

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 3, 2009

Tracy Hall - Meeting Room

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

**Members Absent:** Anne Silberfarb

**Clerk:** Phil Dechert

**Others:** Linda Gray, George Loveland, Ed Childs, Joyce Childs, Stan Teeter, Nancy Dean, Alan Berolzheimer, Nancy Hoggson, Arline Rotman, Diane Riley and Mindy Penny.

Dan Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

**Special Public Comment Session –**

**Town Plan Chapters: Land Use, Housing, Energy**

Johnson welcomed the audience and thanked them for coming. At the request of the Chair, Dechert went through each of the draft chapters explaining the highlights and key issues.

**Land Use-** In addition to the review of the chapter the following were discussed:

- Concept of higher density areas balanced with undeveloped open space in areas closer to the Village and the state highways. Also future hamlets away from the existing town center with local services and gathering places. This was a major theme coming from the charrette in 2006 and the planning workshops in 2007.
- Importance of protecting what is left of the working landscape, wildlife habitats and corridors, and the scenic areas. These issues are already addressed in current zoning and subdivision regulation but could be revised and improved.
- How to zone for a hamlet. Hamlet PUD provision or zoning district?
- Wastewater disposal is always an issue. New technologies may help.

**Housing-** The chapter addresses diversity of housing types, energy efficiency, accessibility to services, and affordability. Specific issues discussed included:

- Need for analysis for more specific affordable housing needs.
- Senior housing needs.

**Energy-** Many specific items in this chapter were discussed and revised.

- Add emphasis on Energy audits.
- Review state energy efficiency codes and find strategy to have them enforced.
- Town energy efficiency building codes could make new homes more energy efficient but would create an entire new set of regulations and enforcement infrastructure.
- The potential pollution from wood burning needs to be addressed utilizing “clean” burning stoves and furnaces.

Many helpful comments were made by members of the public that will result in minor changes to the next drafts. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation.

### **Regular Meeting**

1. **Agenda** – Approved.
2. **Correspondence** – Town plan comments were received from Jay Benson and Kathleen Shepherd.
3. **Minutes** – 11-19-09 - Approved as read.
4. **Town Plan** –
  - a. **Funding** – Municipal Planning Grants have been suspended due to state funding shortfalls. Our current MPG ends in early May and additional funds for the town plan preparation will be limited to those budgeted by the town. There is \$1,000 in the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. For the next fiscal year, between \$500 and \$1,000 will be budgeted.
  - b. An Education Grant Program for up to \$800 is available until May.
  - c. **Land Use, Housing & Energy Chapters** – Dechert will revise drafts to include this evening's changes and send to consultant.
  - d. **Town Plan Documents on Web** – After discussion it was agreed to put relevant town plan documents including the charrette report, planning workshop summaries and a public survey on the town web site. Dechert will select the documents and notify members when they are posted.
5. Meeting adjourned at 9:42 PM.

Phil Dechert, Clerk

### **Future Meetings:**

- Thursday, December 10 at 7PM – Regular Meeting
- Thursday, December 17 at 7PM – Special Meeting (Tentative)
- Thursday, January 14 at 7 PM - Regular Meeting

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