

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, March 30, 2017, Tracy Hall**

Regular Meeting

**Members Present:** Thoms, Allen, Horwitz, Lubell, Brien, Goodrich

**Members Absent:** Brink      **Clerk:** Phil Dechert    **Consultant:** Brandy Saxton

**Others:** Dean Seibert, Stuart Richards, Frank Manasek, Linda Cook, John Pepper, Calli Guion, and Marcia Calloway

Jeff Goodrich, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

1. **Agenda** –Approved.
2. **Comments from the Public** –
  - a. Dean Seibert – Regarding reference to global warming in TP Energy Section, it is important for Commission to recognize it, seems probable, although not necessarily proven. The Commission should determine what the community thinks. He also hopes the Town Plan will reflect a strong stand against commercialization of rural areas.
  - b. Stuart Richards – He asked how many units are planned for Mixed Use areas. He also requested a re-survey of community opinions on land use issues by the Commission.
3. **Announcements, Reports, Updates & Correspondence** –
  - a. Clerk reported Herb Durfee, the new Town Manager, will start May 1<sup>st</sup>. He has a background in land use planning.
  - b. Jaci Allen reported attending a TRORC planning workshop.
4. **Minutes** –3-9-17 were approved.
5. **Town Plan Update Status**
  - a. The Community Facilities, Resiliency and Transportation Section drafts were approved subject to minor edits.
  - b. Energy Section – Linda Gray, Chair of the Norwich Energy Committee, requested that her additions to the last draft representing changes in policy be deferred to the “Phase II Draft” along with detailed siting requirements for wind and solar facilities. The remaining updates in the current draft mostly relate to energy sources and usage as requested by TRORC. This data, based on the Vermont Community Energy Dashboard, is a combination of town specific (electricity) or using state averages with town population and town category (heat and transportation).
  - c. Land Use Section – The Commission agreed to suspend discussion of changes to zoning in the proposed mixed use districts until the Town Plan draft update is complete. Zoning changes may not be adopted if a town plan has expired or until an expired town plan has been adopted. Another issue is a conflict in the Regional Land Use Plan Map in which large portions of the Route 5 South/River Road area are shown as “Interchange Area” which does not reflect many of the current or proposed uses. The Commission agreed to draft minimal changes in the Town’s Land Use Section to support changing this area on the Regional Map to “Village Settlement” without proposing specific zoning changes. Dechert will discuss this with TRORC next week. Based on these discussions, and other changes discussed, a new draft of the Land Use Section will be drafted with assistance by the consultant, Brandy Saxton.

**6. Comments from the Public:**

- a. Seibert and others suggested re-visiting all “controversial” sections of Town Plan before readopting.
- b. John Pepper suggested allowing more dialogue between Commission members and the public in the public comment agenda item.

**Adjournment – 8:10 PM**

Phil Dechert, Clerk

*APPROVED 4-13-17*

Future Meetings:

Thursday, April 13, 2017 – Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 27, 2017 – Regular Meeting

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