

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019 – 6 PM
100 BROADWAY, RM #335 - THIRD FLOOR
NORWICH, CT**

REGULAR MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER: Art Sharon called at the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. INTRODUCTIONS OF MEMBERS AND GUEST PARTICIPANTS:

Present: Committee on the City Plan: Chair Art Sharron, Norwich Historical Society: Regan Miner, Redevelopment Agency: Chair Jim Quarto, Norwich Public Utilities: acting General Manager Chris LaRose and Fawn Walker, Harbor Management Commission: Chair Tucker Braddock, Commission on the City Plan: Les King, and Inland Wetlands Commission: Rick Morell

Others Present: City Planner Deanna Rhodes, Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 14, 2018

On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Les King, the commission unanimously approved the minutes of the Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development: Plan Implementation Committee (POCD PIC) meeting of November 14, 2018 as presented.

D. OLD BUSINESS: None presented

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review & Discuss:

Chapter entitled "Grow Strategically"

- Section entitled "Manage Utility Infrastructure - Guide Housing development"
Pages 7-8 of Implementation Element & Pages 34-35 of Strategic Element
 - Subsection – "Support Community Structure"

A.1. Chris LaRose reported that Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) works closely with both the Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) and the Planning & Zoning Departments to ensure coordination of efforts. They are currently working on Westledge Apartments and Phase 2 of Ponemah Mills. Franklin and Bozrah are paying for infrastructure improvements which will add revenue to NPU. Ten percent of this revenue goes to the City of Norwich. The project in Sprague will not add revenue because it will only be used in case of emergencies. Art Sharron asked about extending sewer service to the Teddy Lane neighborhood. Chris said initiating sewer projects generally need to be supported by a strong neighborhood advocate. A majority of residents in the proposed area need to be in favor. Sewer assessments are applied to all properties within the expansion area. The NPU Board of Commissioners and the City Council must approve a sewer expansion project. He committed to investigating the possibility. Tucker Braddock asked about the effect of the new projects on the waste water treatment plant. Chris responded that the plant has plenty of capacity now. Also, sewer separation projects are being carried out in the city. Five years from now would be the earliest that sewer plant upgrades would begin. Jim Quarto asked about the fiber network. Chris reported that a study is being done by a consultant to see how best to serve homes. The results should be in this spring/summer. He referenced

that fiber expansion could be an economic development tool. If customers are underserved, NPU could consider fiber expansion. The study will also consider public Wi-Fi.

A.2. Chris reported that he is willing to look at working with DEEP and OPM to allow recreational use of the two watershed areas. The water supplies are not needed for 20-30 years. Recreational use would require monitoring. Deanna inquired as to the best way to proceed. Rick Morell noted the need for parking away from the houses and to gate the areas at sunset. Chris said that NPU can talk to DEEP and the Uncas Health District (UHD). He noted the potential need for advocacy. Deanna pointed out that they are city asset. For Bog Meadow, she will work with DPW on parking. Chris committed to working with the City on this. He noted there would be increased liability to the City but it makes Norwich a great place to live. Chris and Deanna discussed options for monitoring activity at the areas.

A.3. Chris reported he will continue to work with the planning department and will make sure they take ownership of these systems. NPU is trying not to have private pumping stations. They want all to be up to NPU standards. In response to a question by Tucker Braddock, Chris confirmed that in the Enterprise Zone, a sewer connection fee is half the normal amount.

- Subsection – “Improve Infrastructure Systems”

B.1. Chris reported that NPU staff are continually educating customers. Water revenue continues to be lower due to low flow faucets and toilets. Electricity has the same trend due to improved light bulbs.

B.2. Chris spoke about the many connections in city with old sewers. NPU is doing sonic inspection of all pipes and bringing in new technologies to find and fix the worst spots.

B.3. Chris reported that NPU continues to clean storm basins.

B.4. Chris reported that NPU supports low impact development techniques including rain gardens, permeable pavement and green roofs. Deanna referenced the MS4 requirements. It is proving difficult in the city to have decreases in impervious surfaces with so much private paving. Private lots can be repaved without contacting city departments. New developments offer the city a chance to reduce paving.

B.5. Fiber optics were discussed earlier in the meeting.

B.6. Public wireless internet connectivity was discussed earlier in the meeting.

B.7. Chris reported that NPU provides their outage statistics to APPA. NPU ranks in the top quartile in nation. Staff have been inspecting tree situations near poles. Reliability of the water system includes interconnections with other water sources in other towns within the region. Water can flow either way through towns, so towns can assist each other. Also the natural gas system has five gate stations. Usually a community has one and if it fails, the whole system is out.

B.8. Chris reported that NPU will continue to expand natural gas service. On a BTU basis, natural gas is on par with oil. Gas service will be going into the Hale Mill development, Westledge Apartments and Ponemah Phase 2. Preston is in NPU’s franchise area, so there is the potential for development at Preston Riverwalk. NPU purchased new capacity so NPU is ready for expansion.

B.9. Chris reported that NPU is working with surrounding communities such as Bozrah in the expansion of the public water service. The city of Norwich benefits from the 10% of revenue which is paid by NPU to the city.

2. Reports from Committee Members and Guests

Deanna reported for Inland Wetlands. They are working towards increasing park areas in the city. They will work with DPW and NPU on the projects discussed tonight and then have hearings.

Regan reported for the Norwich Historical Society. They received a grant from the Sachem Fund and state for Phase 2 of Walk Norwich. They finished two sections of the freedom trail, Jail Hill and Millionaire's Way. The website is walknorwich.org. They are finishing interpretive signage.

Regan reported for the Historic Commission. They have been receiving two to three applications per month for Little Plains and Norwichtown. The Leffingwell Museum opens for the season on April 6, 2019. On April 20, 2019, the Lexington Alarm Letter is coming back to Norwich for the first time since 1775. This prized document will be on display for three hours at the Leffingwell Museum.

Tucker reported that the Harbor Management Commission voted to apply for a grant from the CT Port Authority to repair the docks at Howard T. Brown Park. The grant needs a 20% match which will be requested from the city. Jim Quarto asked about the osprey nest project. Tucker replied that next Monday there will be a meeting with people who control the land regarding the position of the pole to hold the nest. Once the location has been determined, a permit will be requested from DEEP. Finding the right piece of land has been the challenge.

Deana reported for the Redevelopment Agency. The city has an EPA grant for environmental assessments. RDA is prioritizing the assessments. Brownfield funding has been used at Uncas Leap to remove an underground storage tank. No contamination was found. On Laurel Hill Avenue, two sites are being studied, 68 Thermos Avenue and the American Legion. A summary document of environmental studies is being compiled for the Shipping Street area. Post cards are being mailed to owners of identified sites to offer the city's assistance. The mayor may want to do a Phase 1 Study of the marina property. The city also has a \$200,000 grant for assessment of Ponemah South and how it will best function with the North Mill. The market study of the south mill was soft. The developers are thinking about alternative uses such as flexible work space.

F: OTHER ITEMS

1. Meeting Reminder for May 8, 2019: Prepare to Review & Discuss Chapter Next meeting: Deanna announced the topic for the next meeting. "Promote Livability" Section entitled "Enhance Character/Spirit" Pages 9 – 12 of Implementation Element & Pages 38-41 of Strategic Element will be emailed to all members prior to the next meeting.

2. Other: None

G. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Jim Quarto, seconded by Les King, the POCD PIC meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary*