

PC Members,

ITEM #5

I am including this listserv posting by John Pepper & John Langhus for the benefit of those of you not reading the listserv.

Phil

From Norwich Listserv 1-8-18

20. Town Plan Deliberations - PROCESS NOT SUBSTANCE

From: John Langhus <johnlanghus@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, 7 Jan 2018 17:13:32 -0500

Hello neighbors,

We would like to offer a few process-oriented thoughts about the Town Plan, given the number of posts that have been made recently regarding the Town Plan and the fact that we are now in the final phase of the adoption process whereby the Selectboard coordinates the final drafting and approval of the Plan.

We want to emphasize that we are NOT posting for the Selectboard, simply as citizens who are sharing personal views on the process that is now unfolding.

Please be aware that this process is just now coming together and is in no way set yet. To date, the Selectboard has scheduled two public hearings to discuss the draft that came to us from the Planning Commission. This draft is on the Town website and can be found as document #2 here:

<http://norwich.vt.us/2017-town-plan-documents-Selectboard-Draft/>

First, please note that no changes have been proposed or made to that draft yet. The Selectboard has simply acknowledged receipt, similar to signing for a package from Fedex before opening it. In order to discuss it at all, we had to receive it first.

Second, at least two public hearings are required before a Plan is adopted. The two sessions that are scheduled for this month should be considered together as ONE, not two of those. We wanted to have the first hearing be accessible to people with different schedules so we decided to do it TWICE – one is on a weekend day (Sat. Jan 20th from 3PM - 5PM at Tracy Hall) and one is on a weekend night (Tues. Jan 23rd from 7PM - 9PM at Tracy Hall).

Each will be a full discussion, not two halves of a discussion, so it is fine if you can only make one of the times. Once the public has had a full opportunity to share thoughts and concerns during one or both of those sessions, we will be able to plan for the rest of the drafting and approval process. To be clear, there will be AT LEAST one further public hearing (possibly again comprised of two sessions to accommodate varying citizen schedules) after January 23.

If these issues are important to you, please plan to attend one of the public meetings. There is no way for these issues to be officially debated and discussed outside of a public meeting and in, particular, no substantive discussion about particular aspects of the Plan may be discussed by Selectboard members on the Listserv. There have been many points of confusion created by recent Listserv posts, which is by its very nature a one-sided medium. Only through in-person discussion and dialogue can these points effectively be worked through and understood.

The Town Plan is an important document as a guide to how policies are made and implemented. We urge as many people as possible to become involved in these deliberations.

In addition, we encourage those of you who feel you have significant value to add to the Selectboard to run for one of the two seats that will be open in March. The petition to run can be picked up from our Town Clerk, Bonnie Munday, during business hours at Tracy Hall.

Many thanks,
John Langhus and John Pepper
Norwich Citizens