

# ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

February 10, 2011

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

## REGULAR MEETING

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chair Tom Danyliw. Seated were Tom Danyliw, Linda Herman, Alan Kerr, Claire Tiernan for Carla Feroni and Bob Laundry for Ralph Monaco. Also in attendance was John Guskowski, Town Planner.

### 2. Approval of Minutes: January 13, 2011

Motion by Linda Herman and seconded by Claire Tiernan to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Motion carried.

### 3. New Business

None

### 4. Old Business

#### a. Transportation Study – Continued Discussion on Recommendations

Jason Schreiber from Nelson Nygaard and Susan Van Benschoten from Fitzgerald Halladay presented the Draft Action Plan.

An itemized review of recommendations and specific projects were identified and prioritized including the following:

**Centerbrook Enhancement Plan** – public green space, shared street improvements, sidewalks, curbing, crossing islands, marking and signage

**Bokum Center Enhancement Project -**

**Ivoryton Enhancement Project** – shared street, roadway alignment, sidewalks, curbing, crossing islands

**Gateway Enhancement Project** – street closures and new curbs, park and multi-use path, signal removal, landscaping

**Mares Hill Road Enhancement Project** – road widening, drainage, sidewalk, off road trail

**Dennison Road East and West** – roadway modifications, drainage, marking, signage

**Traffic Calming** at West Main St./Grove St., Mares Hill/Walnut Street, Westbrook Rd., and West St., curbing recommendations, roadway modifications, public green space, drainage and speed control

**Pedestrian Enhancement Program** includes connecting sidewalks from Centerbrook to Ivoryton, Exit 3 to Bokum Center, and Essex Village

**Bicycle Infrastructure Program** to connect villages, on-street bike facilities, and long-term lockers at commuter lot

**Safe Routes to School** includes sidewalks, walkways, and signage  
**Local Transit Program** including enhancing trolley service and bus stops  
**Parking Management Program** includes a variety of strategies and management plans for Essex Village, recommendations for Ivoryton, and detailed Zoning recommendation

**Transportation Demand Management Program** including incentivising transit commuting to Hartford, car share program, and coordination with TMA

**Placemaking with Shared Streets** that lets cars through but shares with pedestrians

**Street Design Guidelines** with sign design recommendations

**Branded Wayfinding Program** includes bike riding and pedestrian traffic, the Exit 3 gateway, and changing the nature of Essex Village

Develop **Bokum Corner** as a 4<sup>th</sup> village center with crosswalks and bike lanes, on street parking including Plains Rd. This would make it a mixed-use environment. Discussion was that it looks a little urban in the presentation.

DOT will have a lot of say in the Ivoryton proposal section. Claire Tiernan noted that traffic is heavier since Gather opened. Alan Kerr asked about DOT's opinion on traffic calming. Susan vanBenschoten noted that they look at throughput and that they are coming around, their policies are changing and they listen to communities. It is necessary to go for everything with them, and the trend is going back to living communities.

At the east end of Dennison, the possibilities are a 4 way stop or roundabout.

**Exit 3** - Discussion on that intersection noted that traffic getting onto Rt. 9 creates the heaviest accident intersection in town. A proposal provides channelization, maintaining 1 lane with widening for ramps and peak orientation to movement. It is likely that they will test the intersections using cones.

Programming policy and who should be responsible for different components was discussed.

EDC wants some input into parking recommendations.

The goal is that when Nelson Nygaard goes away, someone is vested in carrying out these programs. Who is the person or organization to be frontrunner on that piece? Tom Danyliw feels it is vital to development and it seems that Planning should have oversight of this plan and its pieces. Responsibility for whole project lies with Planning but not doing the legwork. Various agencies and departments would do the actual work.

Stakeholders will be the collaborators, and John Guskowski will make this happen. His counterparts working together with him is the vision for this being carried out. The whole plan will go into the Plan of Conservation and Development. Tom Danyliw sees this as a bedrock. Visibility will be created, and a Public Meeting will be held to add this. The Plan was revised in 2005, so it is not necessary to change the whole thing.

Jason Schreiber will develop necessary language.

Success will be based on funding, and Jason Schreiber expressed that there are many more funding opportunities.

Regional planning agencies are a great source of funding, and private sources should be explored.

Prioritization of action plan items as immediate, short and long term (5 years), lowest cost items can be considered first, and a discussion involving public opinion will determine priority items and implementation.

After the Public Meeting and results are compiled with a recommendation and action plan, Jason Schreiber's work is done.

**b. Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Grant – Update**

A preliminary draft of the toolbox, and draft recommendations will be available at the end of next month, presented to Planning in March as well as the survey.

**c. Safe Routes to School**

The first round of funding has been approved, and they will have another public outreach session. The hope is to begin building in August.

**d. Boy Scout Building at Viney Brook Park – Update**

It is still be presented and making rounds to various groups.

It is allowed according to regulations. They could find a building in the commercial district. Tom Danyliw will write to Attorney Lomme and explain that it is allowed according to regulations. The Plan of Conservation and talks about mixed use so they could go anywhere, and it is encouraged in any of the zones. This is not consistent with what they said. Linda Herman feels the park is for active and passive use, and it seems that this is private money for public use. It benefits a combination of public and private. If the Essex Foundation partnered with the town to build then it is public property. This is not for planning to approve or disapprove.

**e. Toby Hill Update**

This is on the agenda for the March Board of Selectmen's meeting, and a public hearing is scheduled for March 2.

**f. Subdivision Fees Ordinance**

Selectmen endorsed the ordinance and it will be scheduled for a town meeting.

**5. Report of Committees and Officers**

**a. Inland Wetlands - no report**

**b. CRERPA –**

Alan Kerr reported the discussion involved the impossibility of regionalization, and discussion of a possible merger.

New person at CRERPA talked about Affordable Housing and may be a resource.

**c. Economic Development Commission –**

Boat launch project was discussed. It was over budget and there were issues with how it was done.

Regarding the old Boy Scout building (Bumpy Warner), maybe the town can acquire that space for parking.

There is word that there will be a reduction and Essex will have only one Post Office located in the Industrial Park.

**d. Architectural Design Review – no report.**

There are 2 new members on that subcommittee.

**e. Ivoryton Subcommittee - no report**

Planners Report - John Guszkowski reported that the new zone change is going to Public Hearing. Marian Staye and Al Wolfgram will be coming next month.

Old Saybrook is continuing the Public Hearing on the Preserve issue.

That referral is coming.

The Budget workshop for the Board Of Selectmen is on February 16 at 5:00.

Planning budget will be discussed.

Possible workshops were reviewed and should be recommended to John Guszkowski by February 23.

**Motion** by Linda Herman and **seconded** by Claire Tiernan to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.  
**Motion** carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Meinsen  
Recording Secretary