

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Tracy Hall - Meeting Room

Members Present: Daniel Johnson, Tom Gray, Richard Stucker, Brooke Adler, Ralph Hybels, Jeff Goodrich

Members Absent: Jaye Pershing Johnson

Clerk: Phil Dechert

Others: Madeline Levy, Lynn McGrew

Daniel Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

1. Approve Agenda – Agenda was approved by **unanimous consent**.

2. Comments from the Public – None.

3. Announcements & Correspondence – None

4. New Zoning –

Stucker, Adler, Hybels, and Dechert reported on the September 24 Selectboard zoning hearing and the discussion regarding changes to Section 3.13 – Natural & Scenic Features. Some of the Selectboard members seemed interested in reverting back to the August 2007 version of 3.13. McGrew reminded the members of his concern regarding how changes were made from the August 2007 draft to the May 21, 2008 draft. The commission reviewed a draft document prepared by Dechert for the Selectboard that included an alternate version of 3.13 reinserting the historical and cultural resources section, explanations of proposed changes, and why certain wording in the May 21, 2008 version should be retained. This will be submitted to the Selectboard along with proposed motions for warning a new hearing prior to the October 7 Selectboard meeting.

It was agreed that the goal of the Planning Commission is to create the best document.

5. Request to Change Zoning - Norwich Full Gospel Voice Church, 713 US Route 5 North

Note: Jeff Goodrich recused and left the table for the following discussion.

David Goodrich, President and Pastor of the Norwich Full Gospel Voice Church, had appeared at the Selectboard zoning hearing the previous evening and submitted a request for the town to change the zoning for the parcel where his church is situated to allow a commercial use other than a church. He had also submitted a letter from Jack Candon, his attorney, requesting consideration of a zoning change. The Selectboard referred the issue to the Planning Commission.

Dechert explained that the protection of the Village water supply is a significant issue but that a non-residential use may have less impact on groundwater than a residential use. He also pointed out that the current town plan and the discussion for the new town plan include discussions of creating a mixed-use district between the river and the interstate which would include this property. The real problem is that re-zoning individual properties is generally not good practice.

Members of the Planning Commission were sympathetic with the request but were not in favor of proposing a zoning change for an individual property.

Stucker moved to advise the applicant that the Planning Commission is sympathetic with the request to re-zone the church property but does not support a zoning change for an individual property. The motion was seconded by Adler and passed 5-0 (Goodrich recused)

Dechert will communicate to David Goodrich what other options he may have.

6. Town Plan

Natural Resources – Comments have been received from the Conservation Commission.

Transportation – Goodrich and Dechert have met with several Upper Valley transportation planners. Goodrich will submit an outline of findings.

Energy – Waiting for comments from Energy Committee.

Housing – Gray has a meeting scheduled with Creigh Moffatt and Mary Ann Hankel of the Affordable Housing Committee.

Finance – Hybels expecting comments from Finance Committee in early October.

Land Use – Goodrich and Johnson have meetings scheduled with regional planners.

Funding – Dechert will have a draft of the MPG application ready for review at the October 9 meeting.

7. Inclusionary Zoning

Review continued on the 9-24-08 draft as revised by Gray. There was discussion of phasing requirements and ways to ensure the construction of the required affordable units. Dechert will incorporate changes into a new draft for October 9.

Concern was expressed regarding the feasibility of an inclusionary zoning scheme in a town like Norwich with limited development and no sewer system. It was decided to continue with the process of developing a draft.

8. Minutes - 9-11-08 – Approved without changes.

9. Adjournment – 9:50 PM

Phil Dechert

Approved 10-16-08

Future Meetings:

Thursday, October 9 at 7 PM

Thursday, October 23 at 7 PM

Thursday, November 13 at 7 PM