

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 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, Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, Norwich Community Development Corp: Jason Vincent, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU): General Manager Chris LaRose, Inland Wetlands Commission: Rick Morell and Doug Lee, Harbor Management Commission: Tucker Braddock

Others Present: Mayor Peter Nystrom, Director of Public Works Pat McLaughlin, City Planner Deanna Rhodes and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

On a motion by Les King, seconded by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, the commission approved the minutes of the Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development: Plan Implementation Committee (POCD PIC) meeting of September 11, 2019.

**D. OLD BUSINESS:** None presented.

**E. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Review & Discuss:**

- Chapter entitled “Promote Livability” - Section entitled “Enhance Open Space/Greenways” - Pages 16 & 17 of Implementation Element & Pages 44 & 45 of Strategic Element Subsection – “Maintain Adequate Community Facilities”
  - Subsection – “Maintain Existing Open Spaces”
    - A1: Deanna Rhodes introduced the topic and reviewed the Open Space Plan map. Pat McLaughlin reported that DPW is re-doing the bathrooms in Mohegan Park soon. They lowered the water level of the pond this winter to combat milfoil since the same process seemed to have been successful last year. DPW also did an aquacide application, with limited success, around the fishing areas. Lines were getting tangled in the weed.

Frank Manfredi spoke of the Ellis Walter Ruley Park. The new 3+ acre park has a paved drive and several pathways. The Ruley homestead foundation was preserved. Pavers were added, along with three benches. The final report has been submitted to City Council and the Ellis Ruley Park Committee has been dissolved. NPU has a security camera running with a direct feed to the police department. Frank thanked DPW and NPU for their efforts. He also noted that a lot of volunteers deserved appreciation, too.

Ms. Rhodes reported on the progress at the Uncas Leap Heritage Area. The goal for the granite building is to be a ruin so parts of the remaining structure will be deconstructed. Once the elevation of the building is brought down, the view of the falls will be improved. She will continue to look for resources to improve the park. Mr. McLaughlin reported that DPW will pave the parking lot in the spring.

Mr. McLaughlin also updated the POCD PIC on Howard T. Brown Park. DPW will repave the parking lot in the spring due to worn pavement. Also accessibility will be improved. DPW will try to pave in May prior to the carnival. Tucker Braddock asked that DPW please keep the Harbor Management Commission aware of the paving plans.

- A2: Ms. Rhodes noted that the City Council is the leader on this item but they have many partners. Rick Morell referred to B. 3. He suggested the formation of a subcommittee including the City Planner, DPW, NPU and Inland Wetlands, to discuss and then create a plan of implementation to be presented at the June meeting. Chris LaRose noted that the two emergency reservoirs can get permitted with DPH for passive recreation and sealed batteries boating. Bog Meadow is leased to Norwich fish and game so there is some availability on the rear of that property. Mr. LaRose will look into the terms of the lease. Ms. Rhodes said this could be a sub-committee of Inland Wetlands. The subcommittee could cover Fairview and Taftville 1, Reservoirs 2 & 3 with the intention of planning for a linear park. Mayor Peter Nystrom recommended talking with the Chief of the Taftville Volunteer Fire Department for access routes to these areas.

Ms. Rhodes reviewed plans for the 8<sup>th</sup> Street property. The city had applied for a state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) grant for a trail system. The planned half mile loop trail would have included views of the old dam on the Shetucket River. The city did not get the DEEP grant so she would like to revisit it with NPU to see if they could do the work. It would add value to the Greeneville neighborhood. Mr. LaRose noted there is a portage around the old dam that is maintained by NPU. He mentioned that the trail work would be a great Scout project.

Ms. Rhodes noted that city has received land adjacent to Mohegan Park. She noted that these plots are not coded on the city maps as open space. She inquired if the City Council would need to take action to change the coding to open space. Mayor Nystrom suggested that Ms. Rhodes discuss this with City Manager John Salomone. He noted there are similar city parcels on Lucas Park Road in Thamesville. Ms. Rhodes noted other city-owned parcels on the paper streets of planned developments that have no access because the streets were never built.

- Subsection – “Seek to Create an Open Space System”
  - B1: Jason Vincent reported on the greenway concepts. The Yantic and Shetucket Rivers are state designated greenways. The regional mobility plan to connect Colchester to Norwich is part of that vision. Also connecting Norwich with the

tri-town trail (Preston, Ledyard and Groton from the reservoirs to Bluff Point) is envisioned. This access could occur through Palmer Street Extension. The Heritage Trail by Walk Norwich is being developed to connect the other historical walking trails in the city. This trail does not have a specific story but it will connect all of the others that do. Mr. Vincent also reported that the Shetucket River is a National Recreation Trail. The water trail map has the same logo as the Last Green Valley water trails. Ms. Rhodes noted the kayak launches throughout the city in Occum Park and Howard T. Brown. Mr. Vincent also spoke of a concept of a bike trail from downtown (from the local bike shop) to Mohegan Park.

Discussion ensued on the inclusion of more specific projects in the next POCD to prioritize preferred amenities and locations for routes. Mr. LaRose gave examples of cities and towns that have successfully used mountain biking trails and breweries to attract tourists. These smaller cities have become travel destinations.

- B2: Ms. Rhodes spoke to promoting the value of open space and looking at ways create more open space. Also, the city can re-evaluate the amount charged per lot for the open space fee.
  - B3: Ms. Rhodes noted that the Inland Wetlands subcommittee will address this issue. It was decided to include Mr. Vincent from NCDC, as well. Mr. LaRose noted he had a designee in mind to serve on the subcommittee.
  - B4: Ms. Rhodes reported that she requests \$50,000 each year on the department budget for this purpose but it gets cut every year. Discussion ensued on having a line item funded with \$1 for open space, enabling funding the line item with underspent funds from other projects. Mr. LaRose suggested NCDC produce a video on passive recreation in the city. Mr. Vincent said it could be cued up.
  - B5: Ms. Rhodes is researching funding for the city's parks. She faces challenges in obtaining funding for other open space because the plan does not prioritize properties. Prioritization needs to be done in order to ask for grant funding for obtaining these properties. Mr. Vincent suggested this group could recommend to CCP to prioritize according to the green map.
  - B6: Ms. Rhodes noted that not all pieces of land are equal. Some do make sense and the city does evaluate when this occurs.
- Next Steps and Accountability for Section - "Enhance Open Space / Greenways"

## **2. Round Table - Reports from Committee Members and Guests**

Mr. Vincent announced that Siobhan McGirl, a reporter for NBC30, is moving to Norwich and will have office space at Foundry 66.

Mr. LaRose said that Chris Riley of NPU will work with Harbor Management Commission to promote the new Osprey nest that was placed on the Thames River.

Mr. LaRose also reported that CT-NPR is doing a news story on NPU. They came and took video of the fish lift and other areas of the city. The story is about a utility's partnership with a municipality and the benefits of municipally-owned utility. The NPR team will come again in the spring.

Mr. Bhatia showed an example of signage with positive messaging created by a local non-profit. The non-profit will donate signs to be placed throughout the city.

Mr. Braddock recommended adding public restrooms to the downtown area, perhaps at Howard T. Brown Park. Mr. Vincent added that Mystic pays \$18,000/year for maintenance on each public restroom.

Mr. LaRose reported that NPU will have wheelchair charging downtown. The station would have a solar panel.

#### **F: OTHER ITEMS**

- 1. Meeting Reminder for January 8, 2020: Prepare to Review & Discuss Chapter Entitled "Promote Livability" – Section entitled "Address Transportation / Mobility Needs" Pages 18 – 21 of Implementation Element & Pages 46 - 51 of Strategic Element**

Ms. Rhodes reminded the members that the next meeting will be held in March. She will send related documents for review prior to the meeting.

#### **G. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Rick Morell, seconded by Tucker Braddock, the POCD PIC meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Melinda Wilson  
Recording Secretary*