

**Town of Essex  
Architectural Design Review Subcommittee**

**Tuesday, July 12, 2011**

**Essex Town Hall - Meeting Room B  
7:30 PM**

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chair Neil Nichols. Present were: Tom Danyliw, Tom Rutherford, Jane Piro, Cotty Barlow, and Hope Proctor. Absent: Janice Atkeson, John Beveridge, and Bill Jacaruso.

**Focus group plan moderator interview update.**

A. Discussion of top line feedback

The Focus groups were at or above expectation, over attended and over subscribed. Qualitative information was generated and beyond expectation. All villages were represented. Moderating was extremely well done by CRERPA.

Discussion:

The information gathered was discussed as to how to interpret and share going forward. It is too complicated an issue to put on the website, and most people will not look there.

Suggestions were:

- To pick the things people had the most interest in and focus the information on that.

- Put information in Essex Events

- Take the broad spectrum to the public meeting.

Hope Proctor feels that we can't get into too much detail because there is too much information under each option.

The Planning Commission needs to take on some of the process now after getting some register of public interest.

One particular interest of the focus groups was in commercial guidelines. Should some of this go to zoning? Can we put moratorium on development?

People were also interested in design guidelines, but there is no clear support because no one understands what they are.

Specific design guidelines weren't mentioned so that's where things get sticky. The EPA presenter suggested picking the top 8 or 10 things but who would pick those? Hope Proctor suggested bringing samples or examples to the public to "test the waters". The desire is to get a sense of how tight or how strict the public is willing to be.

Jane Piro discussed the option of the National Historic Register. The public response to this was favorable.

Neil Nichols discussed “significant loss”. There is no record of buildings lost (since 1900) and the moderator noted that “significant loss” is not a number.

## **B. Commercial and Appointed and Elected Focus Group Schedule**

The next phase is focus groups for Commercial and Appointed and Elected Town Officials.

Discussion followed on including all Planning and Zoning commissioners in the appointed and elected focus group. The random selection process will continue for this group as well as the commercial group. Every nth person will be invited. Linda Krause is a possible moderator

Discussion on the commercial focus group-

The definition of “commercial” does not include people who work out of their home. Included businesses need to have a building because it is about commercial architecture.

How do we get out of town building owners?

Tom Danyliw wants a close watch kept on who is being exempted from the commercial process. It was recommended to exempt anyone in residential zone. It was consistently heard that people didn’t know we didn’t have guidelines and they didn’t know enough about it to have opinion.

The plan is to go into September with information in the newspaper for the public meeting.

Tom Rutherford feels it is risky to conclude that from that one meeting there will be a clear show of support.

At the public meeting there will be the same presentation and the results from the various focus groups will be discussed. This phase is looking for recommendations as well as a sense of what people will accept.

There may be need for another meeting after that as to what recommendations will look and feel like.

Jane Piro feels the subcommittee needs to wrap this up by going to the Planning Commission with recommendations, then Planning will develop guidelines to possibly take to a town meeting.

The question is when to get into details. Tom Danyliw feels at some point in time people are going to want details.

## **Video Presentation**

The video presentation will be used at the public meeting in September.

## **Update on request to renumber the 1978 Connecticut Registry of Essex Village Historic Buildings report.**

This process will be completed in the near future due to street and house number changes since 1978.

**Approval of the May Minutes**

This will be done at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Meinsen  
Recording Secretary