

City of Norwich
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Norwich City Court

June 17, 2013
7:00 PM

Present: R. Mirabito, D. DeForest, L. Bunce, K. Campbell, M. Stewart, H. Graves

Absent: J. Miller, S. Prentice,

Staff: T. Dreyer, J. Lawrence, A. Donnison

I. Call to Order:

Chairman R. Mirabito called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. On a motion by D. DeForest, the minutes of the May 20, 2013 meeting seconded by H. Graves were approved.

II. Comprehensive Plan Update:

Todd Dreyer stated that tonight's section for review is a completion of the Housing section, which was reviewed nearly a year ago but at that time all the census data for 2010 was still not available. Also added were achievement updates regarding city housing projects. T. Dreyer stated that through a Restore NY Grant the city was able to demolish 3 dilapidated houses and then went out to bid to have new single family homes constructed on those lots. All 3 have been sold and occupied for sometime now. The city also obtained a Home Program Grant for multi family homes and rehabilitated approximately 20 rental units throughout the city. Through another round of Restore NY grants the city also rehabbed the former Casey Jones building on east Main Street which has commercial use on the first floor and 2 rental units on the second floor that are each 1 bedroom. The latest project is on 49 Front Street which is another property that the city obtained and was in very poor condition as a result of a fire several years ago and was then left abandoned. The city demolished this structure and then built another single family home on the lot. The majority of the construction of this project was performed by construction students at BOCES. There will be an open house at 49 Front Street on June 26, 2013 from 3pm to 7pm for anyone interested in seeing it. T. Dreyer had before and after photos of all the above noted projects available. There is also a new first time home buyers program available for properties in the City of Norwich with NBT and OFC. NBT has committed \$1,000,000 to provide first mortgages to qualified first-time homebuyers with 100% financing and no down payment. OFC has a grant program for eligible first-time homebuyers that meet household income of 80% of Chenango County Median for 2012 in the City of Norwich for up to \$20,500. The combined efforts of these two organizations make for an outstanding opportunity for first-time homebuyers to obtain a home in the City of Norwich.

The city began using a Request For Proposal (RFP) method of selling properties obtained through unpaid taxes rather than the sealed bid method which allows the city more flexibility in matching the property to the buyer as the city wishes to see the homes occupied by the owner and not chopped up and used as rentals. J. Lawrence stated that several years ago the city placed a moratorium on all conversions of houses to multi-family dwellings while updates were made to the Zoning Ordinance in regards to on site parking that must be made available to the occupants.

Since the parking requirement change recommended by Planning Commission was adopted by the Common Council there have been several property owners wishing to increase the number of units in an existing apartment house as well as converting single family homes to apartments that have been unable due to the fact that they did not have enough property to provide the required parking on site since on street parking is not permitted to be used as part of the available parking for an apartment house. e Norwich Housing Authority has completed 3 duplex units for senior housing. There are several properties being reviewed for possible use as a homeless shelter. The most recent location being reviewed is the old gymnasium section of the former school on the corner of Maple Street and East Main Street. The Merchants Association and the B.I.D. have expressed concerns regarding this location.

T. Dreyer pointed out that of the properties in the City of Norwich 51.8% are rental dwellings according to the 2010 Census. Also per the 2010 census data Chenango County has 75% owner occupied housing. It is suspected the reason there is such a difference between owner occupied buildings within the city as compared to the rest of the county is because of the proximity of services such as the county and others since the City of Norwich is the County seat.

T. Dreyer stated that the profile section of the comprehensive plan has now been completely reviewed. The next section will be the action plan matrix. Once that is complete it will then be a matter of compiling all the data that has been reviewed and creating the whole document for final review and approval.

III. Zoning Map Review

A. Donnison stated that from time to time the City of Norwich Zoning Ordinance and related map needs to be reviewed and possibly updated. The section that may need to be considered for updating is on the southeast side of the city and involves only 2 parcels, however these 2 parcels are very large as you can see on the attached map. The map is marked with the owners of these 2 parcels. The Norwich City School is exempt from following most of our local ordinances as is the Chenango County Fair Association. These 2 parcels are currently zoned R-1. The parcel immediately to the north, Matthews car dealership, and the parcel immediately to the south, Golden Artist Colors are already zoned B-2. By changing the 2 parcels between Matthews and Golden Artist Colors it would make this area more closely zoned to its current true use. Zone R-1 is designated to be primarily residential with very few other uses allowed by right as is indicated on the attached use table. If this zone change is approved it would make a contiguous B-2 zone along the river on the southeast side of the city as well as on East Main Street across the Matthews Auto which is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. It was generally agreed that this area needs updating and upon member review of the map there were several other parcels connected to the same area that currently are zoned industrial that have no industrial uses on them – they are all single family homes at this time except for one vacant lot. The board requested A. Donnison compile the exact addresses of these additional parcels to be reviewed and discussed at next months meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2013.

IV Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by motion by E. Bunce at 7:50 pm seconded by M. Stewart. Ayes all.