

**MINUTES OF THE NORWALK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ON 02-11-16**  
(Unabridged)

**Call to order**

The City Council study session which was to discuss the City's Comprehensive Plan and held in conjunction with the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission, was held at the Norwalk Public Safety Building, 1100 Chatham Avenue, on Thursday, February 11, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 P.M. by Chairperson Chad Ross. Those present at roll call were:

Council: Stephanie Riva, Ed Kuhl, and David Lester. Council Members Erika Isley and Jaki Livingston were absent.

Planning and Zoning Commission Members: John Fraser, Chad Ross, Judy McConnell, Donna Grant and Brandon Foldes.

Staff: Marketa Oliver, City Manager; Jim Dougherty, City Attorney; Wade Wagoner, Planning and Economic Development Director; Luke Parris, City Planner; and Brandt Johnson Planning Intern.

Mayor Tom Phillips joined the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

Consultants: Chris Shires and Shannon Gapp of Confluence, Keith Marvin of Marvin Planning Consultants, Bob Olson and Austin Fisher of Olson Consultants.

Guests: Hollie Askey from Warren County Economic Development Corporation and Hank Norem from the Economic Development CIAC committee.

Wagoner introduced the consultants and gave a brief overview of tonight's meeting.

The consultants delivered a power point presentation on the Planning Department outlining the Land Use Plan Update. Wagoner gave an overview of past rezoning's that were met with strong opposition from surrounding property owners (Kruse & Old School.)

Marvin gave a presentation on Comp Planning 101 which is on file in the planning department. The highlights of that presentation included:

- The importance of Comprehensive Planning, Tomorrow Plan, Iowa Smart Planning, and review of Norwalk's 2013 Comprehensive Plan.
- Discussion of Norwalk's population projections and strong economic base.

**Review of the City of Norwalk's 2013 Comprehensive Plan** Marvin and Shires gave a presentation on and took comments from the Commission and Council on the following:

- High Density Residential discussion – the value of density and various housing styles.
- What amenities does the community want to see?
  - Residential growth policies.
  - Controlled growth – avoid expensive infrastructure.
  - Desire to maintain the character of Norwalk.
  - Concern with current typical apartment complexes.
  - Can 50<sup>th</sup> Street be a major entry?
    - Use commercial/high density residential to screen Microsoft.
    - Flex zoning for future development.
- What areas need to be re-worked in the Land Use plan?
  - West Rural Estates (off of 50<sup>th</sup>).
  - Between Norwalk, 50<sup>th</sup>, and Cummings (Sub Area 3).
  - Concern with large areas designated with HDR / MDR.
  - Break down land use categories (refine/focus land use categories).
  - Add more defined land use policies/aesthetic standards for HDR.
  - Concern with water (Storm water management plan needed).
  - Determine locations/options for regional detention/storm water conveyance).
  - Bike/trail planning as part of the comprehensive plan – future subdivision ordinance. Relate to parkland dedication for future developments.
  - Identify neighborhoods to promote a sense of community ownership.
  - Concern with the size/scale of current apartments being proposed – Can we regulate with zoning?
  - Can we create separate land use designations to separate apartments, townhouses, senior housing, etc. – Set a % standard.
- Thoughts on Sub Area 3?
  - Potential to be a future node – Still viable (add open/public space)
  - Add density and retail.
  - History of concern with apartments near existing single family residential.
  - Refine high density residential locations to be more targeted.

**Sub-Area 1 Master Plan Process Update** Shires gave a presentation on Sub Area 1 which is on file in the planning department. Highlights of the presentation and comments received are as follows:

- What should be considered for Sub Area 1?
  - Not a line of box retail along highway 28 – will not keep the character of Norwalk.
  - Not Merle Hay Rd – Size limitations of any boxes.
  - A main street/town center – Center of the community gateway.
  - Pedestrian mall with parking on the outside.
  - Professional office space – with retail / restaurants to support.
  - Schools and parks – with good traffic flow.
  - Have a small town Iowa feel and be walkable.
  - Have smaller mixed-use options.
  - Needs to be economically viable/sustainable – be built in phases.

**Next Steps:**

The next steps will be to hold a public workshop (not a public hearing, those will follow later, but a meeting where the public is invited to give feedback, Planning and Zoning and Council will be invited as well) on March 24, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at the Public Safety building followed by a meeting of the Steering Committee (City Staff, Stephanie Riva, Mayor, Planning and Zoning representative) on the morning of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 P.M.

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Tom Phillips, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marketa Oliver, City Manager