

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

Agenda

Monday, April 15, 2024 START TIME 6:30 pm

Zoom Meeting Info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88071589319>

Phone: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 880 7158 9319

1. Approve prior meeting agenda
2. Comments from the Public
3. Approve Minutes – 1-22-24, 2-15-24 and 3-19-24
4. Updates
 - a. Vermont Community Development Program grant application
 - b. June 1 Home Creators Expo, Hartford Area Career and Technical Center
5. What's next?
 - a. Fire District Land
 - b. Other?
6. Adjourn

Enclosures:

1-22-24 Draft Minutes

2-15-24 Draft Minutes

3-19-24 Draft Minutes

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION: AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE
Minutes

January 22, 2024
6:30 PM

Attendees:

Subcommittee members: Jeff Lubell, Jeff Goodrich, Brian Loeb, Paul Manganiello

Guests: Jack Kauders (Executive Director of UV Habitat for Humanity, Jaan Laaspere (Chair of Norwich Planning Commission)

Approve agenda:

Jeff Lubell moved to approve, seconded by Paul Manganiello.

Approved 4-0

Comments from the Public: none

Approve minutes from prior meeting:

Jeff Goodrich made a motion to approve the Nov. 20, 2023 minutes, Jeff Lubell seconded. Motion Passed 2-0 with 2 abstentions (Paul and Jeff Goodrich).

Update on Vermont Community Development Program grant application

The Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) has agreed to administer the grant. The Town Manager has indicated that town staff are not available to serve as project managers so there is a need to identify who will provide project management for the project. That could be provided by members of the affordable housing subcommittee or by an outside professional.

Discuss Public hearing on the VCDP Planning Grant application

A public hearing is needed before the application can be submitted. The meeting needs to be noticed 15 days before the actual public hearing. The grant application needs to be submitted before the deadline in early April. Jaan has requested that the Selectboard warn a hearing for its Feb. 28 meeting. This request will be discussed at the January 24 Selectboard meeting.

Jack Kauders, director of the Upper Valley chapter of Habitat for Humanity, introduced himself and said he has walked the land and would be willing to have Habitat serve as the project manager for the project. Habitat is excited about the project and believes it has the necessary experience not only to manage the planning phase, but to see it through to completion should the town decide to proceed. Jeff Goodrich indicated that his firm has worked with Habitat before, on both a volunteer and a paid basis, but does not perceive a conflict of interest.

Brian made a motion to request a proposal from Habitat for project management services for the project and for him and Jeff Lubell to discuss the possibility of Habitat serving in this role with Jack and TRORC to see if agreement could be reached. Motion passed 3-0 with one abstention (Jeff Goodrich).

Discuss:

Town's \$1 million surplus:

Jeff Lubell noted that he had proposed at a Selectboard hearing that \$100,000 of the town's surplus be set aside for future affordable housing for Norwich.

Brian needed to sign off so the committee no longer had a quorum

March 18th Workshop on Accessory Dwelling Units

There is a plan for a workshop on accessory dwelling units at the March 18, 2024 subcommittee meeting. Jeff Goodrich offered to discuss the issue of septic requirements at that meeting. Paul suggested contacting Vital Communities as they did a seminar on this topic on November 3, 2021.

Other Business: no discussion

Adjourned

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

Draft Minutes from February 15, 2024

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Brian Loeb, Creigh Moffatt, Jeff Goodrich, Jeff Lubell, and Paul Manganiello

The Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee met jointly with the Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness to discuss issues of mutual interest related to affordable housing. The discussion was very productive and both committees expressed an interest in continuing to work together.

One specific outcome is that the Norwich Affordable Housing Subcommittee agreed to encourage Norwich residents to attend a conference that Hartford will be hosting in the spring about Accessory Dwelling Units and other opportunities for residents to develop housing units. This will be instead of a Norwich-specific zoom forum on a similar topic that had been considered for March.

Meeting adjourned around 8:15 p.m.

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

JOINT MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING FOR VCDP PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION

Minutes

Draft 3/20/2024

Members present:

Planning Commission: Jaan Laaspere*, Bob Pape, Ernie Ciccotelli, Vince Crow*

Affordable Housing Subcommittee: Jeff Lubell, Brian Loeb, Creigh Moffatt, Paul Manganiello*

Members of the public:

Pam Smith (Selectboard), Mary Layton (Selectboard)*

Jaci Allen, Jennie Anderson*, Susan Barrett, Rachel Coombs, Joe Denny, Jon Felde*, Linda Gray, Elliott Harik*, Peter Orner*, Arline Rotman*, Geof Smith*, Amy Stringer*, Kate White*, Tim White*, Steven Zubkoff, and several other remote attendees who did not comment

*Attended remotely

March 19, 2024 at 7:00 pm

1. Approve agenda

At the opening of the meeting, neither the Planning Commission nor the Subcommittee had a quorum, so no vote to approve the agenda was required. Mr. Crow, Ms. Moffatt and Mr. Manganiello joined once the meeting had progressed to agenda item 2, so both groups then had a quorum.

2. Public Hearing on a proposed Vermont Community Development Program planning grant to assess the feasibility of developing affordable housing on town-owned land on New Boston Road.

Mr. Lubell presented slides with data showing the need for housing in Norwich and regionally, as well as the elements of the town's Housing Strategy, which is incorporated into the Town Plan. Mr. Loeb described the Subcommittee's study of town-owned land, the location and attributes of the chosen site, the parameters of the VCDP Planning Grant program, and the work streams included in Norwich's application.

Mr. Laaspere moderated comments and questions from those in attendance, both in person and remotely. All members of the public who spoke did so in favor of the town submitting the application as described at the hearing.

Mr. Manganiello stated that his property abuts the parcel in question, and in particular the side with the transfer station, and that he considered the transfer station a good neighbor and would welcome more residents to the area. He expressed support for moving forward with the proposed planning grant.

Ms. Coombs expressed support for moving forward with the proposed planning grant. She stated that she supports the town taking action on an important issue rather than waiting for the state to address local challenges; that the Starlake community (an affordable homeownership development in town that uses the community land trust model) contributes to the beauty, complexity and richness of the town, and she expects another such neighborhood would do the same; and that the lack of affordable housing in town today is causing harm to families, particular those with children who lose their housing and must relocate.

Ms. Barrett expressed support for moving forward with the proposed planning grant. She stated that she also lives on New Boston Road, and that she encourages residents to be open to diverse housing types and affordable housing. She is concerned with the recent increase in property taxes, driven by the change in per-pupil weighting for education taxes, and supports town efforts that could ameliorate that impact.

Ms. White stated that she is also concerned about the property tax issue and is supportive of the proposed planning grant.

Ms. Rotman remarked that neighboring communities have moved ahead of Norwich in terms of responding to the regional housing need, and she is worried about harmful impacts to the environment of local employees having to commute from far outside the regional job center. She said she supported the proposed planning grant.

Ms. Allen commended the Subcommittee for its work and said the proposed planning grant would be a small but important step for the town.

Mr. Harik said he supported the proposed planning grant and hoped members of the Selectboard heard the voices of support for the application.

Ms. Gray said that a diverse community creates a thriving community and she supports the proposed planning grant. She asked about the timing of the application and about the town's plan to manage the grant. Mr. Loeb explained that the town plans to submit the application for the April program deadline and that it expects to hire an experienced consultant to manage the grant, including procurement for technical services.

Mr. Smith, the deacon at the Norwich Congregational Church, voiced his support and said that in other towns where housing options have been insufficient, the local economy suffers.

Ms. Anderson, the priest at St. Barnabas Church, voiced her support and said the church's presence in town made her feel accountable to help the town achieve its goals.

Mr. Felde spoke of the generosity of town residents who support area organizations such as the Upper Valley Haven, and that he is in favor of the application because it responds to the underlying challenge in the region and the need for adequate housing for everyone.

Mr. Laaspere concluded by remarking that he had heard the widespread support for the application among attendees, that he would draft a letter from the Planning Commission endorsing the project, and that he encouraged the Selectboard to move forward with submitting the application.

3. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Pape, seconded by Mr. Ciccotelli. Meeting adjourned at 7:52PM.