

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 14, 2005
Tracy Hall - Conference Room

Regular meeting called to order by the Chair at 6:40 p.m.

Members Present: Daniel Johnson (Chair), Douglas Hoffman (left at 8:45), Ralph Hybels, Jaye Pershing Johnson, Lynn McGrew, Alison McRee, Jeffrey Mathias, Stuart Richards

Members Absent: Adele Fulton

Staff: Phil Dechert

Public: Gerard Chapdelaine (partial, non-participatory, including 7c)

1. Agenda:

Action: R. Hybels moved to switch agenda items 4 and 5 to focus on the survey, and to cover zoning regulations as time allowed. Second S. Richards. Passed unanimous.

2. Comments from the Public - none

3. Correspondence:

TRORC letter received.

S. Richards letter which was emailed to the PC members to be discussed under "Survey".

5. Survey:

S. Richards suggested that the survey provide more background information in each question and to offer "quantified" rather than "relative" answer choices. D. Hoffman suggested providing some background on which respondents may base answers in a cover letter/introduction to the survey. R. Hybels warned about prejudicing answers with selected background. The Chair suggested having the survey consultant advise the PC on this point.

Action: J. Mathias moved to request suggestions from the consultant on these points and on entire revised draft of survey. Second S. Richards. Passed unanimous.

S. Richards suggested, in view of the Sewer Committee report now being available, that questions be added regarding sewers. The goal is to have the survey mailed in early September. Revised questions were reviewed. D. Hoffman will update #6.

Action: S. Richards moved to add 2 columns "rural residential" and "village residential" to question 11. Second R. Hybels. Passed unanimous.

R. Hybels suggested providing definitions for "affordable housing" and "shared housing". R. Hybels then suggested "affordable housing" be defined as "housing for those with an annual income of \$59,350 for a family of four". S. Richards suggested "housing for those earning 80-120% of the median Windsor County income". It was asked what about people earning less than 80% of the median Windsor County income; are they excluded?

Action: D. Hoffman moved to use “housing for those earning less than 120% of the median Windsor County income”. Second J. Johnson. Failed 4-4-0 (For: L. McGrew, D. Hoffman, D. Johnson, J.Mathias; Against: R. Hybels, J. Johnson, A. McRee, S. Richards).

Action: Richards moved to define affordable housing as housing for families making \$48,000-71,000 per year for a family of four. Second D. Johnson. R. Hybels offered a friendly amendment to clarify that this equaled 80-120% of the median Windsor County income of \$59,350.

D. Hoffman (acting scribe) left at 8:45

5. *Survey - continued*

Action: Motion by S. Richards to include Affordable Housing definition as housing which is available to families who earn no more than 120% of the Windsor County median income. No second.

Action: Motion by R. Hybels to include Affordable Housing definition as housing which is available to families who earn no more than \$71,000. Second ???S. Richards???. Passed 6-0-1 (Abstaining: L. McGrew)

4. *Zoning Regulation Revisions - skipped due to time*

6. *Old Business*

a) *Proposal for meeting regarding town and school tax rates as they relate to development and population growth or decline.*

Discussion included: The Finance Committee forum on September 15 dealing with town and school tax rates; the timing of zoning revision review; the need to focus on specific issues.

Action: It was decided by unanimous consent that the planning commission would hold a special meeting on September 29, 2005 with representatives from the Finance Committee and the School Board. It was agreed that any such meeting be held after a town wide forum that is to be hosted by both these groups.

b) *Punch list Item #1 Open Space Sub-Committee - update - skipped*

7. *New Business*

a) *Assistant or Acting Zoning Administrator*

The possible need for an assistant or acting ZA was discussed and included: the absence or vacation of the ZA; new zoning regulations may generate more work for the ZA; the DRB has taken more time and generated more paperwork than anticipated; the Town Manager and P. Dechert are currently discussing the need for P. Dechert to have help; P. Dechert plans to submit a larger budget for planning/zoning which may include additional help; what procedures are used. A question still remains as to if help needed is only clerical or would include administrative functions. J. Mathias was asked to distribute copies of what Chapter 117 says regarding an assistant or acting administrative officer.

b) *Bylaw changes*

Several amendments were proposed to be made to the By-Laws of the Norwich Planning Commission in Section IV, Organization of Meetings.

Action: Motion by J. Johnson to propose amending Section IV, Subsection 1 to add apostrophe to the second occurrence of “commissions”. Second by R. Hybels. Passed unanimous.

Action: Motion by J. Mathias to propose amending Section IV, Subsection 2 to strike “ the usual place and give notice of it directly to all the members at least 12 hours in advance thereof.” and replace with “ or near the municipal clerk's office and in at least two other public places in the municipality, at least 24 hours before the meeting. In addition, notice shall be given, either orally or in writing, to each member of the public body at least 24 hours before the meeting, except that a member may waive notice of a special meeting.”. Second by S. Richards. Friendly amendment accepted from J. Johnson to change “public body” to “commission”. Passed unanimous.

Action: Motion by J. Mathias to propose amending Section IV, Subsection 3 to add “, if received from the Chair” after “next meeting”, and striking and replacing “one” with “meeting”, and adding “, if timely received,” after “discussion”. Second by R. Hybels. Passed unanimously.

Action: Motion by J. Mathias to propose amending Section IV, Subsection 4 to add “draft and approved” after “post”, and strike and replace “outside” with “inside”, and strike “, and file copies with the Selectboard and the Town Clerk.”, and add “The Clerk shall deliver a copy of the approved minutes to the Town administrative secretary for distribution and a copy to the Chair for signing and filing with the Town Clerk. Scribes may assist the Clerk by recording minutes and if so shall bear the responsibility to deliver those draft minutes to the Clerk within five days.”. Second A. McRee. Passed unanimous.

Notice is hereby given as per Section IV, 6, j of the By-Laws of the Norwich Planning Commission that the first four subsections of Section IV, Organization of Meetings, of the By-Laws of the Norwich Planning Commission are proposed to be amended at the next regular meeting of the planning commission on July 28, 2005 as described above and resulting as follows.

Section IV, Organization of Meetings

1. Vermont law requires that meetings of Planning Commissions be open to the public. It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a schedule of this commission’s regular meetings posted on the bulletin board for public notices outside of Tracy Hall.

2. A special meeting of the Commission may be called at any time by the Chair, or by a majority of the voting members, and it shall be the duty of the Clerk to post a notice of the same in or near the municipal clerk's office and in at least two other public places in the municipality, at least 24 hours before the meeting. In addition, notice shall be given, either orally or in writing, to each member of the commission at least 24 hours before the meeting, except that a member may waive notice of a special meeting.

3. The Clerk shall likewise furnish each voting member with the agenda for the next meeting, if received from the Chair, together with minutes of the last meeting and any pertinent documents due for discussion, if timely received, at least 24 hours before the meeting.

4. The Clerk shall post draft and approved minutes of each meeting of the Commission on the public bulletin board inside Tracy Hall. The Clerk shall deliver a copy of the approved minutes to the Town administrative secretary for distribution and a copy to the Chair for signing and filing with the Town Clerk. Scribes may assist the Clerk by recording minutes and if so shall bear the responsibility to deliver those draft minutes to the Clerk within five days.

c) Selectboard motion regarding Simpson DRB decision

Discussion of the minutes of the Special Selectboard meeting on July 6, 2005, item number 5 included: should correspondence be sent to the Selectboard from PC or in conjunction with DRB; is the Selectboard action interference with the DRB; is the Selectboard trying to work something out within their realm of authority; is there a Selectboard misunderstanding of the DRB's quasi-judicial duty; does the Selectboard understand their role as negotiator; what precedent might be set; should there be discussion with the DRB; are there principles to express?

Action: Motion by J. Mathias for the Chair to draft a letter expressing concerns for the Selectboard's action to be discussed at the next meeting. Second by S. Richards. Motion failed 4-2-1 (For: D. Johnson, L. McGrew, J. Mathias, S. Richards) (Against: J. Johnson, A. McRee) (Abstaining: R. Hybels)

8. Minutes - 6/15/05, 6/29/05

Action: Motion by S Richards to approve draft minutes of 6/15/05 including corrections received from J. Mathias and S. Richards. Second A. McRee. Friendly amendment accepted from R. Hybels to exclude J. Mathias' first correction to item 4. Friendly amendment accepted from A. McRee to change vote on survey question 5 to unanimous. Passed 6-0-1 (Abstaining: J. Johnson)

Action: Motion by J. Mathias to approve draft minutes of 6/29/05 including corrections received from J. Johnson and typos. Second ??? Passed unanimous.

9. Future Agenda Items & Schedule

Future Meetings:

Thursday, July 28 - 6:30 PM Regular Meeting

2nd Thursday of each month - 6:30 PM Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 29 - 6:30 PM Special Meeting

10. Comments from the Public - none

11. Adjournment - 10:40 p.m.

Action: Motion by A. McRee to adjourn. Second by J. Johnson. Passed unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Hoffman, acting scribe until 8:45
Jeffrey D. Mathias, acting scribe after 8:45

Jeffrey D. Mathias, Clerk, Norwich Planning Commission

Approved: July 28, 2005