TOWN OF NORWICH
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
DRAFT Minutes
November 10th, 2026
Tracy Hall and Zoom

Members present:
Jaan Laaspere (Chair), Mary Gorman, Bob Pape, Vince Crow, Christian Spalding (Vice-Chair)
Members absent: Jeff Goodrich, Miller Nuttle,
Staff: Steven True, Director, Planning & Zoning
Minute Taker: Steven True
Others Present: Jeff Lubell

1. **Meeting opened at 6:31 PM**. A quorum was present.

2. **Approve Agenda**: Gorman and Pape moved to approve the agenda as amended to include discussion of the Two Rivers Regional Planning Commission under the Chair report. The agenda was approved unanimously.

3. **Public Comment**: No public comment.
4. **Chair Report**
    a. **Two Rivers Regional Planning Commission**: Members discussed recent concerns raised by representatives of several towns regarding Two Rivers' meeting procedures and staff conduct. True provided background on the concerns, including issues related to Open Meeting Law and the regional plan under Act 181. Members discussed the potential differences in how the regional plan affects towns with and without local land use regulations. The Commission agreed to await further action by the Selectboard before deciding whether to schedule additional discussion. Laaspere noted that a Planning Commission representative could participate if the Selectboard schedules a discussion.

5. **Affordable Housing Subcommittee Missing Middle Housing Memo**: Jeff Lubell presented background on the memo and its purpose as a starting point for discussion in preparation for the Town Plan. Members discussed the proposed housing options, potential changes to zoning districts and density, and the need to consider possible effects on infrastructure, transportation, and neighborhood character. Discussion also addressed the relationship between housing goals and other Town Plan priorities. Members agreed that the Town Plan process should consider these issues together and evaluate proposals in the context of an overall vision for Norwich. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee was encouraged to review the Montpelier Town Plan as a model for presenting goals and implementation steps.

6. **Short-Term Rental Ordinance**: True reported that the Town had issued approximately seven or eight short-term rental permits and had addressed several complaints. Members

discussed ways to increase awareness of the ordinance and encourage compliance. True will raise the ordinance at the Selectboard meeting and consider an additional notice on the Town website. Laaspere will update and repost the previous listserv notice. True remains the point of contact for permit questions and enforcement concerns.

7. **Capital Planning**: Laaspere reported that the Selectboard had approved a charge for the Finance Committee to work with the Planning Commission on capital planning. He will follow up with Finance Committee Chair Steve Hepburn about how the committees can coordinate, including review of the Town's reserve funds. Members discussed incorporating capital planning into the Village Master Plan and Town Plan processes, including consideration of costs, priorities, available funds, and timing.

8. **Village Master Plan Update**: Laaspere reported that the steering committee is preparing for a public working session on December 3. The event will include presentations and small-group discussions focused on transportation, housing and infrastructure, and community and business vitality. Food and childcare will be provided. Members discussed ways to support remote participation; True and the consultant will explore options for including people who cannot attend in person.

   Spalding reported that the online surveys had received 144 responses to the general survey and 76 responses to the bicycle and pedestrian survey. He noted that responses from residents under age 30 were still lacking and encouraged members to promote the surveys to a broader range of residents. Spalding will share the survey results with the Commission after the surveys close.

9. **Town Plan Structure and Schedule**: Members discussed using the Montpelier Town Plan as a model for a more concise, accessible plan with clear aspirations, goals, strategies, priorities, costs, and responsible parties. Members discussed the need to integrate financial considerations and capital planning into the process. The Commission will continue developing the Town Plan structure, beginning with aspiration statements and goals for housing, land use, transportation, and economic development at its December meeting. The Village Master Plan process is expected to inform the broader Town Plan work.

10. **Approve Minutes from October 13, 2026**: Gorman moved, and Crow seconded, to approve the October 13 minutes as drafted. The motion passed (3-0, 1); Spalding abstained.
11. **Adjourn**: Gorman moved, and Crow seconded, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Next Meeting: December 8th 2026, at 6:30 PM.