



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting
October 10, 2013
Essex Town Hall – Room A**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members:

Chairman Tom Danyliw called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Linda Herman, Carla Feroni and Ralph Monaco. Seated for Alan Kerr was Alternate Bob Laundy. Also in attendance was Planner John Guskowski.

2. Approval of Minutes: September 112, 2013

Motion to approve minutes of September 12, 2013 by Bob Laundy, seconded by Ralph Monaco. Motion carried unanimously, with Ralph Monaco and Carla Feroni abstaining.

3. New Business

There was no new business.

4. Old Business

a. Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

John Guskowski reminded the Commissioners that the public-input survey on the NHMP was still on the website, and the article promoting the Plan draft and the survey would be coming out in "Essex Events" next week. Following the survey, he anticipated that the Plan would be finalized soon.

b. PoCD Updates – Statement of Intent and Goals

John Guskowski stated that he had been attempting to add more detail to the outline framework that the Commission had developed in previous meetings. He presented the draft narrative for the first of the Major Goal areas, dealing with "Mixed Use, Architecturally-Appropriate Development and Redevelopment in the Villages of Essex, Centerbrook, Ivoryton, and the key hubs of Bokum and Gateway." The Commission generally agreed that the tone and level of detail in the narrative were appropriate.

He reviewed the broad Goal areas with the Commission and asked them to consider any areas that were not included, either geographically or thematically. Ralph Monaco suggested that promotion of public safety should be emphasized. Chairman Danyliw stated that the waterfront was a key resource, both from a natural/environmental/recreational perspective, and from an economic development/tourism perspective. Carla Feroni

Draft Minutes

suggested that the Town could explore more promotion of rural business and agricultural diversity. She also suggested that climate change and sea level rise projections have given rise to a focus on “resilience” as a concept on par with “smart growth” and “sustainability.” John Guszkowski stated he would incorporate these areas and would continue writing the narrative and goal portions, with a target of early 2014 for a draft.

Discussion turned to the economic development and environmental concerns in the Route 9 Gateway area. The Commission agreed that this area had a number of challenges that had not been addressed in a comprehensive manner. Chairman Danyliw stated that an ad-hoc committee or special agenda focus would be in order. John Guszkowski stated that he would prepare some maps for discussion purposes and would place a discussion of a Gateway study on next month’s agenda under “New Business.”

c. Ivoryton and STEAP Grant Updates

John Guszkowski stated that the STEAP grant project was moving forward and the parking lot was being renovated over the next several weeks. He stated that he was trying to get started on the Main Street Investment Fund grant for Ivoryton, and had met earlier that day with the Ivoryton Village Alliance to encourage participation and buy-in on the project. The Alliance requested that any steering committee for this project include a member or two from their ranks. Chairman Danyliw suggested that Linda Herman and Alan Kerr would be the most appropriate representatives from Planning for any steering committee. John Guszkowski stated that it would probably be led administratively by himself, First Selectman Needleman, and Public Works Director Dave Caroline. A general discussion took place as to the wastewater situation in Ivoryton and the location of pipes under Main Street and Summit Street that ought to be considered prior to streetscape enhancement.

d. Economic Development/Zoning/Planning Discussion

John Guszkowski noted that the Connecticut Main Street Center would be having a presentation and discussion at the Essex Elementary School about village redevelopment on Tuesday, October 29. He and Economic Development Consultant Susan Malan had been working on a Preservation of Place grant pre-application to the CT Main Street Center, which is due November 5. Because only one Main Street area per municipality could be the focus of a grant, they recommended that Centerbrook be the subject of this grant, which would help create a unified vision and action plan for this village. Centerbrook lacks the level of community organization of Ivoryton and Essex Village, and this grant could help catalyze that effort. The Commission was generally in agreement with this approach.

5. Report of Committees and Officers

a. Report from Inland Wetlands Representative

There was no report, as Claire Tiernan was absent.

Draft Minutes

b. Report from RiverCOG Representative

There was no report, as Alan Kerr was absent.

c. Report from Economic Development Commission Representative

Bob Laundy stated that John Guszkowski had covered a number of the EDC updates in his discussion earlier. He reported that Susan Malan had been active in talking with prospective tenants of some key vacant properties.

d. Chairman's Report

Chairman Danyliw reported that he attended a meeting on September 17 with First Selectman Needleman and other Commission chairmen in a discussion with the new state Department of Housing Commissioner. He stated that Commissioner Klein did not seem as concerned about the threat of 8-30(g) affordable housing appeals, largely because of the lack of large available properties with access to public sewer infrastructure.

e. Planner's Report

John Guszkowski stated the proposed Blight Ordinance developed by the Board of Selectmen would be going to public hearing soon. He also stated that Town Clerk Fran Nolin had requested suggestions and input on new Commission appointee to replace Neil Nichols. She also had noted that Alan Kerr's appointment was due for renewal.

6. Correspondence and Invoices

Chairman Danyliw reviewed the correspondence, which included an invoice from CME Associates and an update on the status of a RiverCOG contract for GIS services, which was awarded to Tighe & Bond. There was some discussion as to whether the Commission had empowered Chairman Danyliw to approve invoices based on approved budgetary line items.

Motion to pay invoice by Ralph Monaco, **seconded** by Bob Laundy. **Motion carried unanimously.**

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Ralph Monaco, **Seconded** by Linda Herman. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guszkowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
12-11 2013 at 2:15pm
Fran D. Nolin
ESSEX, CT TOWN CLERK

•

RECEIVED FOR RECORD