

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020 – 6 PM  
Virtual/Remote Meeting**

City Planner Deanna Rhodes read information pertaining to virtual meetings and clearly stated that the meeting, including video, will be recorded.

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Frank Manfredi called at the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**B. INTRODUCTIONS OF MEMBERS AND GUEST PARTICIPANTS:**

Present: Committee on the City Plan: Vice Chair Les King, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU): General Manager Chris LaRose, Norwich Historical Society/Historic District: Regan Miner, Norwich Public Schools: Matthew Brown, Norwich Community Development Corporation: Jason Vincent

Others Present: City Planner Deanna Rhodes and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 8, 2020**

Approval of minutes was tabled due to attendance.

**D. OLD BUSINESS:** None presented.

**E. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Review & Discuss:** Chapter entitled "Leverage Assets" - Sections entitled "Promote Sustainability" - Pages 27-2824-26 of Implementation Element & Pages 60-61 of Strategic Element

Promote Sustainability:

A: Promote Agriculture

A1. Establish an agricultural committee to explore how the city could help support farmers and farming and help preserve farms and farmland.

City Planner Deanna Rhodes reported that regulatory action has been taken. Zoning regulations have an overlay district that allows for wineries and breweries. To date, no one has taken advantage of this provision. There has not been a concerted effort to reach out to local farmers. Les King and Regan Miner gave suggestions for agricultural outreach which includes the Last Green Valley. Jason Courter spoke to implementation actions regarding the zoning regulations.

A2. Coordinate local efforts with state farmland preservation programs.  
Actions were discussed and suggestions were made on outreach.

A3. Review land use regulations with regard to local farming and urban agriculture.  
Jason Vincent reported that zoning amendments were made in the 2015 revision.

A4. Use conservation development designs to help preserve farmlands if property is developed.  
Ms. Rhodes noted that ongoing policy does promote conservation of farmland.

B: Promote Ecological Sustainability:

B1. Promote efforts to reduce water usage.

General Manager Chris LaRose reported on these efforts. NPU sends the water report out with conservation tips. Throughout the city, water is metered and checked for leaks with AMI meters. This is

a tool to determine leaks on the customer end. They also calibrate facility meters and calculate losses based on the difference between the two. In the past, NPU took education programs to the schools but with today's rigorous curriculums, the schools no longer allow this.

B2. Promote efforts to reduce energy usage, pursue the use of renewable energy, and implement the Energy Plan developed by the City's Sustainable Energy Committee.

General Manager LaRose reported that there are 8 megawatts of solar power in Norwich. Power is purchased through the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC). NPU has an energy efficiency program that assists with installing heat pumps in older buildings and provides AC, as well. This reduces both load growth and dependence on oil. NPU offers HVAC upgrade rebates, home energy audits, and heat pump rebates for homes and businesses. All new LED lighting was recently installed throughout the city.

B3. Promote efforts to recycle and reduce waste.

Ms. Rhodes will contact the Department of Public Works for input.

B4: Promote efforts to reduce chemical/pesticide/fertilizer use.

This item was not addressed.

B5: Seek to incorporate "green practices" into municipal operations/municipal facilities, including being a leader in alternative fuel vehicles.

Mr. LaRose reported that 30% of NPU's vehicles are alternative. NPU is an active member of the state's coalition. NPU always looks to purchase alternate use vehicles for its fleet. There are two alternate fuel stations and many electric charging stations in the city. NPU offers rebates for owners and businesses that host the stations. NPU has an active electric rebate program, promotes electric vehicles and is always looking to expand programming. He looks to home ownership as a means of increasing engagement that leads to more efficiency in housing and alternate vehicle use.

Ms. Rhodes referred to and displayed the map on page 61. There is quite a bit of agricultural land and open space. Mr. King noted the extensive farmland area and spoke to the importance of the Farm to Table movement in pandemic recovery. The inventory of land could be advantageous. Local farmers markets are very successful. The POCD is a living document that should encourage more emphasis on this topic.

Ms. Rhodes reported on a meeting she had with a consultant on the fire district project being conducted by the city. He asked her if POCD spoke to fire protection in the city or to emergency services, He suggested that the city might want to touch on this when writing the new POCD. The POCD could address infrastructure needs. Mr. King noted that during the last Charter review, this topic was considered. Jason Courter noted that the results of the fire study should be integrated into the updated POCD.

## **2. Adopt 2021 Meeting Schedule (Calendar):**

Ms. Rhodes spoke to the need for a schedule of meetings for 2021. With a new POCD due in 2023, holding POCD-PIC meetings quarterly would give staff time to assess what has come to light in these POCD review meetings. The POCD Planning committee could take over to write the new POCD. Based on the review sessions, the committee could check-off accomplishments and create new POCD goals from the recommendations. The next POCD could include the school facility study, as well. Regan Miner offered to give ideas towards the new POCD.

On a motion by Regan Miner, seconded by Chris LaRose, the POCD-PIC unanimously approve the quarterly meeting schedule with dates of January 13, April 14, July 14 and October 13, 2021. A roll call vote was taken.

**F: OTHER ITEMS**

**1. Meeting Reminder for January 13, 2021**

Mr. King asked members to review the POCD and proactively send Ms. Rhodes suggestions for the next POCD.

**G. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Jason Vincent, seconded by Regan Miner, the POCD PIC meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Melinda Wilson*

*Recording Secretary*