



## ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 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 for the meeting were Members George Sexton, Erin Bogan, and Ralph Monaco. Seated for Gary Riggio was Alternate Al Wolfgram. Also in attendance was Alternate Jane Siris and Town Planner John Guskowski.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes – September 13, 2018 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of September 13, 2018 by George Sexton, seconded by Al Wolfgram. Motion carried 4-0, with Ralph Monaco abstaining.

#### 3. New Business

##### a. Zoning Regulations Amendment Referral – New Section 45-1, Apartments in Commercial Buildings

The Commission reviewed the proposed amendment revision, which created a separate section in the Regulations defining “apartments” as accessory residential structures in existing commercial buildings, as opposed to “accessory dwelling units” which added more residential units to an existing residential property. Chairman Kerr noted that this was a continuation of the initiative started by the Planning Commission about two years prior. Ralph Monaco noted that there was not a definition of “upper levels,” which could lead to some ambiguity.

Motion to issue a favorable comment on the proposed amendment with the recommendation that “upper levels” be changed to “above the first floor” by Ralph Monaco, seconded by George Sexton. Motion carried 4-0, with Al Wolfgram abstaining.

#### 4. Old Business

- a. **CGS §8-24 Referral from Selectmen: Permanent Access Easement on Dump Road in Favor of Eversource** (Tabled from September meeting)

John Guskowski noted that the property and easement survey had not yet been provided by Eversource.

Motion to table discussion by Al Wolfram, seconded by Ralph Monaco. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Chairman Kerr stated that the Committee meeting was cancelled, and the majority of the Committee's work would now be completed apart from the regular meetings. He would be completing a draft Plan, along with input from John Guskowski on potentially developable properties. The draft would be reviewed and finalized by the Committee and forwarded to the Planning Commission for action.

- c. **PoCD Implementation – Development Node Overlays**

John Guskowski noted several items in the agenda, including the draft Essex Village Node map, framing considerations, and the Neighborhood Development District regulations from Stonington. He reviewed the process of “landing” an overlay zone. The Commission discussed the Stonington regulations and considered whether it would be better to have five separate overlay regulations or separately defined sections within an omnibus overlay. Jane Siris noted that the goal of the overlay should be made clearer, and the regulation should focus on uses that are successful and add vibrance. Al Wolfram disagreed, stating that the essential residential character of the mid-Main Street area should be retained. The Commission discussed whether starting the overlay regulation process with Essex Village was too complex and fraught. Chairman Kerr determined that the Commission, by consensus, would address the Bokum development node as a potential overlay.

John Guskowski stated that he would provide a focused overlay map for Bokum 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 he was unable to attend the September COG meeting.

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

George Sexton noted that there was a new pottery shop, owned by Mark Inhorn, moving in to the former Truffle Shots property on North Main Street; Carlson's Landing restaurant was proceeding, though was likely somewhat behind schedule; that the former Wright's restaurant was in negotiations with a new tenant; that the Essex Restaurant had split their service, and had added a Mexican cuisine menu; the Downtown Essex parking analysis had been undertaken by UConn

students as part of a Senior Design project; and that the granite stairway to the lighthouse had been completed.

**c. Planner's Report**

John Guskowski reported that the Centerbrook sidewalk project was being modified slightly in scope and would be going out to re-bid. He also noted that he'd met with representatives of the Ivoryton Village Alliance to discuss parking options in Ivoryton. Two potential improvements were discussed: a) Changing the traffic flow on Ivory Street to one-way southbound, with one existing lane being converted to parallel parking; and b) Making Ivoryton Fire Station property available for parking, and potentially identifying the Ivoryton Congregational Church as a new Fire Station and the Station building being used as workshop space by the Ivoryton Playhouse. The Commission discussed the needs of the Fire Station and the involvement in the Town as a convener of discussions. It was generally agreed that the Ivory Street change would be a realistic option.

With the consensus of the Commission, Chairman Kerr requested that John Guskowski forward these issues to the Board of Selectmen for consideration.

**6. Correspondence & Invoices**

Chairman Kerr noted a newsletter from Connecticut Water, and the monthly invoice from CME Associates.

**7. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Erin Bogan, seconded by George Sexton. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski  
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
10/12/2018 at 10:46 A.M.  
*Janne M. Rogiak*  
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK