

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Essex Town Hall – Essex, CT

February 12, 2020 4:00 pm

In attendance: Chairman Janet Peckinpaugh, Susan Malan, Peter Decker, and George Sexton.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Peckinpaugh at 4:00 pm.

INTRODUCTION

Visitors: UConn Engineering students – Sean Driscoll, Maykle Hawk, Samantha Lee, Bridget Burke, Nicholas Lownes. Essex resident – Rob Galiette.

Commissioners: No additional comment.

REPORT FROM EDC CONSULTANT/SUSAN MALAN

Colonial Market has closed. The boutique on Novelty Lane has moved out and into a new space. The decorate/designer is leasing 8 Main Street, Essex, and is planning to open in April. They have received their zoning permits. Ivoryton Tavern and Café, which recently changed owners, had an interior refresh. Cait Shea has closed. The former Red Balloon building is being demolished. 11 Main Street in Essex, the new retail shop, “You, Me and the Sea,” has opened. Black Jax Saloon is open for business. Los Charros will begin opening for lunch soon. An indoor gold center was approved and the build-out is in process. 1 – 3 North Main Street has sold. Essex Chocolatier has closed. The new committee, Down River, is still meeting regularly.

Zoning Officer Report

Approved Zoning Permit:

- Application No. 20-2 – 57 Plains Road – New building for The Leatherman retail store with an apartment above.
- Application No. 20-3 – New Sign – J McLaughlin, 3 Main Street, Essex.
- Application No. 20-4 – New use – “You, Me and the Sea” – 11 Main Street, Essex.
- Application No. 20-7 – 23 Saybrook Road – Handicapped ramp, landing, and stairs to enter an indoor gold facility.

Special Exception Application:

- Application No. 19-29 – Matthew Strand, 47 Industrial Park Road, Centerbrook. An application for a Special Exception to locate an indoor recreational facility within a commercial space. APPROVED January 27, 2020.

Site Plan Review Application:

- No applications at this time.

Petitions for Text Amendments:

- Application No. 19-21 – Essex Zoning Commission – Newly reformatted Zoning Regulations with some additions and deletions. Public hearing scheduled for February 2020.

News:

- The brewery has called the Fire Marshal for recommendations and should be opening by early July.

- Black Seal may need at least 9 weeks until reopening.
- A potential artisan ice cream shop has shown interest in 104 Main Street.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS –

- There are proposed stairs to go where the former Red Balloon building was.
- The old Olive Oyls building will be used for cold prepared food carry-out and food preparation for Carlsons Landing.
- Rob voiced his concern with the lack of parking in Essex Village due to private property. He also mentioned to the UConn students that Essex Village has old charm and he did not want to see the town lose that charm with the Tactical Urbanism changes they are designing.

New Business:

- UConn Engineering Students Update:
 - o The goal of this project includes increasing pedestrian mobility, enhancing spaces, increasing pedestrian bike safety and increasing/enhancing parking.
 - o Tactical urbanism, or “Quick Build” is a low cost, scalable, and temporary option to make changes. Public Works will go out and make lines/changes, up to code. Then, people in the community will come in and use paint, plants, etc. to enhance these changes. Groups such as the garden club, the high school, etc. can help make the changes. Using the community would be more efficient. The police enforcement would also need to be involved.
 - o Surveys will go out after the changes are made to ask the community for their feedback. The survey would go out via Facebook, email, etc. Community feedback is important. For the survey, it would be important to have residents put their name and address to prevent misconduct. An interactive sign posted in town would also be an option to explain to residents what the changes are and why they were made.
 - o Design plan:
 - Main Street – Add bump-outs, pedestrian refuge, added sidewalks, planters, etc. Something to think about: making sure the walking area around the circle at the top of Main Street is safe.
 - Down Main Street – Add in front-in, slanted parking on alternating sides of the street. This causes traffic to slow down. Slanted parking is safer, there are fewer doors opening in the street. The circle at the bottom of Main Street would have added sidewalks.
 - Ferry and Pratt Street – Add in slanted parking, sidewalks, and crosswalk to cross the street to the marina side.
 - o Cost Estimates:
 - Small planter: \$10
 - Traffic delineator: \$30
 - Cones: \$15
 - Benches: \$60
 - Chairs: \$15

- Paint: \$10
- There is also the potential to temporarily borrow benches and other supplies from people in town. If some of the supplies, such as paint, are already accessible, then it would not be necessary to spend money on them.
- The timeline would include:
 - Getting volunteers together and telling the community about the changes.
 - Confirming materials and costs associated.
 - Installation and implementation of the plan.
 - Feedback from the community.
- Marketing to tell the community: Tactical Urbanism is new and proven to work.
- One concern was if there would be enough of a turning radius for boats, firetrucks, etc. down the entirety of Main Street, and around the cul-de-sac. The students confirmed that there would be enough of a turning radius.

Upcoming Guests and Meeting Locations

The next meeting will be on March 11, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Essex Town Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Peter Decker to adjourn the meeting at 4:57. George Sexton seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Tucker, Commission Clerk