

**Town of Essex
Architectural Design Review Subcommittee**

**Tuesday, September 6, 2011
7:30 p.m.
Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room B**

Call to Order and Roll Call

In attendance were: Neil Nichols, Tom Danyliw, Cotty Barlow, Tom Rutherford, Janice Atkeson, and Jane Piro Absent were: Hope Proctor, John Beveridge and Bill Jacaruso.

Approval of the July Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Tom Rutherford to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2011 meeting. Seconded by Cotty Barlow. Motion carried unanimously.

Focus group plan moderator interview update. Discussion of top line feedback. (Linda Krause Letter)

Linda Krause from CRERPA was consulted regarding the last focus group sessions. She feels that a slightly different format for the next group(s) is appropriate. Janice Atkeson agrees and feels that the format should include someone able to answer questions on the details of planning options. Neil Nichols reviewed the discussion from the last meeting, and the updates on the slide show. Janice Atkeson reported that the slide show has been edited to reflect those needs.

Discussion on the format for commercial property focus group

Attendees will be interested in a different discussion, specifically, commercial design guidelines. Linda Krause feels the community focus group format won't work for the commercial environment and seeing what the impact would be and what commercial owners would be willing to tolerate. Tom Rutherford feels 90% of attendees will be interested in commercial guidelines. A moderator is needed to lead discussion. Part of the format should be a poll about what commercial owners can live with as far as guidelines and then design review, which is more specific and detailed.

Janice Atkeson and Tom Rutherford both feel that if there is a general sense from the commercial group, and combined with the responses from the residential forums, then the committee will have an idea of which way to go with recommendations.

Tom Danyliw noted that, eventually, it will be necessary to discuss the details. If commercial owners are not given the details, they will not be supportive. Tom

Rutherford reminded the group that these guidelines are for new major modifications.

Discussion - the process in Deep River.

Janice Atkeson's understanding is, that in Deep River, they have actually saved people money with Design Review. A strong feeling of shock and surprise that no design review exists was expressed at the focus groups. There was clearly a general feeling that we need some from of design review.

Linda Krause also feels it is important to get comments from Zoning. Jane Piro noted that according to the Plan of Conservation and Development, Zoning is supposed to be partners in this process.

She also noted a lack of interest from the Selectmen and they, too, should be part of this, going back to the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The next step will be to go to Planning.

Janice Atkeson summarized the next steps: The moderator, hopefully from CRERPA, will make sure the participants understand commercial design and advisory vs. mandatory guidelines. After the commercial owners meeting, a public meeting will be held. Recommendations will be made to the Planning Commission.

Tom Rutherford discussed the town meeting, and whether recommendations wait until after the town meeting. It should be structured so it's informational. Cotty Barlow expressed concern that this doesn't get buried after it leaves this Committee. Informing town officials was discussed. Jane Piro noted the studies (Transportation and the Survey) that have been completed and are available to residents and officials for review.

The letters of invitation to the focus groups have said that a public meeting will present information, findings, and recommendations. This meeting will provide additional feedback.

Janice Atkeson noted that there are strong numbers supporting the results of the focus groups.

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

Neil Nichols thinks John Guskowski has the renumbered list. Residents may not know that they live in the district. They should be notified (after this committee is done).

Revisit discussion on Format, Content, List Selection and Schedule for Commercial and Town Elected and Appointed Focus Groups. The goal was September. Review the letter for Town wide meeting

Jane Piro has formulated a letter of invitation for the commercial property owner group.

It will be held in September (19th or 21st). Janice Atkeson will contact Linda Krause and Jean Davies to see when they will be available. She has reviewed the list from John Guskowski as to who is a commercial property owner.

Neil Nichols expressed thanks to Janice Atkeson for her many hours to develop documentation. Janice added that it has been “done by the book”.

Regarding town officials, the Chair was asked to contact the Selectman’s office to state interest in having them attending a meeting. This will offer them an opportunity to say no. Chairs of Commissions will also be invited, and they could offer the invitation to all members. This will be done by the end of September.

An informational public meeting will be held in October.

Motion was made to adjourn at 9:05 by Janice Atkeson and seconded by Jane Piro.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Meinsen
Recording Secretary