



## ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, April 14, 2016

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 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Members Tom Danyliw and George Sexton. Seated for Member John Bairos was Jane Siris, and seated for Member Ralph Monaco was Erin Bogan. Also in attendance were Town Planner John Guszowski and Attorney Terry Lomme.

2. **Approval of Minutes: March 10, 2016**

**Motion to approve minutes of March 10, 2016** by George Sexton, **seconded** by Jane Siris.  
**Motion carried, with Tom Danyliw abstaining.**

3. **New Business**

a. **Zoning Referral: Section 20; Change to Definition of “Rear Lot”**

John Guszowski introduced the referral and explained that the Zoning Commission had attempted to correct confusion in the definition of “Rear Lot” several years ago and have found it unworkable. They are now seeking to return to the original definition. The Commission discussed the two definitions and generally understood what was being sought, but agreed that the proposed language was very confusing. Jane Siris discussed the disconnect between Planning and Zoning and the division of responsibility. Tom Danyliw stated that the proposal provides no discussion or relationship to the goals of the Plan of Conservation & Development, and contains no discussion of purpose or intent. Erin Bogan discussed the potential impact of the change, and the Commission agreed that it would potentially change the Town’s residential densities in some areas where a more rural density should be maintained.

Chairman Kerr concluded that the Planning Commission had reached consensus in its opposition to the proposed amendment, as both the proposed and existing definitions of “Rear Lot” were confusing and provided no clear link nor relationship with the goals of the Plan of Conservation & Development. The Zoning Commission will be encouraged to revisit their intent for this change.

**b. CGS §8-26c Extension Request for Public Improvements at Essex Glen**

Attorney Terry Lomme provided an overview of the proposed Essex Glen project, which involved a three-lot subdivision and a public roadway off of Bokum Road originally serving one 50-unit multifamily structure but now involves 26 detached single-family residences in a Common Interest Community. The roadway was approved in 2007 and is about to hit its statutory deadline for installation. A revision to the Statutes, in consideration of the economic downturn of 2008, provided for a five-year extension for these improvements. He anticipated that construction on the project, including the roadway, would begin this summer. Chairman Kerr asked if there was any reason the Commission should not provide this extension, and the Commission agreed that it was acceptable.

**Motion to approve 5-year extension of installation of public improvements of Essex Glen** by Tom Danyliw, **seconded** by George Sexton. **Motion carried unanimously**

**4. Old Business**

**a. Plan of Conservation & Development Implementation**

John Guskowski presented updates on implementation elements of the PoCD. He distributed information about Accessory Apartments as a tool for promoting more affordable housing. The Commission discussed the statutory requirements of affordable housing and Essex's current status. While accessory apartments are unlikely to be deed-restricted and thus qualify for the State's definition of "Affordable" units, they are still important components of a town-wide housing strategy. The Commission discussed the current Accessory Apartment regulations within Zoning and agreed that the process was restrictive and discouraging of expansion. Erin Bogan suggested reviewing Westbrook's regulations or other communities for alternatives. The Commission agreed by consensus that it would seek to propose a replacement regulation for Accessory Apartments, and John Guskowski will gather examples.

John Guskowski also discussed transportation improvements and the upcoming LOTCIP grant round through RiverCOG. He presented a project concept from the town-wide Transportation Study reconfiguring the Main Street/Dennison Road intersection to become a T-intersection. The Commission discussed this option, and decided, by consensus, that John Guskowski should work with the First Selectman's office to submit this project for grant funding, along with consideration given to pedestrian and bicycle facilities at this intersection.

The Commission also discussed the potential update to the Wastewater Facilities Plan, and John Guskowski reviewed the general scope and stated that the RFP for consultants was still being developed.

**b. UConn Landscape Design Project**

John Guskowski updated the Commission on this project and stated that the UConn students would be presenting their designs on Friday afternoon, April 29 at 2:00 p.m. at the Steam Train. Chairman Kerr requested that John Guskowski share this invitation with the Commission as well as make attendance available via a Town Hall e-news notification.

5. **Report of Committees and Officers**

a. **Report from Inland Wetlands Representative**

The Planning Commission has no active representative to the Wetlands Agency. Chairman Kerr requested a volunteer to serve. Tom Danyliw stated that while the Commission had been well served by Claire Tiernan's participation with Wetlands, there did not seem to be significant value to participation. Jane Siris suggested including Wetlands Commission minutes in the Planning agenda materials.

b. **Report from RiverCOG Representative**

Alan Kerr stated that the RiverCOG meeting was cancelled in consideration of Deep River First Selectman Dick Smith's passing.

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

George Sexton reported that the EDC was concerned about high commercial lease rates, particularly in Essex Village. There will be a business forum/listening session hosted by EDC on May 23. The EDC also discussed the need for a comprehensive revision to the Zoning Regulations.

d. **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Kerr had no further report.

e. **Planner's Report**

John Guskowski reported that there was a successful public information meeting on the Walnut Street Bridge replacement and that the designers had been given authorization to proceed to final design. He also stated that the Land Use Offices at Town Hall were being renovated over the summer, and a temporary office was being established at the rear of the Auditorium. Finally, he reported that the Safe Routes To School sidewalk improvements project was finally out to bid and would be constructed this summer.

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

There were no correspondences or invoices.

7. **Adjournment**

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

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski  
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
04/15 2016 at 3:05 P.M.  
Thomas M. Rogick  
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK