

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of  
Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 5:30 pm

Members present: Mary Layton, Chair; Linda Cook; Stephen Flanders; John Langhus; John Pepper; Herb Durfee, Town Manager.

There were about 8 people in the audience.

Also participating: Stuart Richards, Marcia Calloway, Charlotte Metcalf, Frank Manasek, Carolyn Frye, Jeff Goodrich.

Layton opened the meeting at 5:36 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item): The Selectboard agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted, with added commentary by Town Manager on Audit Update. It is not yet known if the audit report will be ready in time for the Town Report.
2. Public Comments (Discussion Item): Stuart Richards shared concerns about the survey and Route 5 development, and asked that the edited version of the Town Plan he and others have worked on be submitted for the public to review. Marcia Calloway asked again about receiving documentation of 3 years of public participation leading up to the receipt of the Town Plan, citing due process requirements. She asked the Board to understand and be mindful of the 12 criteria and finally wanted to learn details about the feasibility study for the Dyke property as cited in the NY Times advertisement.
3. Town Plan Process – Board Deliberation: Flanders opened by reaffirming that 3 of the 5 Board Members (Flanders, Pepper, Langhus) had previously favored an advisory vote on the Town Plan at the March Town Meeting. Langhus agreed but indicated that objective itself should not drive the timeline. Discussion led to the proposal that after the 2-part Public Hearings on January 20 and January 23, the Board would have more information and could decide on appropriate timing after that, to be discussed at the regular Selectboard Meeting on January 24. Linda Cook emphasized that the public needs to be better educated and would not support an advisory vote in March.

Board discussion regarding the agenda for the 1/20 and 1/23 meetings led to following decisions on hearing structure: i. Overall Summary (Langhus – 2-3 minutes) and then for each “Chapter” of the Town Plan: ii. Key Changes since 2011 and End of Chapter Summary (3 minutes) and iii. Public Comment. Each Chapter will be dealt with separately so as to stay organized.

Break-out group sign-ups by Town Plan Chapter will have sign-up sheets for people who want to learn more outside of the formal hearings.

Linda Cook and John Pepper are in charge of the “PR Committee” to attempt to give notice to as many residents of Norwich as possible, including seniors and those who don’t use technology regularly.

Public Comment: Jeff Goodrich discussed his long history and reminded the board that of Norwich’s role in the regional “designated growth center”. Charlotte Metcalf asked the Board to update Map 11 related to Hamlets and to better understand a law that she believes will eliminate development on highway exit areas like Route 5. Carolyn Frye suggested that the comments by the public at the upcoming hearings be limited to one Chapter at a time. Stuart Richards shared further thoughts before moving onto the proposed Survey.

4. Town Plan Survey – Continued Discussion: Linda Cook indicated she does not support the survey as drafted. She felt that the missing components are tax implications for each of the questions to help residents filling out the survey understand possible implications of their answers on their own financial standing. With discussion and minor suggestions, Pepper, Flanders, and Layton all agreed that the survey should continue forward. Langhus supported it as-is with no suggested changes.

Public Comment: Frank Manacek suggested the questions “Why did you move here?” and “What causes you to stay here?”. Stuart Richards talked about affordability as a key part of the survey. Frank Manacek suggested “Do you think you are getting good value for your tax dollars in Norwich?” Carolyn Frye suggested that in addition to the reasons you choose to stay in Norwich, it could be helpful to know “What don’t you like about Norwich?” “What could cause you to leave Norwich?”

At 7:37pm, Cook moved (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

By Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair

Approved by the Selectboard on February 14, 2018

---

Mary Layton, Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – January 24, 2018 at 6:30 PM

**PLEASE NOTE THAT CATV RECORDED THIS SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORWICH SELECTBOARD.**