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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
January 18, 2012**

Present: Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman
Joel B. Marzi, Selectman

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Stacia Libby to approve the Agenda. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Joel Marzi to approve the January 4, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Communications and Correspondence:

Mr. Needleman reported that the Valley Railroad Company will be reconstructing the railroad crossing that leads from Middlesex Turnpike to private property west of the tracks at Essex yard. Work will begin with the spring thaw around March 26th for approximately a two week period.

Public Announcements: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Gateway

Anthony Chirico spoke about the history of the Gateway. Mr. Chirico stated that Mr. Philip Miller was interested in someone taking a look at the second wave of amendments of the Gateway regulations.

Mr. Chirico spoke about the Gateway line or the border (see attached), and how many houses are impacted by Gateway and that he was looking at what changes or additions they were recommending.

The red line, which was voted on by the State of Connecticut, is the original line for the border. Items being looked at were how the houses inside this border impact the river, the views, etc.

Mr. Chirico looked at zoning permits and many of the rules in the Gateway packet are already in existence in the Essex Zoning Regulations, so there are not too many changes.

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Then he looked at houses that would be impacted compared to other towns. Then he discussed the blue line, which followed along River Road, and all the houses are impacted due to the river.

Mr. Chirico reported that he went to the Gateway Commission and made a proposal to have them look at the red line as opposed to the blue line because properties falling within the blue line cannot even see the river. There are more houses in Gateway in Essex than in any other town along the river.

The original rules for Gateway fall within the red line border. That would stay in place for the original rules only. The blue line is where the new rules would apply and the new changes would affect those on the right side of the blue line. The new rules would impose significant changes.

Mr. Chirico stated that at the time, it was a decision the town had to make, and the town decided to say no. All the other towns have accepted the changes.

Mr. Chirico tried to propose a compromise as the Town of Essex Gateway Representative. Such as, the new rules would not apply to pre-existing conditions. Mr. Chirico stated that there are some benefits to the rules, like height restrictions. Mr. Marzi stated that several properties are non-conforming.

Mr. Needleman asked if Zoning had a statutory right to adopt these regulations. Mr. Marzi stated that Zoning has a statutory right to adopt these. The Town of Essex has to adopt the whole thing, but the question is where the boundary is.

Mr. Ackerman stated he believed this would apply to any renovation or repairs to damaged property. The new rules would apply to a preexisting building. Mr. Chirico stated the blue line is the high point. The pink areas were also proposed to be included.

Mr. Marzi stated we were required to adopt standards, but we were not required to adopt processes. The town rules come first, then the Gateway.

OLD BUSINESS:

Emergency Management Improvements Permit Fees

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to waive the building permit fees on all Emergency Management Suggested Improvements. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Affirmative Action Policy Statement. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

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Fair Housing Policy Statement

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Fair Housing Policy Statement. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Resolution – DEEP Energy Efficient Block Grant Program

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Resolution for the DEEP Energy Efficiency Block Grant Program. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Gateway & Zoning

Strickland Hyde requested that the community become more aware about issues like the Gateway and Town Meetings, etc. More public announcements would be helpful.

Mr. Needleman stated that there will be a Town of Essex newsletter and a new web site is being designed to communicate to residents. There will also be a link where you can put in your email to receive additional and current information.

There was discussion regarding some residents who only read newspapers and some that won't read newspapers but prefer to receive information through technology. There was discussion about implementing an 800 number or the use of banners across Main Street.

SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Essex Meadows – Board of Selectmen Meeting

There was discussion on holding a Board of Selectmen meeting at Essex Meadows on March 21st at 7:30. More information and confirmation would be presented at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:27 p.m. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria P. Lucarelli