

**CITY OF NORWICH
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020 – 7 PM
NORWICH CITY COURT, NY**

Present: Jack Roque, Harry Graves, Mark Parker, Kathleen Campbell
Liz Caldwell, John J. Antonowicz and Andrew Coates (Alternate)

Absent: Jason Miller and Mark Parker

Staff: Amy Donnison and Lorraine Keckeisen

Guest: Robert Jeffrey, Alderman Ward 6, David Zieno, Alderman Ward 5
Dee DuFour, Director of Finance

Jack Roque, Chairperson Called the meeting to order

City of Norwich Planning Commission held a Zoom meeting December 14 at 7 PM to observe COVID-19 Meeting restrictions.

Guest Jim Martin, Senior Planner and Economic Development Specialist, of the LA Group. Mr. Martin delivered a power point presentation. He highlighted how the LA Group may assist in our 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update initiative. The power point presentation was distributed prior to the presentation. This was done to make it easiest to follow this important Zoom meeting. (City Officials, managers and staff were invited to attend and participate via Zoom.

- We value City's input to upgrade the City's Comprehensive Plan - Q&A time followed.

Discussion Included Review of 2014 Comprehensive plan as follows.

- The LA Group provided a presentation and proposal to expedite the update the 2014 Comprehensive Plan completing it in approximately 6 months. (This is quicker than the planning board could do it because the L. A. Group requires less research time; they prepared the City Brownfield Opportunity Area (B.O.A.) application to encourage tax benefits for potential investors; and they participated in a tour of the City in October). They cited resources to get updates on the area demographics other than the 2020 Census and defined current real estate trends and community issues. Tax base declines with its aging population.
- LA Group next steps were discussed as follows:
 - Send a revised scope of work (options for LA Group's services to the City)
 - Provide samples of other comprehensive plans
 - Provide sample surveys to assess community needs and desires
- Alderman David Zieno brought attention the City Budget constraints. He recommended that the City reserve any un-budgeted expenses until after Governor Cuomo releases the 2021 NYS budget.

- Updating the Comprehensive plan is highly recommended. This is particularly valuable when preparing grant applications.
- The Planning Commission determined that it would take on the effort to review in detail the 2014 Comprehensive plan. Determine what applies, what was done and what barriers were experienced; and identify new initiatives for the 2020 update. This will be an ongoing work in progress as we take a needs assessment and develop a report and identify some goals. First phase is to re-write the Vision and Mission statements. Updates will include 2020 revised goals and gain more stakeholder participation going forward. This information will be reported to the Joint Planning Commission at a future meeting. The Planning Commission will build relationships with community to take a needs assessment. This includes engaging with community, its shareholders, and stakeholders as all should be involved and make efforts to achieve the best possible outcome for the City of Norwich.

Old Business:

- **Signage:** Planning Commission decided to revisit the signage update initiative in February or March.
 - o City will consult with Chris Eastman, Department of State (DOS) to ascertain being in NYS legal compliance and consider new language that involves political sign ordinances.
- **Sidewalks:** Discussions are ongoing. Nothing happening due to COVID-19 resource demands.
- Alderman Jeffrey continues to be the liaison to the Common Council exchanging updates and information about the Planning Commission 2014 Comprehensive Plan. He will facilitate a meeting whereby the Planning Commission will give its report. The intent is to report on the status of the 2014 plan outcomes and the 2020 plan needs assessment.

J. Roque gave a brief Summary –

- November 2020 meeting minutes will be formally reviewed by the Planning Commission in At the January Planning meeting.
- Lorraine and Andrew will test Zoom features to share screens and white board feature for use to finalize the vision and mission statements for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan update efforts.
- All agreed to schedule another Zoom meeting – HOLD the dates:

January 11, 2021 to avoid conflict with Martin Luther King's Birthday, on the 3rd Monday of January
 February 8, 2021 to avoid conflict with President's Day, on the 3rd Monday of February

9:15 PM – J. Roque asks to adjourn. Liz Caldwell motions to adjourn, H. Graves seconds, Ayes all.