



## ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 12, 2017

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

### DRAFT MINUTES

#### 1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Alan Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. In attendance was Member John Bairos. Seated for Member Ralph Monaco was Jane Siris, and seated for Member George Sexton was Gary Riggio. Also in attendance were Planner John Guskowski and Essex Land Trust Board Members Chet Arnold and Paul Greenberg.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes: December 8, 2016 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of December 8, 2016 by Jane Siris, **seconded** by John Bairos.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### 3. New Business

##### a. Commission Budget Request, FY 2017-18

John Guskowski presented a brief overview of the proposed budget request, noting the communication from First Selectman Needleman and Finance Director Kelly Sterner concerning the Town's fiscal constraints and the State's reduction in Education Cost Share payments. He stated that the budget request was identical to the current budget, with the exception of a proposed reduction of \$500 in printing costs because the Plan of Conservation & Development had been printed last year. The net result was a decrease in budget by approximately 0.8%.

**Motion to forward the budget request as proposed to the Board of Selectman and Director of Finance** by Gary Riggio, **seconded** by Jane Siris. **Motion carried unanimously.**

##### b. Request for Support – Essex Land Trust Grant

ELT Board Member Chet Arnold presented an overview of the Trust's proposed acquisition of an approximately 18-acre property owned by the Doane family off of Ox Bow Lane. The property is

adjacent to several other ELT properties, and connects, via a right-of-way, to protected land in Deep River. The Trust is seeking to obtain funding from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to support the acquisition and is seeking a letter of support from the Planning Commission. He stated that while the appraisals were still pending, the acquisition costs are anticipated to be in the \$200-300,000 range, with DEEP funding potentially covering 65% of these expenses. The remainder would be covered through a mix of Trust funds, targeted fundraising, potential support from the Gateway Commission and the Town Open Space Fund. Chairman Kerr asked about public access, which would be provided via Ox Bow Lane and the adjacent parcel at James Glen.

**Motion to issue a letter of support for the Essex Land Trust grant application as being strongly consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development** by Jane Siris, **seconded** by John Bairos. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**c. Housing Survey Discussion**

John Guszkowski read an email from First Selectman Needleman indicating support for undertaking a survey of public opinion about expansion of housing options in Essex and requesting that the Planning Commission take the lead in this effort, with final review and approval to remain with the Selectmen. The Commission discussed the issue and the survey template provided by the Partnership for Strong Communities and came to general consensus that gathering public information would be a worthy initiative. Chairman Kerr expressed that the issue of affordable housing was very important, but still struggled with the challenge of knowing how to attack the issue. Jane Siris stated that identifying potential locations would be a good approach, and suggested inviting Janice Atkeson from the Housing Authority to meet with the Commission to discuss their approaches. Chairman Kerr requested that John Guszkowski make a first attempt at drafting a survey, which could be both hard-copy and online (via SurveyMonkey) to present to Planning, as well as inviting Janice Atkeson to an upcoming meeting.

**4. Old Business**

**a. Accessory Apartment Regulations Discussion – Zoning Commission Meeting**

John Guszkowski noted that the Zoning Commission had accepted most of the proposed amendments to the Planning Commission revisions to Section 45, but had some reservations about accepting all changes. Their latest revision retained Section 45E.4 concerning the interior door between units, added a 1,000 square foot cap, and added language about transient occupancy. The Commission discussed the matter, and while there was consensus that the interior door provision served no clear purpose, but the overall regulation had been substantially improved such that the Commission should support the adoption of this final draft.

Chairman Kerr requested that John Guszkowski prepare a memo to the Zoning Commission stating the Planning Commission's opinion on these remaining matters.

**b. PoCD Implementation and Zoning Working Group Participation**

John Guszkowski stated the Working Group had not met in December.

5. **Report of Committees and Officers**

a. **Report from Inland Wetlands Representative**

The Planning Commission has no active representative to the Wetlands Agency.

b. **Report from RiverCOG Representative**

Chairman Kerr reported that RiverCOG was continuing work on the regional Plan of Conservation & Development, but the discussion had focused more on format and layout than on content.

c. **Report from Economic Development Commission Representative**

George Sexton was absent from the meeting and had not submitted a report.

d. **Planner's Report**

John Guszkowski provided updates on the replacement of the Walnut Street bridge, which was on track to begin construction in June. He also noted the passing of Mark Yellin, the owner of several properties in Ivoryton, including the Ivoryton Inn, as well as providing some updates on potential legislation in Hartford concerning affordable housing and community septic systems.

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

Chairman Kerr noted the invoice from CME Associates and the notification about the Partnership for Strong Communities iForum about affordable housing on January 30.

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Jane Siris, seconded by John Bairos. Motion carried unanimously.  
Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guszkowski  
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
1/13 2017 at 3:50 P.M.  
Janine M. Fogiel  
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK