



## ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 13, 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 for the meeting were Members George Sexton, Erin Bogan, and Gary Riggio. Seated for Ralph Monaco was Alternate Al Wolfram. Also in attendance were Alternates Jane Siris and Hope Proctor, and Town Planner John Guskowski.

2. **Approval of Minutes – July 12, 2018 Regular Meeting**

Motion to approve minutes of July 12, 2018 by George Sexton, **seconded** by Gary Riggio.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

3. **New Business**

a. **CGS §8-24 Referral from Selectmen: Proposed Permanent Access Easement on Dump Road in Favor of Eversource**

John Guskowski stated that the rights to an access easement across Town property on Dump Road was set to expire, which is unusual. The Town was working with Eversource to prepare a proposal for a permanent access easement. He noted Section 8-24 of the Ct General Statutes, which require referral to the Planning Commission for any municipal acquisition or disposition of real estate, including interests in land. Eversource was delayed in providing a survey of the proposed easement location, so he recommended that the Commission table the matter until their October meeting.

Motion to table discussion by George Sexton, **seconded** by Gary Riggio. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**b. Zoning Regulations Amendment Referral – Additional Changes to Section 45, Accessory Dwelling Units and Apartments**

The Commission reviewed the proposed amendment revision, focusing on the additional language included since the prior approved Regulation concerning Accessory Apartments, which allowed apartments in upper levels of commercial buildings as well as in the rear of first floor (non-street-facing) storefronts. John Guskowski and Al Wolfram also informed the Commission that an additional revision was pending that would split the regulation of apartments in commercial buildings into a new section, separate from the regulation of apartments in single-family dwellings.

**Motion to issue a favorable comment on the proposed amendment** by George Sexton, **seconded** by Gary Riggio. **Motion carried 4-0, with Al Wolfram abstaining.**

**4. Old Business**

**a. Ad-Hoc Committee on Housing Options**

Chairman Kerr stated that the Committee met on Tuesday, but was sparsely attended. The work of the Committee was winding down and would produce a report on its progress, including a proposed affordable housing plan. The Committee would work on the plan via email, and John Guskowski stated that he would work with Chairman Kerr on a list of potentially developable sites for the plan.

**b. PoCD Implementation – Development Node Overlays**

John Guskowski stated that, given the discussion about the potential zone line adjustment, he wanted to re-start the discussion of the purpose and approach of an overlay. Jane Siris and Hope Proctor agreed that in the case of Essex Village, encroachment of more intense uses along the waterfront to the rear of Main Street properties was not appropriate. The Commission discussed the PoCD's recommendation and what the intent was for Essex Village, as opposed to other nodes. John Guskowski reviewed the two-step process, design controls, and master plan requirement of permitting a development through an overlay process. The Commission agreed that there should be different regulatory approaches and overlay designations for each of the development nodes. They further agreed that the proposed node for Essex Village, which should be the first overlay drafted, should be much reduced, encompassing only Main Street, the Marina area, Essex Island, and a small portion of North Main Street.

John Guskowski stated that he would provide a revised map and would give the Commission an opportunity to suggest elements that they would like to see included in an overlay as well as concerns or uses to be prohibited.

**5. Report of Committees and Officers**

**a. Report from RiverCOG Representative**

Chairman Kerr stated that the August meeting was cancelled.

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

George Sexton noted that ZEO Joe Budrow sent a note to the EDC soliciting input on the potential for expanded retail uses in the Business District along Plains Road. The EDC believed that expanded business was generally favorable, but that the Town should have careful control over traffic and visual impacts. The Commission discussed the current regulations along this corridor. He reported that the steps were being installed at the Lay House; the Carlson Landing restaurant construction was proceeding; a potential new developer was working on a new restaurant at the former Wright's; the "Red Balloon" property on Main Street was for sale and was an interesting development opportunity; that there were only five vacant units at Essex Station, clearly demonstrating demand for apartments in Essex; that the HOPE Partnership had received a \$3 million grant to assist with their Spencer's Corner project; and that there was a new dry cleaner open in Centerbrook. Jane Siris stated that the Red Balloon property would be a good potential multi-family development.

**c. Planner's Report**

John Guskowski reported that he had been working with the State on determining the Town's eligibility for an affordable housing development moratorium, but the Town still was several points short on the Housing Unit Equivalent requirements. It was possible that the Spencer's Corner development might enable the moratorium. He also discussed the delay in the Centerbrook streetscape/sidewalk project and the receipt of a new sidewalk grant through the Community Connectivity program.

**6. Correspondence & Invoices**

Chairman Kerr noted a letter from the Essex Land Trust soliciting comments from the Town and Commissioners as part of its efforts to gain accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance. Erin Bogan stated that the Land Trust had a very good signage/branding approach to their property identification. John Guskowski stated that he would circulate the letter to the Commissioners for their consideration and potential comment.

**7. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Al Wolfgram, seconded by George Sexton. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski  
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
09/17/18 at 11:45 A.M.  
Janice M. Royle  
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK