



## ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, July 13, 2017

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Auditorium

### DRAFT MINUTES

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

Chairman Alan Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Members George Sexton, Tom Danyliw, John Bairos, and Ralph Monaco. Also in attendance were Alternate Jane Siris and Planner John Guskowski.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes: June 8, 2017 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of June 8, 2017 by Ralph Monaco, seconded by Tom Danyliw.  
Motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. New Business

##### a. Proposed Expenditure of Open Space Acquisition Funds – Doane Property (Map 06, Lot 007)

John Guskowski presented the letter from the Board of Selectmen requesting expenditure of \$50,000 from the Town's Open Space Acquisition Account, which is managed by the Planning Commission, for participation in the purchase of the 18.4-acre Doane property in the Book Hill Woods area of Town. The acquisition is led by the Essex Land Trust, and is a bargain sale of \$241,500 (of an appraised value of \$371,000). The property will link up with several other open space parcels on both sides of the Essex/Deep River line and create an approximately 50-acre preserve. The Land Trust has submitted a grant application to CT-DEEP for cost-share, and this funding is still pending. He noted that while the Planning Commission did support the grant application, the Commission's approval was initially overlooked by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting process. This request seeks to correct that error. There is currently approximately \$130,000 in the Fund.

Chairman Kerr noted that it would be useful at some point to do a site walk of the property, but that it probably was not critical prior to action on this request. Jane Siris clarified the role of the

Planning Commission and the manner in which funds are deposited into the Open Space Account. There was a general discussion among the Commission about the cluster of open space properties and the Plan of Conservation & Development's conservation priorities.

**Motion to recommend expenditure of a sum not to exceed \$50,000 from the Town of Essex Open Space Acquisition Fund in support of the Essex Land Trust's acquisition of the Doane Property (Map 06 Lot 007) by Tom Danlyiw seconded by Ralph Monaco. Motion carried unanimously.**

**b. State Plan of Conservation & Development 2018-2023: Locational Guide Map Discussion**

John Guszkowski presented an overview of the draft State PoCD and described the process of Plan review and adoption. The OPM, which is preparing the Plan, is taking a somewhat different mapping approach to this update, seeking to focus State resources on a narrower geographic area where infrastructure is or will be concentrated. The Commission had a general discussion on State investment and review Locational Guide Map options as presented by OPM relative to the Town's PoCD. The Commission agreed that LGM Option 2 appeared to do a good job of reflecting the Development Nodes and Focus Areas as identified by the Essex PoCD, but the image quality of the document made it difficult to make a firm judgment. John Guszkowski recommended that the commission members review the maps on the OPM website to get a better appreciation of their level of detail.

**4. Old Business**

**a. Ad-Hoc Committee on Housing Needs**

Chairman Kerr reported that the Ad-Hoc Committee was starting slowly, still assembling resources and membership. He repeated his invitation to Commission members to join the Ad-Hoc, and stated that he would be participating personally. He reported a promising discussion with Janice Atkeson of the Essex Housing Authority, who offered provisional help and also reached out to a representative from LISC who may be able to help. George Sexton stated that EDC would likely be appointing a representative, and also stated that they believed a realtor should be included. Jane Siris suggested contacting Maureen O'Grady. John Guszkowski also noted that Governor Malloy had vetoed the bill that proposed to make a number of tweaks to CGS Section 8-30g regarding Affordable Housing Appeals, and that First Selectman Needleman had requested that he should look into the statutory calculations for moratorium eligibility.

**b. Zoning Revisions Subcommittee – Update and Discussion**

John Guszkowski reported that the Subcommittee met this week to go over editorial details of the current draft, which had been completed. There will be one more editorial meeting of the Subcommittee, and then the draft will go to the Zoning Commission for review this summer, with an anticipated public hearing in the Fall. The Planning Commission will be sent the entire draft as a referral for comment.

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**

Alan Kerr reported that he was unable to attend the latest RiverCOG meeting.

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

George Sexton reported that the EDC and discussed the following updates: the contract on Bennie's Market fell through and the realtor is seeking new offers; The Essex restaurant is having its soft opening, with very positive reviews; the Scotch Plains Tavern (former Oliver's) will be opening in August or September; the Cumberland Farms remodel has received health department approval but is still waiting for final curb-cut approval from CT-DOT; and Olive Oyl's expansion and move is delayed.

d. **Planner's Report**

John Guskowski reported that he met with Patty DeVinney, the co-owner of a vacant property on South Cove, for which the Planning Commission will be asked to consider an open space tax abatement at their October meeting. He also distributed concept plans from the Essex Land Trust for potential enhancements of the Mill Race property and discussed their long-term goals for this land. He reported that there may be a request in the next few months about modification of the terms of the Conservation Easement at Foxboro Point to facilitate pedestrian access to the dock being proposed off of the former Windmill lot. He reported that the Walnut Street Bridge replacement would be underway within the next two weeks.

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

There was one invoice from CME Associates, and the Commission discussed the expenditure under several different line items, particularly the Walnut Street Bridge work.

7. **Adjournment**

Chairman Kerr polled the Commission and noted that a sufficient number of members would be unable to participate in the August meeting, and decided that the August 2017 meeting would be cancelled.

**Motion to adjourn** by Ralph Monaco, **seconded** by George Sexton. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski  
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
08/14/2017 at 10:55 AM  
Dianne M. Ruzick  
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK