

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 13, 2018, Tracy Hall

Members Present: Jaci Allen (Chair), Susan Brink, Steve Thoms, Jeff Lubell, Jeff Goodrich, Melissa Horwitz (Clerk), Leah Romano, Ernie Ciccotelli, Brian Loeb

Members Not Present:

Public: Linda Cook, Doug Wilberding, Dennis Kaufman

Staff: Rod Francis

Jaci Allen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Approve Agenda
 - a. Jeff Lubell moved; Susan Brink seconded --approved
2. Meeting Objectives:
 - a. Discuss Action Item Status and Next Steps
 - b. Finalize 2019 Work Plan
3. Comments from the Public - None
4. Review Minutes 10-11-18
 - a. Item #6, items c) &d) were discussed by Steve Thoms
 - b. Steve Thoms moved and Susan Brink second—Jeff Goodrich abstains Approved
5. Announcements, Reports, Updates & Correspondence (Francis)
 - a. Correspondence -None
 - b. Announcements –
 - i. Selectboard—Review of the vote about expanding number of members of PC—this concerned whether the question of expanding the membership to nine should have been separately warned. This time the item was warned and passed (again)
 - ii. Mary Layton and John Langhus reported out on their visit with TRORC Executive Director and Chair to discuss the October 2018 decision by TRORC not to approve the 2018 Norwich town plan. After some discussion the Selectboard communicated their expectations:
 1. Start the plan rewriting process now and aim to have it completed in 12 months
 2. Discard the current plan and start-over
 - c. Updates See 7. below
6. Discuss Action Item Status and High Priority Next Steps
 - a. Energy (Horwitz)
 - i. We have a choice between doing basic energy chapter or enhanced energy chapter
 1. Comments on powerpoint slide
 - a. Change in the current status of action items—3rd paragraph—should read municipal facilities
 - b. Since 2016 contractors and property owners are supposed to self-regulate to meet VT energy code—Jeff G. asks if Norwich actively participates in reviewing this part of the code (Francis indicates that Norwich lacks the authority, can only [and does] give ‘encouragement’)
 - c. Current land use “density factor calculations”—encourage a denser settlement pattern (reducing travel and cost of providing services)
 - d. Missing from this chapter is any consideration of the cost implications.

- b. Land Use (Francis)
 - i. Core of a Vermont Town Plan
 - ii. Guides future development of the community
 - iii. Many action items listed already done
 - iv. 91 interchange area important for next plan discussion
 - v. TRORC (the Regional Planning Commission [RPC]) has standing in Act 250 land use proceedings so any future land use chapter work needs to reflect this reality
 - vi. To better understand Norwich land use requires understanding our relationship to New Hampshire

- 7. Review draft of 2019 Work Plan (Francis)
 - a. Timeline for Planning Commission work in first half of 2019
 - i. Enhanced Energy Planning Working Group—working on this
 - ii. Land Use—will need the most engagement
 - 1. TRORC will take up the interchange question early in 2019; Norwich will benefit from involvement
 - iii. Affordable housing strategy should be out for comment by the end of the 1st quarter, 2019
 - iv. Spring (2nd quarter) should schedule more community outreach because people come out a little more during that time
 - v. Zoning issues—may be easier and less controversial (without major changes or redistricting)
 - 1. Major changes can wait until we have town plan and then see if we need to make the zoning changes
 - 2. Minimal update of the document—not policy, (or if policy only administrative policy)
 - vi. Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF)
 - 1. July 1, 2017 major storm that caused damage to Norwich road network—got support from FEMA and the state of Vermont to repair roads. Although we participate in ERAF we don't have policies in place that allow maximum reimbursement (we left 5% on the table)
 - 2. Two options to get that money:
 - a. Try to make an argument to state officials that current land use regulations meet the spirit of the River Corridor code of regulations that they offer and would get us the maximum benefit
 - b. Find another way for maximum benefit for the Community Rating System (CRS)—part of the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations This is a lower bar to clear administratively, is less controversial from a land use policy standpoint and gives a direct benefit to landowners (in the form of an insurance rate discount)
 - b. Feedback on the Work Plan included:
 - i. Is the time frame too ambitious?
 - ii. Subcommittees may be a way to handle the workload
 - iii. Circulate the TRORC 16 page review of the 2018 town plan in January packet
 - iv. Make what and how to do the town plan the major agenda item in January

- c. Updates
 - i. Affordable Housing Subcommittee (Lubell)
 - 1. Met several weeks ago to discuss criteria for revolving fund and came up with a framework and going to meet to discuss and then pass on to Planning Commission then on to Selectboard
 - 2. Administrator of fund—Vermont Community Loan—try to get other people to contribute to it
 - 3. Want to make sure when the funds are spent and the project is a viable one; not high risk
 - 4. Want to get the money back
 - 5. Get stakeholders there before go too far with it
- 8. Other Business
 - a. Quarterly report to Selectboard due at end of month
 - b. Jaci Allen provided draft and we should email her with comments
- 9. Future Meeting Schedule & Agendas
 - a. January 10, 2019
 - b. Things for next meeting agenda:
 - i. Quarterly report
 - ii. Examples of other town plans for January meeting
 - iii. Discussing path forward on town plan
 - iv. Existing TRORC Interchange policy
 - v. Town plan Subcommittees
 - vi. Affordable housing suggestions for revolving fun.
- 9. Comments from the Public
 - a. Linda Cook - Rod is coming back to the Selectboard with a town plan budget—try to make decision on consultants—19th to discuss budget

Steve moves to Adjourn; Jeff Lubell- Seconds—all agree—8:37 P.M.

Melissa Horwitz, Clerk

APPROVED 1-10-19 WITH AMENDMENT

Future Meetings:

Thursday, January 10, 7pm Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 24, 7pm Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 14, 7jpm Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 28, 7pm Regular Meeting

Planning Commission Agendas & Minutes available at: <http://norwich.vt.us/planning-commission/>