the ZA will assist the PC with its responsibilities to update the municipal plan, ordinances, regulations, and policies.
 - 6.4 As time allows, the ZA will assist the Town Manager with other duties needed to support the day-to-day functions of the Town.
7. **CONTACTS**
 - 7.1 The ZA will report to the Town Manager for employment responsibilities.
 - 7.2 The ZA will coordinate with the DRB for all non-administrative land use applications.
 - 7.3 The ZA will assist and inform all land use applicants.
 - 7.4 The ZA will coordinate with the PC to assist the PC with the execution of its legislative responsibilities.
 - 7.5 The ZA will engage members of the public with courtesy.
 - 7.6 The ZA will transparently engage others involved in land use including, but not limited to, legislative and regulatory interests outside the Town, RPCs, RDCs, public and private regional organizations involved in land use, other land use professionals, adjacent municipalities, and other parties affecting land use in the Town.
 - 7.7 The ZA will need to work with other staff members for planning, budgeting, and permitting needs (such as the Public Works Department for driveway permitting, all departments for long-term capital improvement planning, and all departments for Town Plan and other regulatory implications).
8. **PHYSICAL DEMANDS/WORK ENVIRONMENT**
 - 8.1 The ZA must use the Town's digital system to perform daily duties and work with the Town Manager to upgrade existing systems.
 - 8.2 The ZA must be available for public outreach for land use concerns and applications by means of office hours in Tracy Hall, notifications of availability, and timely responses for individual interactions.
 - 8.3 The ZA will need to conduct site visits, interact with people outside the Town, and maintain technical knowledge, which will require skills and abilities in myriad temperature and weather conditions for travel and participation.
9. **SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**
 - 9.1 This position has supervisory responsibility for a Planning Assistant.
 - 9.2 This position is responsible to the Town Manager for employment.
 - 9.3 This position is subject to the law and Town policies.

10. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- 10.1 Licensure, degrees, and/or past job positions related to land use applications, municipal project review, and documentation related to land use permits.
- 10.2 Verbal and written communication skills in person and digitally.
- 10.3 Town employment requirements such as a driver's license, background check, etc.



Job Title: Planning Director and Zoning Administrator
Department: Planning and Zoning

FLSA Designation: Exempt
Pay Classification: 22

1. JOB SUMMARY

- 1.1 This position is responsible for the town's planning and zoning operations.

2. MAJOR DUTIES

- 2.1 Provides professional planning services including but not limited to implementing and revising the Norwich Town Plan and the Norwich Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
- 2.2 Drafts municipal plan and land use regulations in collaboration with the Planning Commission; organizes and facilitates public workshops and hearings; writes planning and historic preservation grant applications and administers grants; issues requests for quotes and requests for proposals for consultants, recommends selection, and supervises projects.
- 2.3 Represents the town at regional Transportation Advisory Committee meetings, Upper Valley Transportation Management Association meetings, and other regional groups.
- 2.4 Maintains the town's geographic information system (GIS).
- 2.5 Maintains town's E911 database in coordination with Vermont Enhanced 911 Board.
- 2.6 Prepares Planning Department budgets and manages Planning Department staff.
- 2.7 Applies for and administers relevant grants including but not limited to grant writing, issuing requests for proposals, recommending consultant selection, and managing projects.
- 2.8 Administers the Norwich Zoning and Subdivision Regulations including but not limited to advising prospective applicants; reviewing permit applications; maintaining permit records; preparing staff reports and draft decisions for the Development Review Board, investigating complaints and enforcing violations, and maintaining compliance with statutory notice and posting requirements.
- 2.9 Advises landowners and applicants on municipal land use regulations and permit application processes; reviews zoning permit applications for approval; maintains permit records; creates databases to track records.
- 2.10 Investigates and enforces violations of municipal land use regulations.
- 2.11 Assists and advises applications in preparation of applications to the Development Review Board; reviews applications for completeness; provides staff support for board hearings.
- 2.12 Provides staff support for town committees including but not limited to the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Conservation Commission and Historic Preservation Commission, and maintaining compliance with Vermont Open Meeting & Public Record Laws.
- 2.13 Directs planning and zoning functions for the town.
- 2.14 Performs related duties and other duties as assigned by the Town Manager.

3. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- 3.1 Knowledge of land use planning and regulatory principles, techniques, best practices, and laws.
- 3.2 Interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

- 3.3 Analytical writing skills and oral communication skills.
- 3.4 Knowledge of State, department and town policies and procedures.
- 3.5 Knowledge of computers and job-related software programs.
- 3.6 Skill in the analysis of problems and the development and implementation of solutions.
- 3.7 Skill in the preparation of clear and precise reports.
- 3.8 Knowledge of grant application and management principles.
- 3.9 Knowledge of website design and management, and mapping and other job-related software.

4. SUPERVISORY CONTROLS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 The Town Manager assigns work in terms of department goals and objectives.
- 4.2 This position has direct supervision over Planning Assistant (1).

5. SCOPE OF WORK AND WORK ENVIRONMENT


- 5.1 The work consists of varied duties. Regulatory standards and deadlines contribute to the complexity of the position.
- 5.2 The position requires regular contact with co-workers, elected and appointed town officials, property owners and their representatives, and members of the public. Contact is typically to provide services, to give or exchange information, to resolve problems.
- 5.3 Work is typically performed while sitting at a desk or table or while intermittently sitting, standing, or stooping. The employee occasionally lifts light objects and distinguishes between shades of color.
- 5.4 Work is typically performed in an office and outdoors, occasionally in cold or inclement weather.
- 5.6 Regularly scheduled office hours including some flexible work hours, such as night meetings for the staffing of committees.

6. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- 6.1 Bachelor's degree in Planning or closely related field; at least three years progressively responsible experience in planning or related professional capacity; or any combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- 6.3 Possession of or ability to readily obtain a valid driver's license issued by the State of Vermont for the type of vehicle or equipment operated.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Norwich Selectboard

FROM: Joseph S. McLean, Esq. 

DATE: May 10, 2022

RE: Planning and Zoning statutes versus Norwich structure

This memorandum is in response to Norwich Selectboard member Marcia Calloway's 4/7/2022 memorandum containing comments/questions regarding the structure of zoning and planning in the Town of Norwich, and that structure's conformance with Vermont state statutes. Our responses are set forth in the order presented in Selectboard member Calloway's memorandum.

Problem: Norwich apparently allowed the former town manager(s) to appoint a "Planning and Zoning Director" to co-exist with a planning commission. Recently the Selectboard has authorized the town manager to hire a Zoning Administrator. I cannot find this structure, nor such authorization, in statute.

Response: *As discussed below, despite some potentially confusing terminology, we do not see a legal issue with the appointment of a Planning and Zoning Director position in Norwich. It is clear that, in Norwich, this position was not intended to be substitute for the planning commission; it primarily serves a management oversight function. Further, while the Selectboard may authorize the town manager to "hire" a zoning administrative officer ("ZAO"), that position should not be considered filled unless and until the ZAO candidate is nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the Selectboard. Thereafter, ultimate supervision of the ZAO (who also functions semi-autonomously) is by the town manager, although intermediate supervisory steps are also possible (i.e., oversight through a "Planning and Zoning Director").*

Concerns about Norwich structure vis-à-vis statutes (cited below):

- Norwich is considered an “urban municipality” to the extent that it has not previously chosen to vote to be considered a “rural town.” 24 V.S.A. § 4303 (25), (31). Norwich could still so vote.

Response: We agree that Norwich is an urban municipality since its population is over 2,500 persons, and it does not appear to have voted to be considered a rural town.

- However, in an “urban municipality” the legislative body **may** create a planning department headed by a planning director as a substitute for a planning commission, in which case the legislative body **may** also create an advisory planning council to advise the planning director and perform whatever additional functions the legislative body assigns to it by resolution. 24 V.S.A. § 4321(b).

Response: We agree that § 4321 authorizes the legislative body of an urban municipality to create a “planning department” headed by a “planning director” as a substitute for a planning commission, and that, in such instance, the legislative body may also create an advisory planning council. Note, however, that is not what we believe has occurred in Norwich to date. Note, also, that the terms “planning department” and “planning director” are not defined by Chapter 117 of Title 24.

- Norwich has a planning commission AND a planning director/department. This seems at odds with the statute.

Response: We agree that Norwich has a planning commission. We also understand that Norwich presently has a position called “Planning and Zoning Director.” While the terminology used is similar, we do not understand the Norwich “Planning and Zoning Director” to be a position intended to replace the planning commission, as contemplated by § 4321. Instead, we view the “Planning and Zoning Director’s” position as merely consolidating the support functions (and, potentially, management oversight) of the municipal planner and ZAO in a single person. This is not uncommon in Vermont; we are aware of several communities where, for management purposes, the planning and zoning functions are overseen by a “director” who, in turn, answers to the municipal manager or Selectboard. Of course, there is nothing that would prevent Norwich – where the ZAO and Planner have generally been the same person – from re-naming the “Planning and Zoning

Director” position to, for example, “Town Planner/Zoning Administrator” to avoid confusion.

Notably, the ZAO, upon nomination by the planning commission and appointment by the legislative body, enjoys a degree of statutory autonomy in the performance of zoning administrative and enforcement functions. 24 V.S.A. §§ 4448(a), 4452. Curiously, the position of municipal planner is not defined or discussed directly anywhere in Chapter 117. However, 24 V.S.A. § 4345 authorizes the planning commission to “retain staff and consultant assistance in carrying out its duties and powers,” and presumably this includes the municipal planner. See also 24 V.S.A. § 4440(a) (authorizing the Selectboard to appropriate funds for a wide variety of planning and development review work).

- Also in an “urban municipality,” not more than two elected or appointed officials, chosen by the legislative body, shall be non-voting ex officio members of the planning commission. 24 V.S.A. § 4322. *True.*
 - Norwich has not appointed any Selectboard members as ex officio non-voting members of the planning commission as the statute would seem to require. *This is also likely true, but there is no consequence for failing to appoint ex officio members of the planning commission. As a result, and in our experience, it is not unusual for planning commissions to lack ex officio members (and, in fact, having active ex officio planning commission members seems to be more the exception than the rule).*
- Any planning commission may administer the bylaws (zoning regulations) except where those functions are performed by a development review board. 24 V.S.A. § 4325(3). *True, although in this context “administer bylaws” can only mean perform development review functions (with site plan review and subdivision review being the only development review traditionally performed by the planning commission), not perform the functions of the administrative officer. Norwich has a Development Review Board that, on information and belief, performs all development review functions. Therefore, there are no bylaws for the planning commission to “administer,” including the zoning regulations. However, the planning commission can continue to perform its planning and bylaw development functions and other duties under Chapter 117.*
 - Notwithstanding Norwich has appointed a planning commission, the zoning bylaws are administered by the Planning Director.

Response: In Norwich, the zoning bylaws are administered by the ZAO. Development review proposals (i.e., conditional use, site plan, subdivision) and appeals from the ZAO go to the DRB. The planning commission plans/prepares bylaws and bylaw amendments. That model is consistent with what is done in almost every town in Vermont that has a DRB.

- An “administrative officer” shall be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the legislative body for a term of three years promptly after the adoption of the first bylaws or when a vacancy exists. That officer shall administer the bylaws literally.

Response: We agree. Any ZAO, whether permanent, acting or assistant, should be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the Selectboard before assuming office. This is consistent both with 24 V.S.A. § 4448 and 24 V.S.A. § 1236(2) (excepting from town manager authority the power to “make appointments to fill vacancies which the selectboard is now authorized by law to fill”) (see also Norwich TM job description, at 2.2.2.12).

Summary and Request

- Norwich has allowed the construction of a Planning and Zoning Director hired and overseen by the town manager rather than the legislative body, with no ex officio membership of Selectboard members and vesting the power of bylaw oversight in the Planning Director rather than in a Zoning Administrator or the planning commission itself. Whereas, statutes appear to allow the legislative body of a town to create a planning department as a **substitute** for a planning commission, with a Zoning Administrator being responsible for **literal administration** of the zoning bylaws.

Response: Norwich has a town manager form of government. Under this model, the ZAO should be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the Selectboard. Upon appointment, the ZAO functions quasi-autonomously, but, like all employees of the town, is subject to the direction, supervision and management authority of the town manager per 24 V.S.A. § 1235. The manager, in turn, is subject to the direction and supervision of the Selectboard. We are not aware of anything that precludes the town from creating a “planning and zoning director” position, as an intermediate level of management supervision between the ZAO and/or municipal planner and the town manager, and it happens in many larger municipalities. This planning and zoning director position is not a substitute for the planning commission. Further nothing precludes the Selectboard from appointing two ex officio members of the planning commission at any time. The lack of such

appointments does not invalidate the planning commission's actions taken without ex officio members.

- The Board should review the current structure with legal counsel to delineate the Selectboard responsibility, the limits of town manager authority over planning and zoning functions, and the correct execution of administrative powers in the realm of legally-allowed permit review. *See above.*
- The Board should make this review a priority given the current town manager continues to function as the Planning and Zoning Director and is authorized to hire and supervise a Zoning Administrator, all of which may be inappropriate under statute.

Response: We are not aware of anything that would preclude the town manager from serving as the planning and zoning director, municipal planner or zoning administrator, or from supervising the same. Irrespective of how the zoning administrator position is advertised, or how prospective candidates are reviewed/interviewed, he or she should ultimately be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the Selectboard before assuming office. Thereafter, that person should be supervised by the planning and zoning director and/or town manager, as the case may be.

Statutes:

24 V.S.A. § 4303 Definitions [under Chapter 117 Municipal And Regional Planning And Development, subchapter 001: General Provisions; Definitions]

“(25) “Rural town” means a town having, as at the date of the most recent U.S. census, a population of less than 2,500 persons, ... or a town having 2,500 or more but less than 5,000 persons that has voted by Australian ballot to be considered a rural town.”

“(31) “Urban municipality” means a city, an incorporated village, or any town that is not a rural town.”

24 V.S.A. § 4321 Creation of planning commissions [under Chapter 117 Municipal and Regional Planning And Development, Subchapter 002: Municipal Planning Commissions]

“(a) A planning commission may be created at any time by the act of the legislative body of a municipality.

“(b) In any **urban** municipality, the legislative body may create a planning department headed by a planning director **as a substitute for a planning commission**.... In such event, that legislative body may further create **an advisory planning council**, which shall only function in an advisory capacity to the planning director in the exercise of his or her powers and duties, and shall have such other functions as that legislative body shall, by resolution, assign to such council.”

24 V.S.A. § 4322 Planning commission; membership [under the same chapter/subchapter as above]

“...The selectboard of a rural town, or not more than two elected or appointed officials of an urban municipality who are chosen by the legislative body of the urban municipality, shall be nonvoting ex officio members of a planning commission....”

24 V.S.A. § 4325 Powers and duties of planning commissions [under Chapter 117 Municipal And Regional Planning And Development, Subchapter 002: Municipal Planning Commissions]

“Any planning commission created under this chapter may:

“...(3) Administer bylaws adopted under this chapter, except to the extent that those functions are performed by a development review board...”

24 V.S.A. § 4448 Appointment and powers of administrative officer [under Chapter 117 Municipal And Regional Planning And Development, Subchapter 009: Adoption, Administration, And Enforcement]

“(a) **An administrative officer, who may hold any other office in the municipality other than membership in the board of adjustment or development review board, shall be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the legislative body for a term of three years promptly after the adoption of the first bylaws or when a vacancy exists**.....The administrative officer shall administer the bylaws literally and shall not have the power to permit any land development that is not in conformance with those bylaws. An administrative officer may be removed for cause at any time by the legislative body after consultation with the planning commission....”

The Vermont Statutes Online

Title 24 : Municipal And County Government

Chapter 117 : Municipal And Regional Planning And Development

Subchapter 002 : Municipal Planning Commissions

(Cite as: 24 V.S.A. § 4325)

§ 4325. Powers and duties of planning commissions

Any planning commission created under this chapter may:

(1) Prepare a plan and amendments thereof for consideration by the legislative body and to review any amendments thereof initiated by others as set forth in subchapter 5 of this chapter.

(2) Prepare and present to the legislative body proposed bylaws and make recommendations to the legislative body on proposed amendments to such bylaws as set forth in subchapter 6 of this chapter.

(3) Administer bylaws adopted under this chapter, except to the extent that those functions are performed by a development review board.

(4) Undertake capacity studies and make recommendations on matters of land development, urban renewal, transportation, economic and social development, urban beautification and design improvements, historic and scenic preservation, the conservation of energy and the development of renewable energy resources, and wetland protection. Data gathered by the planning commission that is relevant to the geographic information system established under 3 V.S.A. § 20 shall be compatible with, useful to, and shared with that system.

(5) Prepare and present to the legislative body recommended building, plumbing, fire, electrical, housing, and related codes and enforcement procedures, and construction specifications for streets and related public improvements.

(6) Prepare and present a recommended capital budget and program for a period of five years, as set forth in section 4440 of this title, for action by the legislative body, as set forth under section 4443 of this title.

(7) Hold public meetings.

(8) Require from other departments and agencies of the municipality such available information as relates to the work of the planning commission.

(9) In the performance of its functions, enter upon land to make examinations and surveys.

(10) Participate in a regional planning program.

(11) Retain staff and consultant assistance in carrying out its duties and powers.

(12) Undertake comprehensive planning, including related preliminary planning and engineering studies.

(13) Perform such other acts or functions as it may deem necessary or appropriate to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed by, and the intent and purposes of, this chapter. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1979, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 4; 1985, No. 188 (Adj. Sess.), § 7; 1987, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), § 18, eff. July 1, 1989; 1993, No. 232 (Adj. Sess.), § 45, eff. March 15, 1995; 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 85.)

VERMONT **GENERAL ASSEMBLY****The Vermont Statutes Online****Title 24 : Municipal And County Government****Chapter 117 : Municipal And Regional Planning And Development****Subchapter 009 : Adoption, Administration, And Enforcement**

(Cite as: 24 V.S.A. § 4448)

§ 4448. Appointment and powers of administrative officer

(a) An administrative officer, who may hold any other office in the municipality other than membership in the board of adjustment or development review board, shall be nominated by the planning commission and appointed by the legislative body for a term of three years promptly after the adoption of the first bylaws or when a vacancy exists. The compensation of the administrative officer shall be fixed under sections 932 and 933 of this title, and the officer shall be subject to the personnel rules of the municipality adopted under sections 1121 and 1122 of this title. The administrative officer shall administer the bylaws literally and shall not have the power to permit any land development that is not in conformance with those bylaws. An administrative officer may be removed for cause at any time by the legislative body after consultation with the planning commission.

(b) The planning commission may nominate and the legislative body may appoint an acting administrative officer who shall have the same duties and responsibilities as the administrative officer in the administrative officer's absence. If an acting administrative officer position is established, or, for municipalities that establish the position of assistant administrative officer, there shall be clear policies regarding the authority of the administrative officer in relation to the acting or assistant officer.

(c) The administrative officer should provide an applicant with forms required to obtain any municipal permit or other municipal authorization required under this chapter, or under other laws or ordinances that relate to the regulation by municipalities of land development. If other municipal permits or authorizations are required, the administrative officer should coordinate a unified effort on behalf of the municipality in administering its development review programs. The administrative officer should inform any person applying for municipal permits or authorizations that the person should contact the regional permit specialist employed by the Agency of Natural Resources in order to assure timely action on any related State permits; nevertheless, the applicant retains the obligation to identify, apply for, and obtain relevant State permits.

(d) If the administrative officer fails to act with regard to a complete application for a permit within 30 days, whether by issuing a decision or by making a referral to the appropriate municipal panel, a permit shall be deemed issued on the 31st day. (Added 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 100.)

Norwich PC Minutes -8/8/23

Members Present: Ernie Ciccotelli, Vince Crow, Jeff Goodrich, Stuart Richards, Jaan Laaspere, Bob Pape, Kris Clement

Public: Lisa Close, Linda Gray, Nancy Osgood

Meeting Opened: 6:36 pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Goodrich moved, seconded by Ciccotelli, to approve the agenda.

Motion passed 7-0

2. Public Comment on items not on the agenda

None

3. Correspondence

Richards encouraged that anyone interested should sign up for dunk tank at the upcoming town fair.

4. Chair Report

a. PC Budget

Laaspere stated the annual budget allocated for Planning and Zoning is approximately \$160,000. Considering that the Zoning Director position is currently vacant, that leaves approximately \$8,000 a month of the budget unused.

He further stated that because of the timing of the fiscal year and auditing process, any surplus from the previous year would not be available until an undetermined future date.

b. P&Z files and maps

Laaspere stated that staff is continuing to organize and locate the planning and zoning files of the previous zoning director.

Goodrich recommended accessing the previous zoning director's email which would provide access to more pertinent files.

c. AHSC Planning Grant

Laaspere stated that the AHSC is delaying the application for the planning grant regarding the site on New Boston until the next cycle due to lack of bandwidth of staff and the town manager.

Goodrich stated that in the past the town has had a robust record of volunteer citizens engaging with grant projects and the SB should utilize that.

Richards stated that he hopes that the PC looks closely at the line items in order to be realistic about the cost and to potentially reduce the cost.

5. Planning Commission Work Plan and Soliciting input on PC priorities

Laaspere recommended that the PC should meet once a month going forward with subcommittees meeting between meetings.

Consensus was met to establish two sub committees.

The Solar Siting Subcommittee will include Clement, Ciccotelli, and Laaspere.

The Land Use Subcommittee will include Pape, Ciccotelli, and Richards.

Each group will meet before the next PC meeting to further define their goals and expectations.

Nancy Osgood encouraged attendance of the next meeting of the Historical Preservation Commission on August 28th to discuss ideas on the zoning and permitting process.

Linda Gray encouraged the PC to engage with the Conservation Commission and Energy Committee for input regarding priorities of the town.

6. PC Staff – Job description and hiring process

The group discussed changing the job description and title of the vacant position to Zoning Administrator with the goal of more accurately advertising the position.

The current listing as well as a revised version will be included in the next PC meeting packet in order to discuss.

7. Approve minutes

Goodrich moved, seconded by Ciccotelli, to approve 7/25 minutes with corrections.

Motion passed 7-0

8. Public Comment

N/A

9. Adjourn

Goodrich moved, seconded by Richards, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42PM

Motion passed 7-0