

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 22, 2016, Tracy Hall

Regular Meeting

Members Present: Goodrich, Lubell, Thoms, Allen, Horwitz, Brink

Members Absent: Brien **Clerk:** Phil Dechert

Others: Stuart Richards, Barry Rotman, Jim Masland, Eric Hasse, Jane Sherwin, Linda Gray

Goodrich, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

1. Agenda –Approved.
2. Comments from the Public –
 - Stuart Richards asked how many acres are in the proposed Mixed Use Districts, and how many units could be permitted in the proposed Mixed Use District based on the current PUD draft. This information will be available at the next meeting.
 - Linda Gray asked if Town Plan Energy section would be discussed tonight. Clerk responded that it will not, but Linda will meet with Dechert after first of year to work on the draft.
3. Minutes –12-08-16 were approved without changes.
4. Reports –
 - Updates:
 - Dechert reported the Norwich Historic Preservation Commission has submitted three grant applications to the Vermont Historic Preservation Division on December 19th. Two are for preparing nominations to the National Register, a Brigham Hill Historic District and Maple Hill Farm. The third is for a Preliminary Archeological Assessment for the Pattersonville and Pompanoosuc areas.
5. Agenda & Minutes –

Procedures for having agendas and minutes posted within the statutory time limits were discussed. Members agreed that all decisions, either by vote or consensus, be recorded in the minutes. Additional description of the nature of the issues raised in discussions should also be recorded. Dechert suggested that, if needed due to time constraints in the Planning Office, an abbreviated set of minutes meeting the statutory requirements could be posted and a revised version with more detail would be distributed before the next meeting.
6. Mixed Use District Public Presentation Preparation

Jaci Allen and Jeff Lubell reviewed Powerpoint presentation slides put together with input from individual members and the Planner. The presentation, scheduled for January 26th, includes town and regional changes in demographics, economic trends, housing data, workforce and job statistics. The trends of residential development in different areas of town through recent years was looked at. The proposal for mixed use districts in the US Route 5 South and River Road area includes provisions for affordable housing in planned unit developments (PUD). The presentation includes concepts for calculating density bonuses and minimum requirements for affordable units. Additional site plan review criteria addresses the visual and physical impacts of new higher density development. The discussion included detailed discussion of changes to many of the slides including deleting some and adding new ones. Additional information needed includes:

- Maps of existing town zoning districts and proposed mixed use districts needed along with acreages of existing and proposed zoning districts.
- Revise SPR outline and purpose such as preventing strip development.
- Update data on impact on both municipal and education taxes of affordable housing.

Dechert and Allen will development a schedule for promoting the public meeting. Promoting will start in early January.

7. Town Plan Update

The Clerk reviewed the current status of the re-adoption of the Town Plan including:

- Resiliency Section Draft has been completed by the Consultant and distributed to members before the last meeting.
- Land Use changes in support of mixed use development areas have been completed by the Consultant and distributed to members earlier today.
- Energy Section - two phases:
 - The first phase to add data on resources and use, and identify three pre-approved sites is for immediate adoption, and is being drafted by the Planner with assistance from Linda Gray of the Energy Committee; and
 - The second phase to establish criteria for PSB review of proposed solar and wind projects giving the Town standing in PSB review of Norwich projects, will be prepared later when data and mapping is available from TRORC and will be adopted when ready.

8. Communication Policy with newspaper and radio –

Chair will determine which member should respond to inquiries from news organizations.

9. Future Meeting Schedule & Agenda

- January 4th at 4 PM – Special Meeting to Ratify any decisions made at December 8th Meeting in response to Open Meeting Law complaint.
- January 12th at 7 PM –
 - Review 1/26/17 Workshop Presentation
 - Build-out analysis for existing parcels in the proposed Mixed Use District under various scenarios.

10. Public Comment

Stuart Richards requested the presentation reviewed at the meeting be made available to the public before the public workshop. Members had concern with distributing a draft which is going to be changed before the presentation. The Chair stated that based on the open meeting law, the document must be released.

Adjournment 8:30 PM

Phil Dechert, Clerk

APPROVED 1/12/17

Future Meetings:

Thursday, January 12, 2017 – 7 PM Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 26, 2017 – 7 PM Regular Meeting

All Planning Commission agendas and minutes may be found at: <http://norwich.vt.us/planning-commission/>