

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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22 May 2007

COPY

Mayor Ben Lathrop
Norwich City Council
City Hall, Union Square
Norwich, CT 06360

Dear Mayor Lathrop and the Norwich City Council:

SUBJECT: Referral of Proposed Amendment to Chapter Seven of the Norwich Zoning Regulations

We are writing to express concern over the City Council's decision to close the public hearing on the above noted proposed zoning regulation amendment, without providing adequate time for the Regional Planning Commission Reference Committee to provide comment.

Section 8-3b of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that notice of such a zoning amendment be provided to the regional planning agency "not later than thirty days before the public hearing to be held" and that the regional planning agency "shall report its findings and recommendations thereon to the zoning commission at or before the hearing, and such report shall be made a part of the record of the hearing". Despite SCCOG staff having two conversations with Norwich planning staff concerning this notice requirement, the referral was not received until April 30th, twenty days before the public hearing and the same day as the regular meeting of the RPC Reference Committee. In addition, having learned that the City Council had scheduled the hearing the same night as the Reference Committee meeting, SCCOG staff suggested to you that the hearing be held open, to allow the Reference Committee comment to be transmitted and considered. The Council's action to open and close the hearing on May 21st forecloses the opportunity for the Reference Committee's comment (attached) to now be considered by the City Council in deliberating how to act on this proposed amendment.

If municipalities fail to adhere to, either inadvertently or by design, this statutorily required referral process, there is no point in the Reference Committee continuing to meet and the concept of regionalism is made that much weaker. We would respectfully request that the Norwich City Council re-advertise and hold a new public hearing on this matter in order to allow adequate referral of this amendment to the Regional Planning Commission Reference Committee. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Keith A. Robbins, Chairman
Council of Governments


Robert Baron, Chairman
Regional Planning Commission

Cc: Robert Zarnetske, City Manager
Peter Davis, Director of Planning and Development
Arthur Sharon, Norwich Representative to the RPC

Attachment

Member Municipalities: Bourne * Colchester * East Lyme * Franklin * Griswold * City of Groton * Town of Groton * Ledyard * Lisbon *
Montville * New London * North Stonington * Norwich * Preston * Salem * Sprague * Stonington *
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