

## Planning Commission Q3 2019 Report to the Selectboard

9-30-19

**Commissioners:** Jaci Allen (Chair), Melissa Horwitz (Vice Chair), Jeff Lubell, Susan Brink, Jeff Goodrich, Leah Romano, Brian Loeb, Ernie Ciccotelli

**Affordable Housing Sub-committee (AHSC):** Creigh Moffatt, Paul Manganiello; Kathleen Shepherd, Ralph Hybels, Jeff Lubell (PC Member), Jeff Goodrich (PC Member), Brian Loeb (PC Member)

**Committee/Commission/Appointee Charge** (including subcommittees and workgroups): Preparing a town plan, and preparing zoning and subdivision regulations based on the town plan. The commission also studies other planning issues and makes recommendations to the Selectboard.

**Current Projects** (including work by subcommittees) with proposed deadlines:

### Town Plan Rewrite

- The postcard survey has been tabulated, and a summary posted on the Town Plan web page at <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Postcard-Survey-Summary-of-Responses-9-24-18.pdf> .
- Public forums have continued through the summer. A complete listing is **attached**. Upcoming forums include:
  - Oct 3, 6:30-8pm, Land Use Workshop at Tracy Hall
  - Oct 8, 12-1pm, Housing Strategy Virtual Workshop
  - Oct 15, 12-1pm, Land Use Virtual Workshop
  - Oct 17, 6:30-8pm, Re-peopling Vermont, Workshop with Norwich Library
- A tutorial on current land use regulations was conducted on Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, and recorded by CATV. A series of FAQs on the same topic was developed, and excerpts were included in the fall edition of the Norwich Times.
  - A copy of the Current Land Use FAQs is **attached**.
  - Sept 18th Land Use Tutorial presentation can be found at <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Zoning-101.pdf>
  - Sept 18th CATV video of the Land Use Tutorial is at <http://catv.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/9213?channel=2>
- The Commission is currently reviewing drafts of five chapters: Transportation, Economic Development, Community Facilities and Services, Housing, and Energy. Release of a full draft of the Town Plan is targeted for the end of November, and will be accompanied by a public hearing at the beginning of December.
- A web page has been set up on the Town website with information on the Town Plan Rewrite. It includes an overview of the process, calendar of events, background reading list, and other supporting documents. <http://norwich.vt.us/town-plan-2019/>

### **Affordable Housing**

- A Housing Strategy draft was completed by the Affordable Housing Sub-committee and reviewed by the Planning Commission this summer. [http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/DraftHousingStrategy\\_8-29-19.pdf](http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/DraftHousingStrategy_8-29-19.pdf)
- A workshop on the Housing Strategy was held on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Notes from the workshop can be found at <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Sept-12-Affordable-Housing-Session-Summary.pdf> .
- A virtual workshop to gather additional feedback is scheduled on Oct 8, 12-1pm.

### **Regional Plan**

- The TRORC response to comments on the draft of the Regional Plan were received, and can be found in the meeting packet at [http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/PC\\_Packet\\_8-29-19.pdf](http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/PC_Packet_8-29-19.pdf)
- A revised draft of the Regional Plan has been distributed and was discussed again at a public hearing on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Another hearing is scheduled on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Community Rating System (CRS)**

- CRS reduces insurance costs for property owners in communities that are doing more than the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements to help their citizens prevent or reduce flood losses.
- TRORC is assisting Norwich in applying to CRS.
- Membership in CRS also reduces the local share in costs incurred in a 'declared disaster' from 12.5% to 7.5%, e.g. for a million dollar event this represents a savings of \$100k.

### **Future Projects:**

- Continue public workshops on the Town Plan in October and November.
- Release draft of the Town Plan at the end of November and schedule public hearing.
- Work with TRORC on the CRS qualification process.

### **Support Needed from the Selectboard:**

- Ongoing communication and collaboration on key matters

## Town Plan Rewrite-Outreach Calendar

9/30/19

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Organization(s)</b>	<b>Town plan chapter(s)</b>	<b>PC members</b>	<b>Location</b>
4/11	Nancy LaRowe	Vital Communities	Economic Development	Allen	
4/12	Cheryl Lindberg, Charles Taylor, Jill and Joe Lavin, et al	Norwich Business Council	Economic Development	Allen	
4/17	Allison Colburn and Sara Kobylenski	Child Care Center in Norwich	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Thoms	
4/18	Bob Haynes	Green Mountain Economic Development Corp	Transportation	Lubell	
4/18	Andrew Winter	Twin Pines Housing Trust	Housing	Loeb	
4/23	Herb Durfee	Town Manager	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Thoms, Lubell	
4/23	Beth Hunstome	Consultant	Land Use	Brink, Ciccotelli	
4/25	Michael Goodrich	Fire District	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Thoms	
4/25	Douglas Kennedy	Consultant	Land Use	Brink, Ciccotelli	
4/26	Troy McBride	Energy Business	Energy	Horowitz, Brink	
4/29	Tom Candon and Lauren Rhim	Norwich School Board	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Allen	
5/1	Joan Goldstein and Josh Hanford	VT Dept. of Econ. Dev.	Housing	Loeb	
5/7	Berna Rexford	Four Seasons Southeby's Realty	Housing	Loeb, Romano	
5/7	Van Chestnut	Advance Transit	Transportation	Lubell	
5/8	Brie Swenson	Recreation Director	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Thoms	
5/10	Bill Hammond	MCS	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb, Thoms	
5/15	Tom Goins	DHMC	Housing	Loeb	
5/20	Brenda Torpy	Champlain Housing Trust	Housing	Loeb	
5/21	Conservation Commission/Layne	Norwich Conservation Commission	Land Use	Brink, Ciccotelli, Allen	
5/23	Peter Brink + NHPC	Norwich Historic Preservation Commission	Land Use	Allen, Ciccotelli	
5/23	Jolin Kish	Kish Consulting	Housing	Loeb	

5/30	Buff McLaughry	Four Seasons Southeby's Realty	Housing	Loeb, Romano	
5/31	Nancy Bloomfield	The Family Place	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Loeb	
6/4	Mike Kiess and Tom Roberts	Vital Communities	Housing	Loeb	
6/13	Childcare forum for parents	<b>Public</b>	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Thoms, Loeb (+Romano, Allen)	Tracy Hall meeting room
6/14	John Langhus	Norwich Solar Technologies	Energy	Brink, Allen	
6/18	Rob Adams	CEO Solaflect	Energy	Brink, Allen	
6/26	Lynne LaBombard	LaBombard Peterson Realty Group	Housing	Loeb, Romano	
7/2	Jennifer Fontaine	Haven	Housing	Loeb, Romano	
7/10	Economic Dev Roundtable	<b>Public</b>	Economic Development	Allen, Lubell	The Norwich Square
7/11	Lucinda Walker and Beth Reynolds	Norwich Public Library	Utilities, Facilities and Services	Thoms, Loeb	
7/11	Facilitated Workshop 6:15-8pm	<b>Public</b>	Land Use, Energy, and Transportation	Allen, Horwitz, Brink, Thoms +	Tracy Hall meeting room
7/15	Conference Call 12-1pm	<b>Public</b>	Land Use, Energy, and Transportation	Allen	Go to Meeting
8/1	Facilitated Workshop 6:15pm	<b>Public</b>	Land Use and Conservation	Allen, Brink	Tracy Hall meeting room
9/3	Conference Call 12-1pm	<b>Public</b>	Land Use and Conservation	Allen, Brink	Go to Meeting
9/12	Facilitated Workshop	<b>Public</b>	Housing Strategy	Loeb, Lubell, et al	Tracy Hall meeting room
9/18	Tutorial 6:30-7:30pm	<b>Public</b>	Current Land Use Regs	Francis	Tracy Hall
10/3	Facilitated Workshop	<b>Public</b>	Land Use	All	Tracy Hall
10/8	Conference Call 12-1pm	<b>Public</b>	Housing Strategy	Loeb, Lubell	Go to Meeting
10/15	Conference Call 12-1pm	<b>Public</b>	Land Use	All	Got to Meeting
10/17	Re-peopling Vermont	<b>Public</b>	Workshop with PC+ Library	All	Library
Nov	Facilitated Workshops	<b>Public</b>	All remaining chapters	All	TBD

## **FAQs on Current Land Use**

8-22-19

At the direction of the Selectboard, the Planning Commission is rewriting the Town Plan this year. Plan chapters include Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Municipal Facilities and Services, Transportation, Energy, and Resilience.

Last spring the Commission gathered input and data from community interest groups, Selectboard-appointed committees, and others. A variety of public forums have been held since June, with more scheduled into the fall.

In response to questions that have come up in a number of forums, a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) has been developed on land use, a key chapter in the plan.

### **How many zoning districts does Norwich have today?**

- There are currently five districts in Norwich.
  - Village Business
  - Village Residential I
  - Village Residential II
  - Rural Residential
  - Commercial Industrial

### **How is Route 5 South zoned today?**

- Route 5 South on the eastern side is zoned Commercial Industrial (Foggs side)
- Route 5 South on the western side is Rural Residential

### **What is Mixed Use zoning?**

- Mixed Use zoning allows complementary uses such as residential, retail, and office space within a single development or building, where these uses can be functionally integrated and developed at a pedestrian scale. The Village Business District is an example of a Mixed Use district. In contrast, strip mall development is an example of so-called 'single-use zoning,' and is typically auto- vs. pedestrian-oriented.

### **What portion of Norwich is zoned Rural Residential?**

- 97 percent of the land area in Norwich is currently zoned Rural Residential.

### **What types of development are permitted in the Rural Residential district?**

- One or two-unit dwellings, bed-and-breakfasts, agricultural and forestry uses.

### **What types of development are permitted in the Commercial district?**

- Commercial-Industrial allows for retail, light industry, multi-unit housing, and various forms of institutional use

### **What is the purpose of the different zoning districts?**

- The purpose of different zoning districts is to maintain key attributes of the built form and landscape. Broadly speaking, this is achieved by varying dimensional standards:
  - Minimum lot size
  - Minimum frontage
  - Setbacks controlling the distance between boundaries and structure
  - Height of structure
- Zoning districts also control uses (the kind of development)
  - Broadly, the center of the village (Village Business) allows for a mix of uses, commercial, institutional and residential (including denser development)
  - Village Residential allows for single and multi-unit housing with a minimum parcel size of 20,000 square feet
  - Rural Residential allows for rural uses (agriculture, forestry, etc.) and single or two-unit housing with a minimum parcel size of 2 acres
  - Commercial-Industrial allows for retail, light industry, multi-unit housing, and various forms of institutional use

### **How does Norwich control development?**

- Norwich uses Zoning and Subdivision regulations to control development. These regulations control the uses of a structure, the height, minimum parcel size, and position of the structure on the parcel. The intent is to foster a distinct development pattern in each district.

### **Where can Norwich grow?**

- Development in Norwich is limited by high land values, the complexity and cost of obtaining a state wastewater permit, and natural resource constraints (steep slopes, mapped wetlands etc.). This limits future growth to parts of Norwich adjacent to already developed areas where there may be potential for community or municipal wastewater system service.

To see a map of the different zones, visit <http://norwich.vt.us/town-plan-2019/>