



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, June 9, 2016

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 Vice Chair George Sexton, Members Tom Danyliw, Ralph Monaco, and John Bairos. Also in attendance were Alternates Jane Siris and Erin Bogan, Town Planner John Guskowski, ZEO Joe Budrow, Kathryn Shafer and Charles Patton from the Partnership for Strong Communities and several members of the public.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 12, 2016

Motion to approve minutes of May 12, 2016 by Ralph Monaco, seconded by Tom Danyliw. Motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business

a. Affordable Housing Presentation/Discussion with Kathryn Shafer, Deputy Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities

John Guskowski introduced Katy Shafer and explained the Commission's interest in discussing expansion of housing options in Essex. Ms. Shafer described the mission of the Partnership for Strong Communities and discussed the "Reaching Home" and "HOME Connecticut" programs. She described the demographic and market context for housing needs in Connecticut, which is centered on aging baby boomers, millennials, and working families, all who need wider housing options that aren't currently available in most CT communities. She discussed the income/jobs/housing imbalance and reviewed two regulatory approaches – the use of the Affordable Housing Appeals Act (8-30g) and the Incentive Housing Program. She led the Commission in a question-and-answer discussion regarding regulatory obstacles, housing moratoria, flexible regulations, density, comparable community efforts, and community vitality. Approaches taken by Old Saybrook, Milford, Simsbury, Guilford, and Fairfield were discussed as potential examples. Chairman Kerr stated that the Commission should seek to take concrete action, focusing on community engagement and education about this topic. Tom

Danyliw and John Guskowski agreed that the focus on the Essex Station application should be used as an opportunity to have a community discussion and move the topic forward. The Commission discussed the variety of housing types, mixed uses, accessory apartments, and the “point system” of 8-30g. Chairman Kerr discussed actionable “next steps,” and Tom Danyliw suggested a percentage or unit target. Jane Siris underscored the importance of long-range planning for location and scale of new developments. Chairman Kerr stated that this topic would be an ongoing priority for the Commission, and Ms. Shafer stated that the Partnership would be an asset and a resource to the Town as it proceeded. Chairman Kerr thanked Ms. Shafer and Charles Patton for their presentation and support.

Jane Siris left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

4. Old Business

a. Accessory Apartment Regulations Discussion – Proposed Amendments

John Guskowski reviewed the proposed regulations for Accessory Apartments to replace current Section 45 of the Essex Zoning Regulations. The Commission agreed that the annual affidavit was an unreasonable requirement and that Section 45k should be removed from the draft.

Motion to submit the Accessory Apartment amendment with Section 45k removed by Tom Danyliw, **seconded** by Ralph Monaco. George Sexton stated that the regulations should allow apartments either within existing dwelling units or in accessory buildings, so the Commission agreed that Section 45d(1) should be removed. **Tom Danyliw accepted the additional removal of Section 45d(1) as a friendly amendment to the motion, and Ralph Monaco accepted the second. Motion carried unanimously.**

John Guskowski noted that the application would be received by Zoning at its June 20 meeting and scheduled for a Public Hearing most likely on July 17th, which would be a good opportunity to have a broader conversation with the Zoning Commission about the Plan of Conservation & Development and housing issues. Chairman Kerr noted that he would be absent from the July Planning and Zoning meetings, but Vice Chairman Sexton stated he was available and would chair the meeting.

b. Grant Project Updates

John Guskowski reported on the recently submitted Main Street Investment Fund grant application for “Civic Campus, Phase II” and the LOTCIP application for the Dennison Road/Route 154 intersection reconfiguration. Tom Danyliw noted that low-impact development techniques should be employed to reduce impervious surfaces and promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

5. Report of Committees and Officers

a. Report from Inland Wetlands Representative

The Planning Commission has no active representative to the Wetlands Agency. Chairman Kerr requested a volunteer to serve.

b. **Report from RiverCOG Representative**

Chairman Kerr stated that the RiverCOG had received a PoCD referral from Durham and confirmed with John Guskowski that Essex had properly followed referral process with the Town's update. John stated that the COG had reviewed the Town PoCD in September, 2015. Chairman Kerr stated that the COG intends to visit with each municipal commission as part of its own process of updating the regional PoCD, but staffing shortages had delayed this process.

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

George Sexton reported that the EDC held a business input forum on June 8 that was very well attended, including participation from Alan Kerr and Jane Siris. EDC Coordinator Susan Malan reported on the planned Water Pollution Control Authority facilities plan update. Major concerns expressed at the forum included unreasonably high commercial rental rates in Essex Village, parking availability, potential Zoning obstacles, and question about the Town's vision. Overall, he reported it was a useful and productive forum.

d. **Planner's Report**

John Guskowski distributed copies of the newly-printed Plan of Conservation & Development and discussed additional distribution and availability for purchase at Town Hall. He also noted that with the budget passed and the Town entering a new fiscal year, the Commission needed to address a proposed contract extension for consulting planning services.

Motion to authorize Chairman Kerr to sign contract extension with CME Associates for planning services for FY 2016-17 by Ralph Monaco, **seconded** by Tom Danyliw. **Motion carried unanimously.**

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

There was no additional correspondence or invoices.

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Ralph Monaco, **seconded** by George Sexton. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
06/10 2016 at 12:50 P.M.
Yvonne M. Rogiak
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK