



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 11, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Alan Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were members George Sexton and Gary Riggio. Alternate Al Wolfgram was seated for Erin Bogan, and Alternate Jane Siris was seated for Ralph Monaco. Also in attendance were Alternate Hope Proctor, Member Erin Bogan (arrived at 7:34), and Town Planner John Guskowski.

2. Approval of Minutes: December 14, 2017 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of December 14, 2017 by George Sexton, seconded by Gary Riggio. Motion carried unanimously.

Jane Siris noted the memo from Planning to the Board of Selectmen concerning sidewalks on River Road and stated that she did not recall conversation about the sidewalk possibly continuing up River Road northerly of Heritage Cove.

3. New Business

a. Zoning Text Amendment Referral: Addition of Section 110L, Parking in Essex Village District and Ivoryton Village

John Guskowski provided an overview to the Commission, noting that the proposal would exempt uses in the Essex Village District and in Ivoryton Village from parking regulations. Al Wolfgram stated that the proposed regulation would encourage “build out” of properties in these areas, forcing more parking onto the public streets. He indicated several sections of the Plan of Conservation & Development (PoCD) encouraging shared off-street parking and the establishment of public parking areas. John Guskowski noted the PoCD did encourage shared parking, and also encouraged relaxation of parking regulations in Ivoryton. The Commission had a general discussion about the intent of this proposal and if there was some specific examples of businesses being compromised by current parking regulation. George Sexton, a member of the

EDC (applicant for the proposal) was not aware of a specific circumstance. Jane Siris proposed requesting additional information from the EDC. Erin Bogan noted that there was a current parking crunch, particularly in Essex Village, and this was not a solution to address that issue. John Guskowski noted that the PoCD and Transportation Plans both proposed more parking management, not necessarily regulation of spaces. Chairman Kerr asked the Commission if it had a consensus position on the referral. Al Wolfgram proposed that the Commission's response be favorable, but with the caveat that existing off-street parking on private properties be maintained.

Motion to issue a favorable opinion of the proposed Zoning Amendment with the clarification that any existing, dedicated off-street parking areas remain on-site by Al Wolfgram, **seconded** by George Sexton. John Guskowski noted that there was no current "Ivoryton Village" in the Zoning Map and proposed that the recommendation from the Commission be that the regulation amendment apply to the Commercial Zoning District in Ivoryton in addition to the Essex Village District. Al Wolfgram and George Sexton accepted as an amendment **that the proposed parking regulation apply in Essex Village District and the Commercial Zoning District within Ivoryton. Motion carried, with Gary Riggio abstaining.**

b. Budget Request, FY 2018-19

John Guskowski presented the proposed budget request for the Planning Commission for the next fiscal year, noting some money had been shifted out of Engineering and Printing and into Part-time Staff to cover additional clerical requirements of the Housing Ad-Hoc Committee. There was a discussion about RiverCOG's line-item being within the Planning Commission's "Planning Services" budget.

Motion to submit the proposed budget to the Board of Finance by Jane Siris, **seconded** by George Sexton. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. Old Business

a. Ad-Hoc Committee on Housing Options

Chairman Kerr noted that he convened the first meeting of the Housing Options Committee on Tuesday, January 9th. He stated that the discussion was a little bit unfocused. He believed that they would be establishing a mission statement and goal at the next meeting.

There was a discussion among the Commission about the Town's requirements relative to provision of Affordable Housing, and the implications of CGS Section 8-30g as well as the options provided by the Incentive Housing Zone statute. John Guskowski stated that he would reach out to the Partnership for Strong Communities for additional resources.

b. Zoning Revisions Subcommittee – Update and Discussion

John Guskowski reported that the Subcommittee was almost done with the Regulation cleanup, which would be likely presented to the Zoning Commission for review in February. Al Wolfgram noted that a few additional edits were still pending. Following a presentation to the Zoning Commission, it was likely that there would be a joint session between Planning & Zoning Commissions to discuss the changes prior to a formal public hearing process in the spring.

5. **Report of Committees and Officers**

a. **Report from Inland Wetlands Representative**

The Planning Commission has no active representative to the Wetlands Agency.

b. **Report from RiverCOG Representative**

Alan Kerr reported that the most recent RiverCOG meeting was cancelled.

c. **Report from Economic Development Commission Representative**

George Sexton reported that the Scotch Plains Tavern was finally open and doing very well; that Wright's restaurant had closed permanently; that Cumberland Farms would be open within a week or two; that the pharmacy in Centerbrook was in new ownership and would be re-opening; and that there would be an art gallery opening within the Essex Village post office building.

d. **Planner's Report**

John Guszkowski reported that the Walnut Street Bridge was open for the winter, and some re-paving and stone façade work would be taking place in the spring to wrap that project up. He also noted that sidewalk/streetscape plans for Main Street in Centerbrook were nearly complete and the Town hoped to go to bid in the spring.

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

There was no outstanding correspondence or invoices.

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Al Wolfgram, **seconded** by George Sexton. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guszkowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
01/16 2018 at 8:35 A.M.
James M. Fogiel
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK