

**City of Norwich
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
One Court Plaza**

**August 20, 2007
7:00pm**

Present: R. Mirabito, K. Zaia, J. Deierlein, B. Pedersen, E. Bunce

Absent: J. Bazarnik, F. Goldby, Jr., H. Reediger, S. Pelosi, A. Testani

Alternates*: * - Alternates that are noted in bold had voting power

Also: A. Donnison, T. Dreyer, E. Morano

I. Call to Order:

Chairman R. Mirabito called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

II. Updated Zoning Map:

Final zoning map amendments that were presented to members at the July 2007 meeting for review and discussion was presented. Chairman Mirabito stated that he took a drive by the areas in question and agreed with the suggested changes from an industrial zone to a R-2. A. Donnison stated that an email was received by S. Pelosi and she had done same thing and also agrees with the suggested changes. Several other members also did drive throughs to check out the character of the neighborhood and all agreed the amendment is needed. A Motion was made by K. Zaia to approve the zoning map amendments which will change the parcels in the area at the east end of Borden Avenue and west of the city owned former railroad bed from Rexford Street to Adams Street. Most of these parcels are residential homes, there is one business called Roots and Wings and one parcel that has an unoccupied garage structure on it. By rezoning these lots to be R-2 they would be an extension of the neighboring lots – which are comparable in lot size and fits in to the R-2 minimum lots size requirement. The setback in an industrial zone is 20 feet where in a R-2 zone it is 5 feet. Current zoning makes it very difficult and often impossible for a homeowner to construct a garage or enlarge their homes and to do so, they simply do not have the lot width or sometimes the depth to construct much of anything and meet the 20 foot setback on side and rear lot lines as required for lots that are an industrial zoned lot. This not only limits improvements but resale values as well. A. Donnison

stated that the current zoning would also allow for an industry such as a bubble gum factory to be operated right next to a single family home in a residential area because of the fact that these residential lots are already zoned industrial, only parking requirements would need to be met. Motion made by k. Zaia to accept the zoning map amendments as discussed and to forward to the Common Council for review, a public hearing and approval. Seconded by J. Deierlein. Ayes all. Carried.

III. Approval of minutes:

J. Deierlein made the motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of July 16, 2007. Seconded by K. Zaia. Ayes all. Carried.

IV. Comprehensive Plan Goals Update:

T. Dreyer distributed copies of goals 1 through 7 listed in the Comprehensive Plan and what the City of Norwich has done since its adoption in 2003 in an attempt to meet these goals to all members at the July 16, 2007 meeting. T. Dreyer noted that the moratorium on residential conversions expired on March 21, 2007 and the registry has been adopted and is in place. This rental registry has already proven its usefulness several times over. S. Pelosi forwarded through email since she is unable to attend this evening's meeting her thoughts on the goals status for the comprehensive plan to date. Discussion on the status of projects the city has undertaken to attempt to meet some of the goals followed. K. Zaia inquired as to what the status is of the county's comprehensive plan. T. Dreyer stated that Donna Jones is overseeing that project and there is no draft document created at this time. Members were overall happy to see the amount of progress made so far since many projects take so long from conception to completion it often doesn't seem like anything is being done until you can see it on paper.

V. Other:

T. Dreyer stated that last fall the city applied for a restore New York grant and was denied. Round two of this grant is coming up again and he expects we will apply again. T. Dreyer stated that he believes the program is a little skewed to larger urban areas since the criteria is very urban oriented. One of the criteria is to show economic distress meaning that 100 households must be receiving assistance. Norwich has 94 households getting assistance. Initial investigation indicates that the enabling legislation doesn't have the same slant that the criteria implies it has. There are 5 houses that will be included on the application; Grove, Fair, Silver, Waite and Front Street. R. Mirabito inquired if the properties must be signed over to the City. T. Dreyer stated yes.

Ed Morano wished to thank the Planning Commission for their support of the rental registration project, it is greatly appreciated and also wished to say 'good job' to T. Dreyer for the Comprehensive Plan summary.

V. Adjournment:

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm on a motion by J. Deierlein, seconded by K. Zaia. Ayes all. Carried.