

Norwich Planning Commission Regular Meeting – September 12, 2023 6:30pm

To be Held in person in the Tracy Hall Multipurpose Room and via Zoom
Zoom Information:

Topic: Planning Commission

Time: September 12, 2023, 6:30 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81307504748>

Meeting ID: 813 0750 4748

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

1. Approve Agenda
2. Public comment for items not on agenda
3. Correspondence
4. Chair notes
5. Subcommittee updates
 - Solar siting
 - Land use
6. Planning & Zoning files
 - [\[Planning files 090123 note\]](#)
 - [\[Planning files – Table of contents\]](#)
7. Planning Commission staff
 - Meeting logistics
 - Job description and hiring process
 - Selectboard meeting 9/13
 - [\[SB – PC staff 090723\]](#)
8. Planning Commission work plan
 - Soliciting input on PC priorities – interaction with town groups
 - HPC 9/28 meeting
 - DRB, Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, Listers
 - Residents
9. Approve minutes of August 8 & August 22, 2023
10. Public comment
11. Adjourn

To: Norwich Selectboard
 From: Jaan Laaspere, Chair, Norwich Planning Commission
 Date: September 1, 2023
 Re: Planning and zoning files discussion at 8/22/23 PC meeting

Excerpt from Norwich Planning Commission Minutes – August 22, 2023

DRAFT

4. Chair report – P&Z files and maps

The Chair reported on initial attempts to understand the status of background planning & zoning files needed to support the work of this new Commission. It has been difficult to assess availability without specific descriptions of target items. Members stressed the importance of the records of past discussions, previous edits, and unfinished revisions, along with original map files. Members expect there to be a large volume of information in these public records. The Commission agreed to this statement by consensus:

“The Planning Commission asks the Selectboard to take whatever actions are required to locate and make available any and all planning and zoning files. These public records are needed by several town groups to perform their duties.”

[Chair note – On August 24th I met with Brennan Duffy, Pam Mullen and Kyle Katz at Tracy Hall to review the planning and zoning files. A very large amount of information is available in dozens of folders and subfolders. These files are challenging to search given the volume, date range and relative lack of structure. To make efficient use of our staff’s time, it will be necessary to request specific files by topic or date. We discussed the original map files for the zoning regulations and town plan. The zoning maps, such as ridgeline district and scenic resources, date to before 2009 and it is not possible to find any source files from that long ago. The original GIS files for the maps in the 2020 town plan have not been located.]

September 1, 2023 – PC Chair note:

On August 31st I met with Marcia Calloway and Brennan Duffy to discuss this issue. We agreed on a proposed process to provide access to the large number of files in the planning department’s digital archive. We will create a detailed table of contents of the file structure to give a starting point for any searches. To make efficient use of our P&Z staff time, the PC Chair will act as the sole point of contact between PC requests and staff. This initial proposal can be adjusted as needed.

Agenda Item #6

File

Home

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Network > Norwich-DCFS > Planning >

Search Planning

Quick access

OneDrive

OneDrive - Personal

This PC

3D Objects

Desktop

Documents

Downloads

Music

Pictures

Videos

Windows (C:)

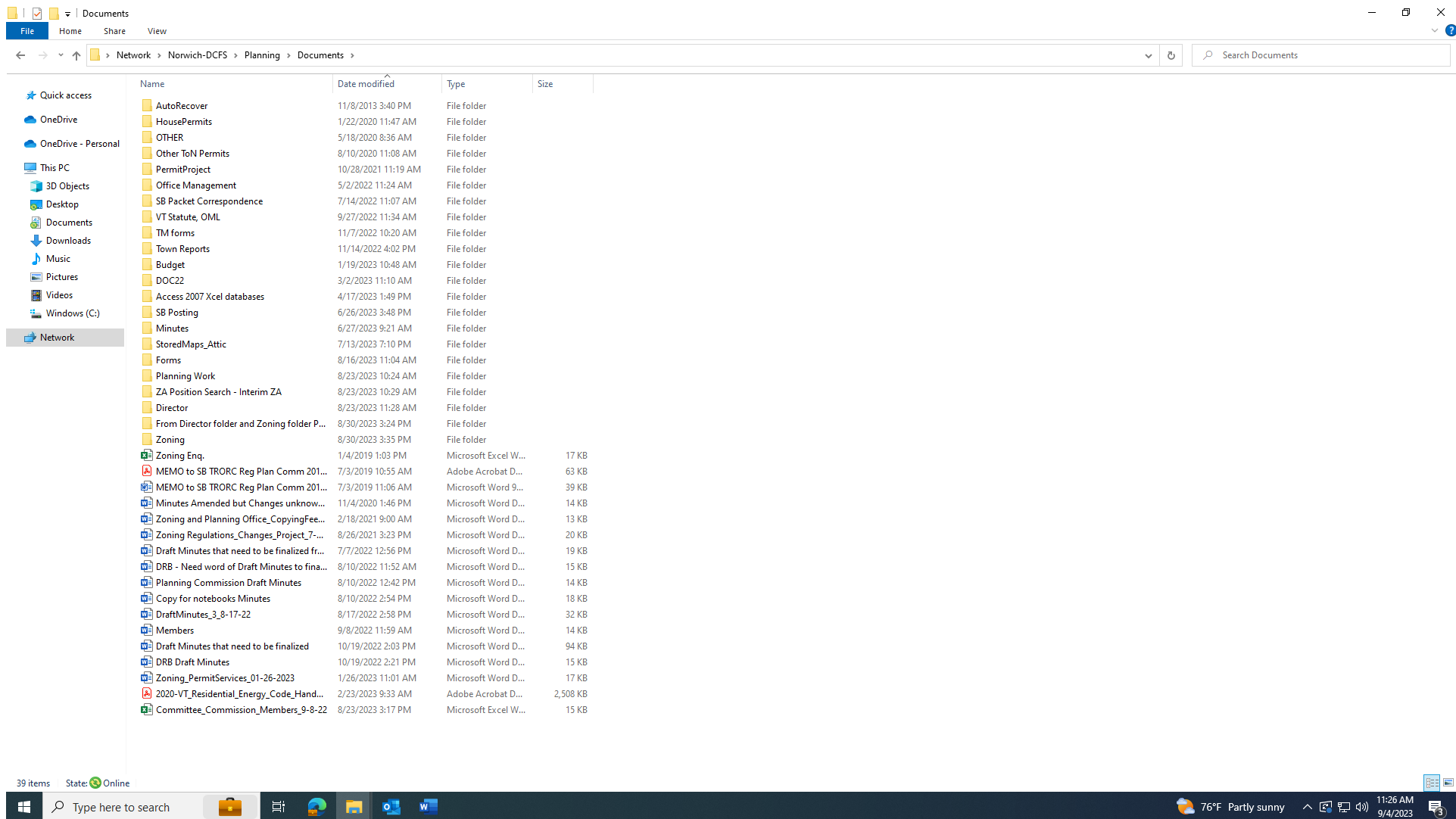
Network

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
ArcData	8/24/2023 12:57 PM	File folder	
ARCHIVE	8/23/2023 10:15 AM	File folder	
Data	12/22/2021 11:08 AM	File folder	
Documents	8/30/2023 11:48 AM	File folder	
Meeting Recordings	11/21/2022 2:12 PM	File folder	
New folder	7/27/2023 10:57 AM	File folder	
Zoning Regulation Drafts (2013-2018)	9/4/2023 11:20 AM	File folder	
2022-GL-Abstract-06-08-2022	6/15/2022 4:36 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,007 KB
ACT078 As Enacted	2/15/2022 5:25 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	73 KB
AHSC 03-27-2023 Packet	3/16/2023 10:16 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	200 KB
Committee_Commission_Members_7-28...	11/9/2020 10:18 AM	Microsoft Excel W...	14 KB
CPR-VC-Application-Guidelines	8/27/2020 5:00 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,120 KB
DHCD-Planning-Manual-Module1(8/26/2020 5:52 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	11,137 KB
FederalPLGuidelines	1/11/2022 6:00 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,627 KB
Norwich_Plan_2020 ADOPTED Ir	3/11/2020 9:16 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	9,055 KB
NorwichApplicationForm2	2/8/2023 9:31 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	81 KB
open-meeting-law-and-expiration-of-st...	7/9/2021 11:14 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	176 KB
PC_Bylaws_OML_Conflict_4-24-18	6/1/2020 8:37 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,058 KB
StagecoachRD_05-054.100_12BLA02	12/15/2021 2:38 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	159 KB
WebPage	1/5/2023 9:52 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	36 KB
Zoom Mtgs Calendar	9/9/2020 12:49 PM	iCalendar File	66 KB

21 items 1 item selected

Windows Taskbar

76°F Partly sunny 11:24 AM 9/4/2023



The image is a screenshot of a Windows File Explorer window. The address bar at the top shows the path: > Network > Norwich-DCFS > Planning > Documents > Planning Work. Below the address bar is a search bar with the text 'Search Planning Work'. The left sidebar shows a navigation pane with various locations: Quick access, OneDrive, OneDrive - Personal, This PC, 3D Objects, Desktop, Documents, Downloads, Music, Pictures, Videos, Windows (C:), and Network. The 'Network' location is selected. The main pane displays a list of files and folders. The columns are Name, Date modified, Type, and Size. The list includes folders like 'Flood Stuff', 'Stream Alteration Permits', 'Emergency Management', 'McClain prop', 'HazardMitigationPlan', 'ACCD Budget', 'TRORC approval', 'TRORC other', 'website', 'WW resources', 'Support Letters', 'B Brook', 'HistoricPreserv', 'CRS', 'Regulations (ZR, SubD)', 'E911', 'Policy (T Plan etc.)', '2020 Adopted Plan', 'Wastewater Working Group', '2021 MPG - Density Grant', 'ToN Survey 2018', 'ChildCareGroup-Selectboard', 'Memos etc from SB', 'IREC', 'Memos to TM', 'AH SC', 'Solar Siting', 'Land Use Subcommittee', 'Planning Commission', 'Solar Siting Subcommittee', and several PDF files including 'CPR-Z4GN-Guide-Final-web', 'Vermont Laws 24 1231', 'Vermont Laws 4412', 'NSPECCodeofEthicsforEngineers', 'CD-VCDP-Program-Guide', 'VT CW PPL AppSRF 2022 12-15-2020', 'PZ map U L-L RD', 'U Loveland RD ANR Atlas', 'FinalReport(May2015)-noapp', 'VLCT- Tree Law FAQs - 2021-06-24', 'CASA 802 AIA VT Awards Submission', 'Norwich PC Land Use Subcommittee Au...', and 'PC Land Use Subcommittee Draft Minute...'. The status bar at the bottom shows '50 items' and 'State: Online'. The taskbar at the very bottom shows the Windows Start button, a search bar, and several open applications including File Explorer, Edge, and Word.

File Explorer window showing the 'Planning Commission' folder. The left sidebar shows 'Network' selected. The main pane displays a list of files and folders, including 'Act250 Docs', 'Clean_Water_16', 'PC Misc', 'Bio-Finder', 'Chap 117', 'Other Towns Town Plans', 'Planning Studies', 'Grants', 'TP OML Richards_Wilberding', 'Schedule-Budget', 'OML', 'Watersheds - TP', 'Village_Designation', 'LUR rewrite - Zoning Regulation Draft Re...', 'River Corridor Review 2018', 'MCS WW proposal', '2019 Plan working drafts', 'Regional Plan', 'bylaw revisions', 'Meeting Docs', 'Audio_Mtgs', 'Misc. Town Plan Items', 'Act_250_Paercls_South', 'Community-Heart-Soul-Field-Guide-2nd...', 'WelcomeEssentialsOpenMtg', 'Draft-2019-HUD-Action-Plan', 'Planning Commission Q1 2019 SB Report...', 'NORWICH SELECTBOARD CORRECTED ...', 'CORRECTED WARNING FOR VNEWS_2-1...', 'PC Quarterly Report to SB eds rf 2020 3_23', '200305 comment on forest carbon passa...', '200307 jc final comment on forest carbo...', 'ToN WW Scoping study', 'PlanningCommissionMembers_6-3-18', 'Sewer Committe Final Report 6-23-05', 'Motivating questions for sewer study', 'Barrett Deed', '24 VSA Sect 1231', 'PC Response to SB 3 Questions 9-13-22', 'Copy of PC workplan 2021-22 rev. 2022 Q...', and '6c_5-10-22 Atty McLean letter in 10-12-2...'. The status bar at the bottom shows '41 items', '1 item selected', '163 KB', and 'State: Online'.

ArcData

FileHomeShareView

Network > Norwich-DCFS > Planning > ArcData

Search ArcData

Quick access

OneDrive

OneDrive - Personal

This PC

3D Objects

Desktop

Documents

Downloads

Music

Pictures

Videos

Windows (C:)

Network

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Ancient Roads	11/8/2013 3:39 PM	File folder	
Archive	11/8/2013 3:39 PM	File folder	
ArcOrthoData	11/8/2013 3:39 PM	File folder	
AvdataBU7-21	11/8/2013 3:53 PM	File folder	
AvdataNB	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
Bond_3-20-13	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
Current	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
Elevation	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
Garmin	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
LinkingLands	11/8/2013 4:04 PM	File folder	
Projects	11/8/2013 4:05 PM	File folder	
Utilities	11/8/2013 4:05 PM	File folder	
VillageDesg06	11/8/2013 4:05 PM	File folder	
Trails	11/9/2013 2:24 PM	File folder	
WATER	2/28/2014 9:45 AM	File folder	
NEMRC_Data_2-20-15	2/24/2015 9:25 AM	File folder	
Fellows12-2-15	12/2/2015 10:31 AM	File folder	
Energy_9-30-16	9/30/2016 5:11 PM	File folder	
Parcel Maps	11/7/2016 10:22 AM	File folder	
NEMRC_Data_3-30-17	3/30/2017 10:34 AM	File folder	
NEMRC_Data_6-22-17	2/27/2018 2:46 PM	File folder	
Bond_11-19-10	6/29/2018 4:10 PM	File folder	
Pete11-18-10	6/29/2018 4:10 PM	File folder	
Bond_2014	9/18/2019 9:20 AM	File folder	
Bond_11-19-10 DBs	9/5/2023 11:27 AM	File folder	
UVLT_Data.dbf	12/16/2009 2:53 PM	DBF File	1 KB
Export_Output.dbf	12/16/2009 2:56 PM	DBF File	77 KB
Export_Output.dbf	12/16/2009 2:56 PM	XML Document	21 KB
UVLT_Data.ADX	12/16/2009 2:57 PM	ADX File	3 KB
export_output	12/16/2009 3:09 PM	Microsoft Excel 97...	5 KB
Export_Output.ADX	12/16/2009 3:12 PM	ADX File	3 KB
GIS Layers	11/9/2013 4:53 PM	Microsoft Word D...	14 KB

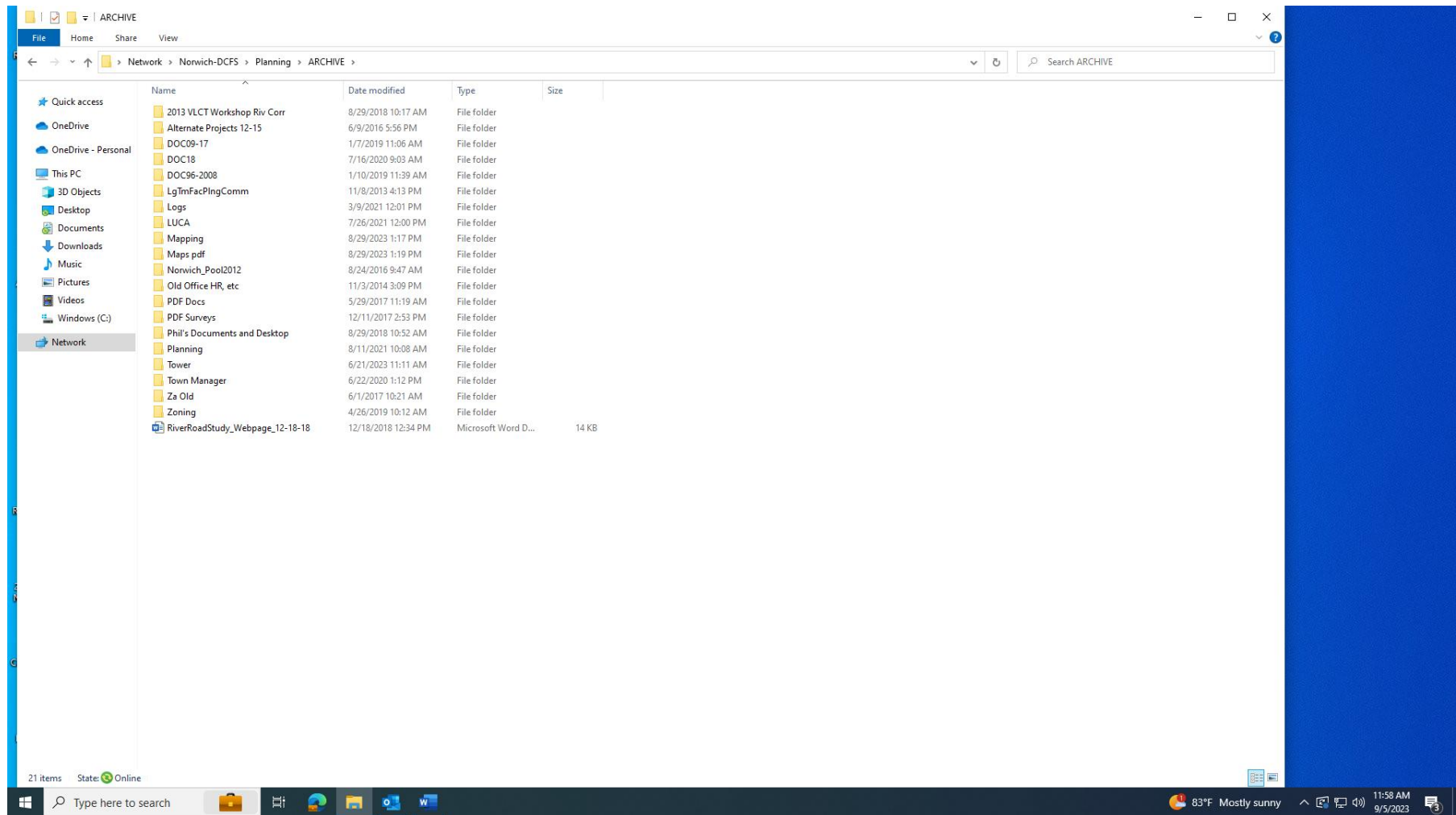
32 items

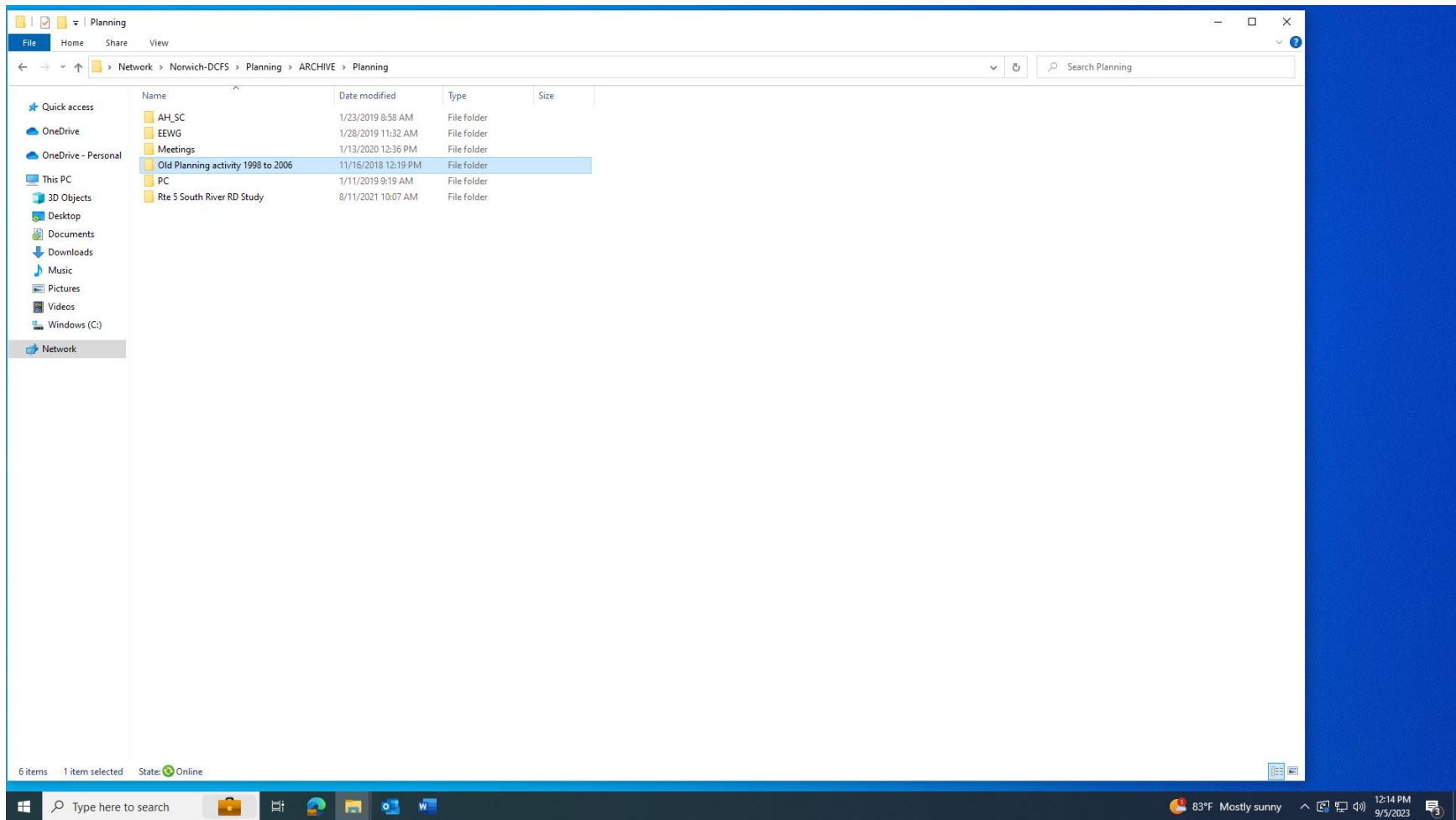
State: Online

Type here to search

83°F Mostly sunny

11:57 AM 9/5/2023





Network > Norwich-DCFS > Planning > Zoning Regulation Drafts (2013-2018) > Search

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
2018 ZA Drafts	8/3/2023 11:54 AM	File folder	
ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas	8/3/2023 11:57 AM	File folder	
130314 - PC Climate Initiatives-tg	7/27/2023 1:27 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	68 KB
Subdivision Regulations_List	8/3/2023 11:44 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	61 KB
TRORC_ZoningRecommendations_12-7-...	12/11/2012 12:08 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	540 KB
WAIVER PROVISIONs_11-9-16	8/3/2023 11:43 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	127 KB
Zoning 101	9/17/2019 12:26 PM	Microsoft PowerP...	2,685 KB

Network > Norwich-DCFS > Planning > Zoning Regulation Drafts (2013-2018) > 2018 ZA Drafts

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
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Art V_Development Review_4-27-17	8/3/2023 11:49 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	313 KB
Article IV Draft 4-26-17	8/3/2023 11:50 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	223 KB
PC_2016-17 Work_Chart	8/3/2023 11:50 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	118 KB
xZoning Reg Amendments as of 04-07-17	8/3/2023 11:54 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	258 KB
xZoning Reg Amendments as of 04-26-17	8/3/2023 11:53 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	259 KB
Zoning Reg Amendments as of 01-09-18	8/3/2023 11:53 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	297 KB
Zoning Reg Amendments as of 04-26-18	8/3/2023 11:51 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	296 KB
Zoning Reg Amendment_Art_2_01-03-18	8/3/2023 11:51 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	235 KB
Zoning Reg Amendment_Art_3_4-26-17 ...	8/3/2023 11:52 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	241 KB

Planning > Zoning Regulation Drafts (2013-2018) > ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
LUR rewrite - Zoning Regulation Draft Re...	8/3/2023 9:16 AM	File folder	
Other Towns Town Plans	8/2/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
Studies Reports	8/2/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
Subdivision Regulations	8/2/2023 4:22 PM	File folder	
Town Plan 2020	8/2/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
Zoning Regulations	8/2/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
Chapter 1 General Notes	8/2/2023 3:10 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	143 KB
CPR-Bylaw-ReportingForm	7/27/2023 10:58 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	218 KB
PC_Laweltr_AccessoryStructures_3-31-15	4/10/2015 10:15 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	92 KB
TRORC_ZoningRecommendations_12-7-...	12/11/2012 12:08 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	540 KB
VillageCtrResolutionSIGNED	11/2/2020 9:38 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	167 KB

ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas > LUR rewrite - Zoning Regulation Draft Rewrite > Search

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Other LURs	8/2/2023 4:46 PM	File folder	
1 Norwich Admin sect. D 2021_1105 rf-Ed...	8/3/2023 9:13 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	476 KB
Cannabis Control Board guidance for mu...	2/1/2022 10:21 AM	E-mail Message	358 KB
Cannabis Muni Guidance CCB	2/1/2022 10:20 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	247 KB
Chapter 1 General Notes	8/3/2023 9:10 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	142 KB
Chapter 1 General	8/3/2023 9:11 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	257 KB
FederalPLGuidelines	1/15/2022 2:36 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,491 KB
N wich Admin sect. D 2021_1006 rf	8/3/2023 9:14 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	336 KB
N wich Admin sect. D 2021_1105 notes	8/3/2023 9:14 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	113 KB
N wich Admin sect. D 2021_1105 rf	8/3/2023 9:15 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	356 KB
Norwich TOC 2022_0303	8/3/2023 9:15 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	181 KB

ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas > Other Towns Town Plans > Search

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
HartfordDraftTownPlan_2-20-19	8/2/2023 4:21 PM	File folder	
Thetford_Town_Plan_2019_v0.2e- C	8/26/2019 10:50 AM	Adobe Acrobat D...	1,726 KB

ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas > Subdivision Regulations > Search

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Subdivision Regulations 7-3-13	7/12/2013 12:12 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	859 KB
Subdivision Regulations_List	8/2/2023 4:22 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	61 KB

ZoningSubdivisionRegulationsDraftIdeas > Zoning Regulations > Search

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Norwich-Zoning-Regulations_Amended_...	8/2/2023 12:39 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	869 KB

To: Norwich Selectboard
From: Jaan Laaspere, Chair, Norwich Planning Commission
Date: September 6, 2023
Re: Planning and zoning staff

At our August 22, 2023 meeting the Planning Commission discussed the roles and responsibilities of the PC relative to the planning staff, in particular the current open position.

Excerpt from August 22, 2023 Planning Commission DRAFT minutes

“The relationship between the Planning Commission and planning staff was discussed. The group favored a model of a robust and engaged Planning Commission with staff assisting and implementing, rather than directing.

Vermont statutes outline two options for planning in an urban municipality such as Norwich. One model, appropriate to a larger town, has a staffed planning department, led by a Planning Director, with a more advisory Planning Commission. Another option, also clearly outlined in VT statutes, describes an active and engaged Planning Commission supported by a Zoning Administrator who is nominated by the PC and appointed by the Selectboard. In this model the Commission collaborates with staff to do the town’s planning work.

The Planning Commission passed a unanimous motion empowering the Chair to approach the Selectboard Chair to advocate for the “strong PC” model and discuss next steps. It was suggested that perhaps a small group of 1 or 2 PC members, the Town Manager and a Selectboard member could meet and propose options.

It was acknowledged that this represented a change from the model in place over the past few years and had important consequences relative to the posted job description and hiring process.”

Notes from August 31, 2023 meeting of Calloway, Laaspere and Duffy

According to input from counsel, Norwich “had not taken affirmative action” to be considered an urban municipality. Therefore, we fall under 24 V.S.A §4325 which enables an engaged and working Planning Commission.

We agreed there is a limit to the workload that can realistically be accomplished by a volunteer group and staff is needed to help implement policy and planning decisions made by the PC.

The Planning Commission would like meaningful input into the following:

Job title -

The Planning Director title is more appropriate to the urban municipality model. Can we change this? Perhaps not to simple ZA, but something like Municipal Planner / ZA could be appropriate.

Job description -

Adjust the job tasks to emphasize support of permit applicants and DRB, along with plan, regs and grant writing.

Hiring process -

Brennan talked about enabling the DRB, HPC and PC to participate in candidate review and selection. It is understood that, in a Town Manager form of government, HR supervision of employees is done by the TM and the SB approves the budget. Groups like the PC will work daily with this person and having input into their selection will make the candidate more likely to be successful.

As we discussed, personality matters a great deal. I believe the balance of responsibilities desired by the Planning Commission can be successful with the right candidate. This is another reason why it is critical we are involved in selecting the person.

Can we discuss creating a working group of 1 - 2 PC members, 1 from DRB and the TM to:

- Adjust the job title and description
- Evaluate any current candidates
- Reinvigorate advertising
- Review new candidates

Norwich PC Minutes -8/8/23

Members Present: Ernie Ciccotelli, Vince Crow, Jeff Goodrich, Stuart Richards, Jaan Laaspere, Bob Pape, Kris Clement

Public: Lisa Close, Linda Gray, Nancy Osgood

Meeting Opened: 6:36 pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Goodrich moved, seconded by Ciccotelli, to approve the agenda.

Motion passed 7-0

2. Public Comment on items not on the agenda

None

3. Correspondence

Richards encouraged that anyone interested should sign up for dunk tank at the upcoming town fair.

4. Chair Report

a. PC Budget

Laaspere stated the annual budget allocated for Planning and Zoning is approximately \$160,000. Considering that the Zoning Director position is currently vacant, that leaves approximately \$8,000 a month of the budget unused.

He further stated that because of the timing of the fiscal year and auditing process, any surplus from the previous year would not be available until an undetermined future date.

b. P&Z files and maps

Laaspere stated that staff is continuing to organize and locate the planning and zoning files of the previous zoning director.

Goodrich recommended accessing the previous zoning director's email which would provide access to more pertinent files.

c. AHSC Planning Grant

Laaspere stated that the AHSC is delaying the application for the planning grant regarding the site on New Boston until the next cycle due to lack of bandwidth of staff and the town manager.

Goodrich stated that in the past the town has had a robust record of volunteer citizens engaging with grant projects and the SB should utilize that.

Richards stated that he hopes that the PC looks closely at the line items in order to be realistic about the cost and to potentially reduce the cost.

5. Planning Commission Work Plan and Soliciting input on PC priorities

Laaspere recommended that the PC should meet once a month going forward with subcommittees meeting between meetings.

Consensus was met to establish two sub committees.

The Solar Siting Subcommittee will include Clement, Ciccotelli, and Laaspere.

The Land Use Subcommittee will include Pape, Ciccotelli, and Richards.

Each group will meet before the next PC meeting to further define their goals and expectations.

Nancy Osgood encouraged attendance of the next meeting of the Historical Preservation Commission on August 28th to discuss ideas on the zoning and permitting process.

Linda Gray encouraged the PC to engage with the Conservation Commission and Energy Committee for input regarding priorities of the town.

6. PC Staff – Job description and hiring process

The group discussed changing the job description and title of the vacant position to Zoning Administrator with the goal of more accurately advertising the position.

The current listing as well as a revised version will be included in the next PC meeting packet in order to discuss.

7. Approve minutes

Goodrich moved, seconded by Ciccotelli, to approve 7/25 minutes with corrections.

Motion passed 7-0

8. Public Comment

N/A

9. Adjourn

Goodrich moved, seconded by Richards, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42PM

Motion passed 7-0

Norwich Planning Commission Minutes – August 22, 2023

DRAFT

Members present: Ciccotelli, Clement, Goodrich, Laaspere, Richards

Members absent: Crow, Pape

Public: Jack Cushman

Meeting opened: 6:34

1. Approved agenda (unanimous)
2. **Public comment on items not on the agenda** – None
3. **Correspondence** – None
4. **Chair report – P&Z files and maps**

The Chair reported on initial attempts to understand the status of background planning & zoning files needed to support the work of this new Commission. It has been difficult to assess availability without specific descriptions of target items. Members stressed the importance of the records of past discussions, previous edits, and unfinished revisions, along with original map files. Members expect there to be a large volume of information in these public records. The Commission agreed to this statement by consensus:

“The Planning Commission asks the Selectboard to take whatever actions are required to locate and make available any and all planning and zoning files. These public records are needed by several town groups to perform their duties.”

[Chair note – On August 24th I met with Brennan Duffy, Pam Mullen and Kyle Katz at Tracy Hall to review the planning and zoning files. A very large amount of information is available in dozens of folders and subfolders. These files are challenging to search given the volume, date range and relative lack of structure. To make efficient use of our staff’s time, it will be necessary to request specific files by topic or date. We discussed the original map files for the zoning regulations and town plan. The zoning maps, such as ridgeline district and scenic resources, date to before 2009 and it is not possible to find any source files from that long ago. The original GIS files for the maps in the 2020 town plan have not been located.]

5. Subcommittee update

The Land Use subcommittee held its organizational meeting on 8/15/23. Richards was selected as moderator and Pape as note-taker. It should be acknowledged that the draft minutes for this meeting were published one day late due to a misunderstanding of the OML time requirements.

At its next meeting on 8/24/23 this subcommittee will begin to review sections 1 & 2 of the current town plan to evaluate if the language is still relevant and if anything requires more discussion or possible amendment.

The readings listed in the packet for the upcoming meeting sparked a discussion of climate change with Jack Cushman advocating for the use of current, peer-reviewed documents. The PC Chair directed the group and the subcommittee to stay focused on the appropriate work of the Planning Commission and not debate wider issues such as climate change, which are outside our purview.

The Solar Siting subcommittee will hold its first meeting on 8/24/23.

6. Planning Commission staff

The relationship between the Planning Commission and planning staff was discussed. The group favored a model of a robust and engaged Planning Commission with staff assisting and implementing, rather than directing.

Vermont statutes outline two options for planning in an urban municipality such as Norwich. One model, appropriate to a larger town, has a staffed planning department, led by a Planning Director, with a more advisory Planning Commission. Another option, also clearly outlined in VT statutes, describes an active and engaged Planning Commission supported by a Zoning Administrator who is nominated by the PC and appointed by the Selectboard. In this model the Commission collaborates with staff to do the town's planning work.

The Planning Commission passed a unanimous motion empowering the Chair to approach the Selectboard Chair to advocate for the "strong PC" model and discuss next steps. It was suggested that perhaps a small group of 1 or 2 PC members, the Town Manager and a Selectboard member could meet and propose options.

It was acknowledged that this represented a change from the model in place over the past few years and had important consequences relative to the posted job description and hiring process.

7. Planning Commission work plan

Chair will continue informal outreach to other town groups. There has been positive feedback for the idea of collaboration and information exchange from the DRB, HPC, NCC, and the Listers.

8. Approve minutes of August 8, 2023

Tabled until next meeting

9. **Public comment** - None

10. Meeting adjourned at 8:39

[Chair note – proposed upcoming PC meeting dates are September 12th and October 10th with subcommittees to meet between meetings of the full Commission.

The next Solar Siting Subcommittee meeting will be September 19th at 6:30]