

DRAFT

City of Newport
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2022

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

Members Absent: all present

Others Present: Zoning Administrator Frank Cheney, Reporter Chris Roy, City Manager Laura Dolgin, Patrick Shattuck, Executive Director Rural Edge, Becky Masure, Real Estate Director Rural Edge, Brandy Saxton Place Sense Consulting(remote), and Reporter Trisha Ingalls(remote).

Chair John Monette called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. The Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on August 16, 2022, Carole O'Connell made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Denis Chenette, the motion was approved unanimously.
2. Chair Monette opened tonight's meeting with an introduction of Brandy Saxton representing Place Sense Consulting, additionally the audience was provided with a brief overview of the upcoming Planning and Zoning Bylaw Modernization Project.
3. Brandy Saxton then took the floor to present an extensive bullet point review of her findings and preliminary recommendations derived from her recently completed audit of Newport City's Zoning Bylaws. Analysis included a detailed overview of intent, regulatory findings, alternative zoning practices and recommended policy direction. The analysis was intended to address both current bylaw inadequacies and remove potential barriers to future development that would be consistent with Newport's Municipal Plan. Planning Commission Members discussed at length the audit findings with the consensus being in support of the direction that would be derived from the recommendations contained within the audit memo. It was agreed that there is work to be done before major policy adjustments can be crafted and that Brandy Sense would contact the City Manager's Office to arrange upcoming sessions.
4. Four Founders Circle (Sacred Heart) Neighborhood. Patrick Shattuck, the Executive Director of Rural Edge Development, provided the commission members with details pertaining to the proposed development of the former Sacred Heart Campus on Clermont Terrace as well as the purchase of a multifamily property located on 329 Main Street. The Four Founders Circle Project represents a 40-to-50-million-dollar investment to develop an 8-acre parcel into a diverse neighborhood consisting of a mix of rental units, condominiums, and home ownership options. The project would be completed in phases over the next 8 years. Rural Edge is currently pursuing funding for Phase 1 which would be set to begin early in 2023. Phase 1 includes a redevelopment of the former convent into twenty-six units of mixed-income rental housing

which would bring desperately needed new housing units to the market. Discussion among members and public ensued with questions regarding hazardous chemical mitigation, construction timelines, tax consequence, unit allocation and traffic flows being addressed by the Rural Edge representatives

5. Carole O' Connell made a motion to support the conceptual purpose and intent of the Four Founders Circle Development. Additionally, that it is consistent with the City of Newport Municipal Plan and will potentially serve as a broader solution to the housing needs of Orleans County. The motion was seconded by Kevin Mead and was passed unanimously.
6. In Old Business City Manager Dolgin asked the planning commission members and everyone in attendance to please take the City Hazard Mitigation Survey that is located on the city's website under 'recent news.'
7. New Business – Carole O' Connell brought in a recent Vermont Digger article large investors purchasing significant parts of local housing markets in the State of Vermont and what difficulties that may create for local working families to procure safe, adequate, and affordable housing in a very underbuilt housing market.
8. The next Meeting will be held on September 20, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. The draft agenda will be like tonight's meeting.
9. Denis Chenette moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kevin Mead and the Planning Commission Meeting was officially adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Zoning Administrator Frank Cheney
Unofficial Until Approved

Approved this ___ day of _____, 2022

Chair, Newport City Planning Commission