

City of Newport Planning Commission Meeting
May 17, 2022

Members Present: Chair John Monette, Denis Chenette, Kevin Mead, Carole O'Connell,

Regrets: Amanda (Mandy) Chaput

Guests: Alison Low, Laura Dolgin

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chair Monette called the meeting to order at 6:06
2. **Approval of the Minutes:** Denis Chenette moved to accept the minutes of the May 3, 2022, with Carole O'Connell seconding. The minutes passed.
3. **Public Comment:** No public Comment
4. **Bylaw Modernization Grant:** The kick off meeting is confirmed for May 31, 2022 at the Gateway beginning at 6:00 pm., and will be catered with light refreshments. The meeting will be called as a Planning Commission Special Meeting. Not only will the meeting be formally warned, but also distributed to area developers, real estate agents, housing non profits, the city council, and landlords with a request for them to distribute as well so that we can reach as large an audience as possible.
5. **City Plan Development:** Received comments from a resident and the Commission views this as an indication that the drafts are being reviewed by the public, which is great. Chair Monette will acknowledge the comments directly.

Alison Low and NVDA generated layered maps and the commission reviewed the basemap first. Other than Bluffside Farm and various small parcels owned by the Department of Fish and Game (Agency of Natural Resources) the maps demonstrate there is not a lot of conserved land within the city limits. Would be wise to add this to the basemap to show wildlife connectivity corridors and as a layer to show the lands are held by a public entity and not available for development even though they may not be conserved to the same level as the wildlife management area (WMA). We also need some clarity around a sliver of land owned by the State of Vermont that is adjacent to the South Bay Wildlife Management Area. It's not clear that this land should be part of the WMA.

We will add sidewalk data to the maps as well. Tracy was not able to confirm this through LIDAR because tree cover got in the way, so it will be reviewed by Tom Bernier.

The commission reviewed map no. B5 NRC Map 42-52 for wetlands and wildlife constraints. There is a river corridor on the Black River & Clyde River, which is defined as a minimum area to accommodate the eventual movement of the stream channel, plus 50 feet of vegetation buffer to ensure stability over time. The Black River runs through the South Bay WMA, but the Clyde River, in theory may be open for some development, because the mapped river corridors do not necessarily overlap with the mapped floodplains on the Flood Insurance Rate Map, which is used to administer the City's flood hazard regulations. From a flood resilience perspective, lands subject to fluvial erosion should not be open to new development. This merits more discussion when the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is being updated.

There is inundation flooding that occurs around these areas, which is indicated by getting feet wet. It is also an area where erosion can occur. These areas, plus the flood insurance data, can be reviewed as part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan update which is now just getting underway. The update will ensure compliance with new flood regulations and new anticipated risks due in part to climate change. Things are changing, i.e., less snow, dryer springs, changing water tables, hotter weather, wildfires. The Hazard Mitigation Plan will consider climate migration impact, and anticipate things that haven't happened but could happen. For example, mortgage companies are now anticipating termites, and ANR is seeing deforestation due to incoming insects; the installation of indoor air conditioners that help with breathing during wildfires and hotter summers. Newport is a desirable place to live due to the climate and is generally viewed as relatively risk free, so more people will want to move here, as opposed seeing a proliferation of risk that we

haven't had before. This could be seen as a real estate boon, but the stresses on local systems ought to be planned. Also would be wise to consider the need to find the balance between locals or migration.

The stewardship section may want to address climate change. Things like tornadoes, fire, floods are systemic risks. If we are focusing on climate migration, we need to think about climate resilience for those who are already here. How will the extra pressure of a potential population surge change things, i.e., water consumption. Climate change can be the backdrop for the chapter on Stewardship. Our hazard mitigation plan can go into more detail than this plan.

The rest of the meeting was spent going through edits, and Alison Low will write a new intro for climate change. The latest version on Stewardship is based on discussions with Ben Copans and Sascha Pealer. Discussion ensued about the wetland on Landing St.

The plan may want to consider the ISO insurance rating as well.

Regarding the Community Section of the plan, Alison Low has also done work on food access that is relevant to the plan. The Food Bank supplies a lot of food to the local food shelves. During the pandemic, the North Country Hospital brought 'Veggie Van Go' services which is where a person can get a box of local produce and there is no income qualification requirement. Participation went way up during the pandemic with over 750 households participating. They feel that food insecurity is an untracked and unmet need, particularly for those that do not have qualifying guidelines. Alison Low has another interview with Green Mountain Farm to School. Rural Community Transport volunteer drivers were taking their food donations from NEKCA and delivering it to people in need. That service might remain in place.

Next steps: Chair Monette will respond to the resident

The paper maps will be left for the city to prepare the sidewalk data

Alison Low will double check some map data with NVDA

More edits on the Community and Stewardship section of the draft plan, and

Will include homelessness in broad terms

6. **Old Business:** Upcoming meetings: the Bylaw Modernization Kick Off meeting is May 31 at 6:00 at the Gateway scheduled as a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, and the Remote Community Summit is scheduled for June 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

7. **New Business:** nothing

8. **Next Agenda:** the next meeting agenda will be the same as tonight.

9.: **Next meeting:** the next regular Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

10: Adjourn: Motion to Adjourn made by Kevin Mead with a second by Denis Chenette, The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:39.

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Dolgin

Unofficial Until Approved

Approved this 14 day of June, 2022



Chair, City of Newport Planning Commission