# NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
# AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

## Agenda

**Monday, Oct. 19, 2026, 6:00 pm**

Hybrid Meeting: In-Person at Tracy Hall and via zoom:
Topic: Affordable Housing Subcommittee
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83194128919
Meeting ID: 831 9412 8919

1. Approve meeting agenda
2. Public comment
3. Approve September meeting minutes
4. AHSC Interface with Village Master Plan Project
5. Follow-up on publicly owned land in Norwich
6. Steps we can take while waiting for planning process for town plan to move forward
7. Adjourn

Attachments

9/14/2026 Meeting Minutes

**NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION**
**AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**
**Monday, September 14th, 2026**

Hybrid Meeting: In-Person at Tracy Hall and via zoom.
Members Present: Jeff Lubell, Brian Loeb, Pete DeShazo, Gregory Hynes, Aviva Tevah
Members absent: Jeff Goodrich
Staff: Steven True
Members of the Public Present: None

1. **Meeting opened, quorum determined 6:00**

2. **Motion to approve the meeting agenda** – Passed 5-0

3. **Public comment** None

4. **Motion to approve the August 17th$^{th}$ meeting minutes** – Passed 5-0

5. **Updates**
    a. New Member Appointment Select Board requires in-person meeting for first-time volunteers; reappointments and appointments to other committees will be handled at the next Select Board meeting; consideration of the appointment of a new subcommittee member expected at the next Select Board meeting.
    b. Village Master Plan Dubois & King was selected as the consulting vendor. The kick-off meeting has been scheduled for September 21. Loeb notes that Yom Kippur falls on that date. True to propose moving the date to the Steering Committee
    c. Memo to the Planning Commission Final version of the memo sent to the Planning Commission chair the prior week; photos from Hartford, Norwich, and London added to accommodate earlier requests.
    d. Joint meeting proposal: Lubell suggested arranging a joint meeting or presentation with the Planning Commission to begin engagement; True assessed it as slightly early given the Planning Commission is still organizing its approach to writing plan elements and reviewing other towns' comp plans for format modeling. Lubell noted that the subcommittee's work will have direct implications for the land use chapter, making early feedback loops valuable. True to discuss with the Chair of the Planning Commission.

6. **Review and discuss Housing Chapter of the Town Plan**
    a. Members discussed the chapter's current structure focusing on the objectives, their relation to Act 181, and the necessity of including State Planning goals within the housing element. Loeb noted that we may want to consider integrating the Regional Planning Commission goals. True to review current State Planning goals (24 V.S.A. §3402) and provide an analysis at the next meeting.

b. Members then discussed historical housing production data, with one member noting an extraordinarily small number of housing units of any size in the last decade. Members noted that, while modest, the town is close to meeting its dedicated affordable housing target as laid out in the 2020 Town Plan
c. The group reached a strong consensus that the absence of publicly available wastewater is a primary structural barrier to housing growth in certain parts of Norwich. Members discussed a prior feasibility study and strategies to renew this effort. True noted that this discussion is part of the Master Village Plan platform and expected the question to be raised in public forums.
d. The group agreed the housing chapter work must be accompanied by a robust public education and input process — both to inform the document and to build community support for substantive changes

7. **Charrette process (Village Master Plan):**
    a. DuBois & King will conduct two charrettes as part of the master plan process; timing is TBD but the goal is to complete them within the current calendar year. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee expressed strong interest in participating in the housing-focused charrette
    b. Two participation models discussed:
        i. **Integrated:** Subcommittee actively participates in the housing charrette itself to introduce their work and listen.
        ii. **Sequential:** Let the charrette surface issues broadly, then subcommittee hosts a follow-on deep-dive specifically on housing.
    c. One option discussed would be to do both — make an appearance at the charrette to establish the subcommittee's existence and relevance, then use that as a foundation for a more focused follow-on session
    d. Loeb is on the Village Master Plan steering committee and can advocate for subcommittee involvement in the housing charrette design
8. **Standalone public event ideas discussed:**
    a. Speaker event on wastewater infrastructure and financing options
    b. Book group organized around the book presented by a Dartmouth author at a recent Homes for Norwich event (author name not recalled); Steven expressed interest in organizing this
    c. Infographic with QR code for broader community outreach
    d. Homes for Norwich presenting their infrastructure/jobs analysis at a Village Master Plan steering committee meeting
9. **Affordability awareness question:** Steven raised whether there is sufficient baseline public understanding of the affordability crisis in Norwich, or whether education on the problem itself is needed before solutions can be discussed
    a. One member opined that most people recognize the affordability issue; another suggested that many people know Norwich is expensive, but may not have thought through the long-term implications for the town's tax base, school enrollment, and community composition
10. **Messaging sensitivity:** The group acknowledged that large development numbers (e.g., 225 units) could alarm residents; framing and sequencing of public communication will be important
11. **One member's framing:** The status quo is not viable — Norwich needs to grow to sustain its tax base and school; the subcommittee's role is to point the way forward, not just document current conditions

12. **Changing demographics:** One member noted significant generational turnover in town, with many young families now engaged as volunteers; this cohort may be more open to change than prior residents

13. **Preparing for next discussions on housing chapter of the Norwich Town Plan** – tabled until next meeting

Adjourn 7:10 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for **October 19th** at 6 p.m.