

COMMISSION ON THE CITY PLAN
Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 7:00 PM
Hybrid Meeting
City Hall Room 319 and Zoom
NORWICH, CT
REGULAR MEETING

Assistant City Planner Daniel Daniska read information pertaining to virtual meetings and clearly stated that the meeting, including video, would be recorded.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Frank Manfredi called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

Present: Chairman Frank Manfredi, Vice Chairman Les King, Swarnjit Singh Bhatia and Kathy Warzecha

Absent: Michael Lahan

Others Present: City Planner Deanna Rhodes, Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska, Mark Block and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commission on the City Plan (CCP) July 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, seconded by Les King, the CCP approved the meeting minutes of July 20, 2021 as presented. Les King abstained due to non-attendance.

COMMUNICATIONS: City Planner Deanna Rhodes reported on a communication from the Town of Preston. Kathy Warzecha spoke to the memo. The town has placed a one-year moratorium on cannabis businesses in order to do more research.

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

City Council Referral July 6, 2021 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$740,000 FOR THE PLANNING, PERMITTING AND ENGINEERING OF INFRASTRUCTURE ACCESS IN THE OCCUM SECTION OF THE CITY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$740,000 BONDS OF THE CITY TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE

Chair Frank Manfredi noted for the record that he is a member of the Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) Board of Directors. He has no financial interest in the passing of the bond. He is confident there is no conflict. Swarnjit Singh Bhatia is also a member of the NDCD Board but has no conflict.

Swarnjit Singh Bhatia made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Council pursuant to Chapter XV, Section 4 of the City Charter. Kathy Warzecha seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the ordinance being consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) relative to economic development. Les King noted that the land is not currently owned by the city. Mark Block noted the bonding is for planning and no construction will be involved. This study will look into the feasibility of a business park at this location, with associated off ramp improvements from Interstate 395. It will include street design. The potential purchase of the properties would still be brought to the City Council for vote. He confirmed that any development would need further approval.

REASON: The ordinance is consistent with the City of Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development relative to economic development initiatives.

The motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. DRAFT - Open Space Fee Language – Subdivision Regulations

Ms. Rhodes requested to table. All members agreed.

4. DRAFT - Building Square Footage to trigger CCP Review Language – Zoning Regulations: City Attorney Reviewing - No Action Required

Ms. Rhodes noted this item is on the agenda for informational purposes only.

EXTENSION REQUESTS: None

BOND REDUCTION / RELEASE REQUESTS:

SDP#1043 – 26&30 Salem Turnpike - Chipotle E&S Bond – Tabled from 7/20/21

Ms. Rhodes confirmed that the work has been completed.

On a motion by Kathy Warzecha, seconded by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, the CCP voted unanimously to approve the release of Chipotle’s \$17,808 SDP#1043 Erosion and Sediment Control Bond.

Reasons: The City Engineer and Zoning Enforcement Officer reviewed the request, visited the site, and recommended the release of the bond.

SP#20-01 - 10 Connecticut Avenue, Nordson

Ms. Rhodes confirmed that the work has been completed. The bond amount is rather large at \$51,000.

On a motion by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, seconded by Kathy Warzecha, the CCP unanimously voted to approve the release of the \$51,000 Erosion and Sediment Control Bond for SP#20-01 for Nordson/Plas-Pak Industries.

Reasons: The City Engineer and Zoning Enforcement Officer reviewed the request, visited the site and recommended the release of the bond.

POCD Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) MEETING UPDATE + REMINDER: October 13, 2021

Ms. Rhodes reminded the CCP members of the October 13, 2021 POCD-PIC meeting. The POCD is a ten-year document which will up for rewrite in 2023. The city started discussion two years ago on a review of the POCD. Staff have been reviewing what was learned over the last two years, including what was compiled during the POCD PIC meetings, and talking about next steps. The city did have a committee that worked on the POCD development the last time it was written. The committee was not the same people as PIC. Brief discussion was held on the composition of such a committee.

STAFF REPORT: Ms. Rhodes reported the following:

City Hall staff have returned to wearing masks.

The Hale Mill bond came in this week. The mylars have not been filed but should be by the end of this week. Her office has hired an architect to review these plans.

Her department has been working with residents on permits for a lot of small homeowner projects.

The Planning Department continues to be understaffed which is exacerbated by summer vacations. She has a skeleton crew.

Ms. Rhodes also noted that her office has been involved in making suggestions for the uses of the federal ARPA funds. Projects under consideration include the completion of the Uncas Leap Park which will be a tourism destination. Also, the addition of an assistant blight enforcement officer would put Norwich on par with other municipalities its size in the state.

She updated the CCP on the draft ordinance for short term rentals. Currently, there is a staffing issue as to who will enforce the ordinance. There is potential that this can be outsourced but it is debatable as to whether this can be done in Connecticut.

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, seconded by Kathy Warzecha, the CCP unanimously adjourned at 7:36 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson,
Recording Secretary*