

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020 – 6 PM
100 BROADWAY, RM #335 - THIRD FLOOR
NORWICH, CT**

REGULAR MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Frank Manfredi called at the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

B. INTRODUCTIONS OF MEMBERS AND GUEST PARTICIPANTS:

Present: Committee on the City Plan: Frank Manfredi, Les King, Jason Courter, Norwich Community Development Corp: Jason Vincent, Inland Wetlands Commission: Doug Lee, Harbor Management Commission: Tucker Braddock; Norwich Historical Society: Regan Miner

Others Present: Director of Planning, Deanna Rhodes and Dan Daniska, Assistant City Planner

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 8, 2020

Les King made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Tucker Braddock. The motion passed unanimously.

D. OLD BUSINESS: None presented.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review & Discuss: Chapter entitled "Promote Livability" - Section entitled "Address Transportation / Mobility Needs" - Pages 18-21 of Implementation Element & Pages 46 - 51 of Strategic Element Subsections:

Frank Manfredi turned the meeting over to Dan Daniska to lead the discussions on each of the following transportation related topics:

A. Establish and Maintain a Balanced Transportation System

Mr. Daniska provided information and updates relative to each of the 3 Strategies:

1. Provide for transportation/mobility needs of the community:
 - The City was selected by SCCOG for TAP (Transportation Alternatives Projects) funding for improvements along New London Tpke. A discussion ensued and Dan provided more details specific details about the improvements in the area of the old Benny's building and area under the Rt. 395/Route 2 overpass. He shared that the funding is not yet available, but should be in the 2021-2022 time frame.
 - The City is partnering with the Town of Montville in preparing a LOTCIP grant application to extend that same project on new London Turnpike down New London Tpke to connect to Route 32 in Montville in the vicinity of Mohegan Sun. The project includes sidewalks and bike lanes. A discussion ensued regarding preparation of a letter of support from the POCD PIC. CCP Chairman Frank Manfredi said he would be able to come in to sign a letter on their behalf.
 - The City received funding through CRCOG for pedestrian bump-outs on Central Avenue. These painted bump-outs will be painted in multiple colors to reflect the diversity of the

Greenville Neighborhood. The project will be initiated after the completion of the paving of nearby roads in Greenville.

- The PW Department has a project for repaving and drainage work on Dunham Street. The project will incorporate complete streets concepts including sidewalks and bike lanes. These improvements will provide connectivity between Thamesville and the Westside.
 - In the recent past, the City installed bike lanes on Mahan Drive.
2. Provide for a balanced transportation system which addresses pedestrian needs, bicycle needs, vehicular needs and transit needs:
- Dan Daniska shared that the P&NS Department is applying to CCAPA (CT Chapter of the American Planning Association) for a \$3500 grant funded summer planning intern. The intern would catalog existing sidewalks parcel by parcel. The intern would look at ADA compliance and rate and photograph the condition of the sidewalks. The City will use this information for asset management and to prioritize the problem areas for correction. Ms. Miner said that she'd submit information about sidewalks that are problematic and notified during the walking tours that the NHS leads.
3. Seek to transform existing streets to "complete streets" with greater provisions for pedestrians, cyclists, street trees, on street parking (where appropriate), and transit/bus shelters in order to provide safe access for all users, regardless of age or ability (as per Public Act 09-154).
- Dan Daniska mentioned that he has been working with the PW Dept. Director and Planning Director on a Complete Streets Plan for the City for a while now. The City held off on proceeding until the SCCOG Regional Bike/Ped Plan was completed. Ms. Rhodes mentioned that public meetings had been held but was unsure whether the final plan was adopted. She and Dan concurred that the City's plan would line up with the regional plan but that ours would be more specific.
 - Franklin/Main Street Roundabout was discussed.
 - Route 82 – West Main Street Roundabouts will help with traffic calming and ped/bicycle safety. A discussion then ensued about the concern for businesses being displaced. It was stated that due to the State and Federal funding of the project, which are not secured, the project would not start any time before 2024. A Master Plan to assist businesses was recommended by Jason Vincent, NCDC, and was supported by the Committee.
 - The City is reviewing the downtown traffic circulation to improve it. This may include the removal of traffic signals which would require a traffic study. Les King mentioned locations for bus shelters. A discussion ensued about the Hamilton Street corridor and Halls at Riverview locations. It was suggested to look at the transit routes. Jason Vincent mentioned that over 1 million people per year ride the bus from the ITC. The inefficiency of the wave down system was discussed and how that affects bus stops/shelters. It was mentioned that without a bus shelter in place, the public's perception is that homeless people are congregating on Franklin Street near Main Street which is not the case.

B. Address Specific Roadway Needs

1. Continue to maintain roads and bridges in order to extend their life and minimize the need for expensive reconstruction.

- Mr. Daniska mentioned that DPW has a repaving schedule and maintenance efforts that have been successful as of late.
- 2. Improve access to the Norwich Business Park – No updates
- 3. Encourage the establishment of roadway connections where beneficial to the community:
 - A pedestrian and road connection between Backus Hospital and New London Turnpike
 - A pedestrian and road connection between Three Rivers Community College, the Uncas-On-Thames campus, and CT-32 (possibly including Norman Road)
 - Mr. Daniska stated that the proposed New London Turnpike LOTCIP project would be a first step in achieving the pedestrian connection between Three Rivers and Uncas-On-Thames, allowing for sidewalks and bicycle lanes to connect from Three Rivers to CT-32 in Montville.
- 4. Work with the Department of Transportation to create a full interchange at I-395 and CT-2 (the interchange is currently missing ramps from I-395SB to CT-2W and from CT-2 WB to I-395NB)
 - Discussion among the group ensued regarding removing this need from the next update to the POCD as the likelihood of the connections ever being completed is slim. It was decided that this effort would be best led by the Council of Governments through their long range transportation planning efforts.
- 5. Address issues along CT-82 (reduce the number of driveways and traffic conflicts, provide turning lanes, sidewalks, bike routes, street trees, and bus shelters)
 - Mr. Daniska mentioned that the Connecticut DOT plan for Roundabouts along CT-82 would be an excellent start to achieving this goal, and the City could work with the DOT on other types of Access Management options for areas of the corridor not addressed in current planning efforts.
- 6. In the downtown area, implement strategies to help get people into parking spaces quickly, provide a safe and clean environment for parkers, and provide a walkable and attractive streetscape.
 - Deanna Rhodes and Dan Daniska mentioned that they had attended a webinar recently, along with Jason Vincent, which spoke to the needs of parking demand and management. Mr. Vincent mentioned that he is working on a report regarding downtown parking. Mr. Daniska mentioned that a wayfinding project would be a good step in the effort to manage parking and provide information. A discussion ensued about the uncleanliness of the Market Street parking garage.
- 7. Review parking requirements and their applicability in village core areas, village fringe areas, and other areas.
 - Mr. Daniska discussed that one of the goals of the to be developed Complete Streets Plan would be to inventory parking, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities in these areas to provide a park once and walk option for residents and visitors. Connectivity between nodes via sidewalk and/or bicycle facilities will also be a priority.
- 8. Assess traffic signals and eliminate any signals that do not significantly mitigate congestion.

- Mr. Daniska noted that there are a number of intersections in the City that are currently signalized that could potentially be converted to modern roundabouts through the proper channels and study: New London Turnpike @ Starr Street, Union/Broadway @ Church/Bath, Boswell Avenue @ North Main Street/Norwich Avenue. Da also noted that a peanut-shaped hybrid round-about may work best at the intersection of Main Street @ Broadway. The committee suggested that the replacement of traffic lights with round-abouts would save the City in the long run through cost savings for their necessary maintenance and operation.

C. Enhance Provisions for Pedestrians and Bicycles

1. Increase opportunities for walking and bicycling and promote these as viable transportation choices.
 - Mr. Daniska noted that many of the issues and projects already discussed have been positive steps in trying to achieve this goal, and the future planning efforts that are planned have this goal as their desired result.
2. Identify priority areas for sidewalks and other pedestrian pathways.
 - Mr. Daniska noted that the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works were in the process of submitting an application to the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association for a summer intern scholarship that would provide funding to undertake a field survey via GIS of all sidewalks and curb ramps in the City in order to develop an Asset Management system and provide a baseline for future planning efforts.
3. Consider whether the City should participate in sidewalk repairs and replacement.
 - Discussion ensued as to whether this would be a good idea or not. Mr. Daniska stated that if the City was successful in securing a summer intern, the data collected could potentially provide guidance on future decision-making.
4. Identify priority areas for bicycle routes (on-road and off-road).
 - Mr. Daniska re-capped that one of the goals of the to be developed Complete Streets Plan would be to inventory parking, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities in these areas to provide a park once and walk option for residents and visitors. Connectivity between nodes via sidewalk and/or bicycle facilities will also be a priority.
 - Apollo Cycles on Franklin Street has been working with Jason Vincent and Dan Daniska to determine best routes to Mohegan park for cyclists. A discussion then ensued about allowing mountain biking on existing paths in the woods at Mohegan Park and meeting with the Mohegan Park Committee about the idea.
5. Seek to be designated a “Bicycle Friendly Community.”
 - Mr. Daniska noted that quite of bit of work needed to be done to even apply for this designation, but many of the efforts discussed during the course of the meeting would be beneficial when an application was made.

D. Enhance Transit Services

1. Seek to maintain and expand SEAT transit service.

- Discussion ensued as to how technology could be leveraged to support and expand SEAT, including digital message boards with ETA on the next bus, as well as online tracking and information sharing.
- 2. Continue to support public bus service that benefits local businesses, workers, and residents (routes, frequency, headway, signs, stops, maps, on-line information, Wi-Fi technologies, GPS location).
 - See previous notation.
- 3. Continue to support para-transit service (such as dial-a-ride) for people who need it.
 - See previous notation.
- 4. Explore the opportunity to provide water transportation options.
 - Discussion ensued and it was determined that the Harbor Commission would take the lead on any future efforts to develop water transportation options.
- 5. Continue to support rail improvements, both passenger and freight.
 - Tucker Braddock recommended that we continue to play a supporting role in this strategy.
- Next Steps and Accountability for Section - “Address Transportation/Mobility Needs”

Deanna Rhodes and Dan Daniska stated that staff will follow up with the various involved stakeholders regarding the discussion tonight.

2. Round Table - Reports from Committee Members and Guests \

- Items accomplished since last meeting

Regan Miner reported for the Norwich Historical Society. She stated that steps are being taken to finalize the Walk Norwich Freedom Trail and Millionaires Triangle projects. She noted that that the projects were funded through grants from the Preservation Connecticut (aka Preservation Trust) and Sachem Funds. She identified locations for the interpretative signage that is being installed as part of the project.

Doug Lee provided an update about passive recreation conversation with NPU related to their reservoir properties. He stated that the discussions were very broad at this time and included Bog Meadows, Fairview and Occum, but they were going to focus first on Fairview access. They plan a site walk in the beginning of May to look at parking location at two municipally owned properties located on Canterbury Tpke. Once installed, it would be a 3 mile loop around the reservoir. Doug Lee stated that Mark Decker with NPU will be following up with the State Department of Public Health about recommendations to protect the water source. This may include restrictions on dog walking and types of passive recreation which would be permissible. They are also investigating pursuing the waiver of municipal liability for the property’s potential recreational use.

Ticker Braddock spoke on behalf of the Harbor Commission. He stated that the State of CT Port Authority’s vote on the grant application for replacement of the docks at Howard T. Brown Park is supposed to be held on March 18th. They are hopeful that it is awarded and the project can move forward expediently.

- Items behind on implementing – No discussion on this topic
- Items needing assistance from others to accomplish – No discussion on this topic

F: OTHER ITEMS: Ms. Rhodes reminded the Committee that the date of the next meeting is May 13th and that the next Chapter is entitled “Leverage Assets”. Section entitled “Capitalize on Historic Assets” - Pages 22 of Implementation Element & Pages 54 of Strategic Element will be covered.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Jason Vincent to adjourn at 7:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by Les King. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Deanna L. Rhodes', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

*Deanna L. Rhodes, AICP
Director of Planning & Neighborhood Services*