

ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

June 9, 2011

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members:

Chair Tom Danyliw called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Seated were Chair Tom Danyliw, Vice Chair Linda Herman, Carla Feroni, Alan Kerr, alternate Claire Tiernan was seated for Ralph Monaco. Also in attendance were alternate Neil Nichols and Planner John Guszowski. Ralph Monaco arrived at 7:45.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 12, 2011

Motion was made by Linda Herman to approve the minutes of the May 12 meeting. **Seconded** by Claire Tiernan.

Alan Kerr corrected the minutes to clarify the CRERPA report that Jean Davies discussed regionalization but additionally also discussed referrals which almost never have impact on surrounding towns.

Minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

3. New Business

a. Receipt of Application – Vumbaco Subdivision, Toby Hill Road

There was no application.

4. Old Business

a. Safe Routes to School

DOT is reviewing the preliminary plans.

b. EPA Sustainable Communities Project – Update

Christopher Duerksen from Clarion Associates led the sessions last week. Participation was excellent with representation from Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands, Economic Development Commission, and Citizens for Clean Energy. The overriding theme was that the Planning Commission has put together very aggressive plans but is falling off in terms of implementation. Some suggestions were made on things that could be changed, but specific recommendations will be made in a report. It was noted that the WPCA and Board of

Selectmen should be on the same page and accept responsibility and specifically to be more aggressive about wastewater treatment especially in Essex village. Tom Danyliw got the message that there is disconnect between Planning and Zoning. It was questioned whether recommendations are compatible with the Plan of Conservation and Development. Claire Tiernan also heard an emphasis on zoning regulations supporting what we want to do in town and the need to have greatly enhanced communication. Implementation is weak. There was a strong case made for simple design standards, as well as accessory housing and units, with a sewer avoidance policy that is the most economical to increase housing stock and affordability.

There was discussion on the effectiveness of combined Planning and Zoning Commissions. He pointed out repeatedly that zoning regulations are not supportive of the Plan of Conservation and Development. If there is an amendment to the regulations then there should be a statement as to whether it is in compliance with the Plan of Conservation and Development. It was noted that there are no codes to address solar or recycling. Claire Tiernan got good feedback on the presenter. John Guskowski felt the Chris Duerksen got enough information from those in attendance to make judgments and specific recommendations about the town.

c. Historic Preservation Survey & Planning Grant -

The final report is now available in various locations for public information. The next phase will be determined.

d. Transportation Study

It is in its final form, John Guskowski will provide copies to the Commission for reviewed and it will be discussed at the next meeting.

e. Subdivision Fees Ordinance -

Attorney Royston was asked to review the ordinance by the Board of Selectmen and the planning Commission received his comments. His ultimate recommendation is that it is a legal procedural issue to modify or amend the existing ordinance. There has still been no response from Zoning, Inland Wetlands, ZBA and the Board of Selectmen.

Ralph Monaco sees it as a legal procedural issue. Discussion ensued on amending the original ordinance or requesting adoption of the proposed ordinance.

John Guskowski feels that it is a more fundamental change than recognized by Attorney Royston.

Linda Herman feels each commission should have their own ordinance for fees, as this proposal only applies to Planning fees.

Ralph Monaco recommended submitting the proposed ordinance to the Board of Selectmen and request that they act on it.

A memo will be sent to the Board of Selectmen stating that the Planning Commission has reviewed Attorney Royston's comments and opinions but it is opinion of the Planning Commission to urgently recommend passage of the proposed ordinance, and to schedule a Town Meeting for adoption.

The Planning Commission wants an answer and requests it be on the Board of Selectmen's agenda for their next meeting.

Motion was made by Ralph Monaco and **seconded** by Linda Herman that it is the strong opinion of the Planning Commission to pursue the Subdivision Fees Ordinance as originally submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

f. Affordable Housing Update

There is no update. Recommendations from Chris Duerksen as to what approach to take will be considered upon receipt of his report. The original Affordable Housing Memo was sent to Zoning in 2009. A year ago, a follow up memo was sent noting concern about their pace in addressing this. Zoning Commission prioritized issues and this is not a high priority. , The pace is frustrating and Tom Danyliw will call Al Wolfgram to urge that this be addressed. Ralph Monaco offered to go to a Zoning Commission meeting to speak about Affordable Housing. Alan Kerr is looking forward to revisiting this after receipt of Chris Duerksen's report.

5. Reports of Committees and Officers

a. Report from inland Wetlands Rep.

The meeting is next week.

b. Report form CRERPA Rep.

Alan Kerr was unable to attend the meeting.

c. Report from Economic Development Commission Rep .

Bob Laundry was absent. Linda Herman noted that there are two more pending vacancies on Main Street due to rent prices.

d. Report from Architectural Design Review Subcommittee

The focus group phase is underway. Centerbrook and Ivoryton groups exceeded expectation in turnout. The Essex meeting will be rescheduled to next week. Neil Nichols reported early feedback is that participants were shocked there is no Architectural Review Committee in town, and there is strong support for commercial review and less support for residential. There was better than 10% response to letters. Jean Davies and Linda Krause from CRERPA are the moderators.

e. Chairman's Report

There was no report.

f. Planner's Report

It is the end of the fiscal year, and the budget approved the Planner's position budget at \$40,000 reduced from \$48,000.

John Guskowski is disappointed. He is working to not have reduction in service, but asked for feedback as to how to continue. Linda Herman suggested cutting some projects that are non- Planning. This position benefits other commissions and Linda Herman wants to demonstrate that this position has value to the whole town. John Guskowski was pulled into Safe Routes by the Board of Selectmen and Phil Miller and additionally the FEMA application for Tiley Pratt. That was more with First Selectman Phil Miller but John has worked "closely" with Selectman's office. Commission needs to authorize Chair Tom Danyliw to accept and sign another contract. Claire Tiernan sees the need to have Planner services above and beyond the Planning Commission as suggested in the sessions with Chris Duerksen. John Guskowski was directed to make an argument for being full time through a report to Planning including work for other Commissions, granting opportunities, and a list of what he is not able to do.

Motion by Claire Tiernan to authorize Chair Tom Danyliw, on behalf of the Planning Commission, to sign a contract for John Guskowski to continue service on behalf on CME. **Seconded** by Ralph Monaco. **Motion carried.**

There was a question about the Town engineering list of those in the region willing to work on a non-compete basis. Alan Kerr will check on it at the next CRERPA meeting. Carla Feroni will review the list when it is received.

6. Correspondence and Invoices

A Budget statement was available

7. Adjournment

Motion was made by Linda Herman and **seconded** by Claire Tiernan to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Meinsen
Recording Secretary