

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday September 14, 2021, 6:30pm

MINUTES

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89339717735>

Meeting ID: 893 3971 7735

Physical meeting location: multi-purpose room, Tracy Hall

Members Present: Jaci Allen, Brian Loeb, Jeff Lubell, Melissa Horwitz, Jeff Goodrich, Ernie Ciccotelli
Public Present: Linda Cook, Joanna Whitcomb
Staff: Rod Francis

Meeting Opened: 6:32pm

1. Approve Agenda:

Horwitz moved and Goodrich seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Horwitz, Ciccotelli, Goodrich.

2. Public Comment: none

3. Presentation: Joanna Whitcomb, Director, Campus Planning Dartmouth College:

Whitcomb presented the Planning for Possibilities a Strategic Campus Framework, first presented in November 2020 and then re-released earlier this year. Whitcomb spoke to graphic representations of the college growth, including the properties in Norwich. Of special interest to the Norwich community and Planning Commission are holdings in Lewiston. Whitcomb described Lewiston as an opportunity site—but said that there are no actual plans. Dartmouth would be happy to engage in the rewriting of Norwich Zoning Regulations as they effect this neighborhood. Some of the more significant topics in the strategic plan concern housing, land holdings and building assessment.

Loeb asked about incentives to students to seek housing off campus, and if Dartmouth could provide home addresses of students as a way of identifying the number of Dartmouth students living in Norwich. Whitcomb responded that in a normal year about 10 percent of undergraduates live off campus. This year the number is higher (but still less than 15 percent due to more demand to be on campus, as a response to covid-19 and less opportunity to study in overseas programs. The purpose of the \$5000 incentive was to stay at home or do research off-campus, not be on campus.

Loeb also wanted to know more about the quality and maintenance of rental properties in light of Norwich not maintaining rental registries.

Allen asked how the college enhanced the vibrancy of downtown Hanover. Whitcomb replied that Hanover was trying to eliminate some parking to give more room for open air restaurants and that rents have dropped in response to current conditions.

Lubell asked about the extent of collaboration with the hospital around housing supply and specifically if there were numeric targets they were trying to reach for new units. Whitcomb answered that they do not have numeric targets yet. But quantifying the demand and setting targets is being studied now. The project they are currently working on is 540 units mostly at Sachem Village intended for graduate students. 100 new beds have been added in the last decade. None of these have been dormitories reflecting the fact that there has been no growth in the undergraduate population.

4. Announcements, Reports, Updates & Correspondence:

Director's Report: The Acting Town Manager role is taking up a lot of time and the Managers office is busy with job searches for key personnel across departments, onboarding new Finance Director and budget preparation. The Density Study RFQ has been posted and advertised, the wastewater study RFQ will be posted as soon as the state

confirms it meets their procurement requirements. He concluded by saying that the DRB will join the Planning Commission at the October meeting, but that he is not sure when he will return full-time to Planning Director.

Correspondence:

- Norwich Technologies provided details of an environmental review of the Upper Loveland RD project site. There has been a minor adjustment to the location of panels in response to findings, but there will be no visual impact
- Rosamond Orford offered objections to a small net-metered solar panel project opposite her Union Village RD property. The installation meets setbacks in the Norwich Zoning Regulations. The Public Utility Commission (PUC) is the regulating authority, the Town does not have any authority to review the project.

5. Planning Commission By-laws:

This item was moved to next month's agenda to allow Commissioners to review the correct draft in preparation.

6. Approve Minutes of August 10, 2021:

Horwitz moved and Goodrich seconded a motion to approve the minutes of July 13, 2021. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Goodrich, Horwitz, Ciccotelli.

7. Other Business: none

8. Future Meeting Schedule & Agendas:

- DRB, Land Use Regulations discussion
- Affordable Housing Public Land memo

9. Comments from the Public: none

10. Adjourn

Goodrich moved and Ciccotelli seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried 6 – 0. For: Allen, Loeb, Lubell, Goodrich, Horwitz, Ciccotelli.

Meeting adjourned: 8:28pm

Future Meetings:

Tuesday, September 14, 6:30pm Regular Meeting
Tuesday October 12, 6:30pm Regular Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Francis

APPROVED 10-12-2021