

Essex Junction Trustees 2011-12 Annual Action Plan

1) Amtrak train and bus renovation

Purpose: Improve the appearance of the Amtrak/CCTA station on RR Ave to make point of entry to village downtown more welcoming and to deter loitering, graffiti, crime

Status: Cameras are in place and working. Amtrak intends some renovations next spring but will not substantially change appearance of stations. Citizens/staff are exploring Amtrak's Great American Stations project to determine if funds might be available for more aesthetic improvements.

2) Orton Grant

Purpose: Orton Foundation Grant for Village and Town to work together on long range community planning, economic development, preservation of value.

Status: Grant is complete and submitted. Award to be announced in Sept.

3) Orton Grant Alternative

Purpose: Village and town are collaborating on Orton Grant application process and will be joint participants in helping plan village economic development if approved. However, grant is highly competitive, so need to develop an alternative plan for continuing collaboration if application fails.

Status: Discussions have begun and further plans will depend on outcome of grant award.

4) Farmers Market/Event Series

Purpose: Farmers Market and RR Ave projects and events have been successful, but how do we sustain and expand these efforts?

Status: Market and event organizers will meet with trustees in the fall for overview.

5) Advertise village businesses on Village website

Status: Business links now placed on site but more work anticipated to actually use the site to help market local businesses.

6) Review Village Green Space use

Purpose: Preserve and improve appearance of Village downtown; consider how to move forward with Village development director's plan for pocket parks.

Status: Work begun by gardening committee has continued. This should perhaps be an agenda item in the fall to review progress and anticipate further work.

7) Communication Plan and Policy

Purpose: maximize benefits of village website, Front Porch Forum and other communication assets; develop policy for elected boards for using communication assets

Status: In progress. Preliminary draft reviewed by trustees.

8) Fire truck

Purpose: To encourage and help town follow through on their previous commitment to help fund Village ladder truck

Status: Selectboard and Trustees will consider and possibly sign new memorandum of understanding at their respective August 15 and 16 meetings, committing the town to a \$200K subsidy to the Village Fire Department for purchase of a 100 foot, \$1 million truck.

9) Village-wide Wi-Fi

Purpose: With wireless nodes at elementary school fiber-optically connected to server at EHS, there may be an opportunity to provide free wireless Internet. Idea was first proposed in 2009 by Prudential Committee to allow all students to have online access.

Status: Preliminary discussions with the school district have occurred. Further discussions this fall should occur.

10) Revamp Village Annual Meeting

Purpose: Many residents have suggested that the village should budget be voted on by Australian ballot? Would we risk not having people come to annual meeting? If we keep the current system, how can we improve attendance?

Status: In progress. An informal citizen committee has formed and begun initial discussions.

11) Stevens Park – restrictions/covenants/re-purposing

Purpose: Stevens Park is presently underutilized and unattractive for recreational use. How can it be improved? Could it be used for other purposes?

Status: Charter for property has been reviewed and there are no restrictions or covenants for how it is to be used. Property is owned by the Village but managed by the school district.

12) Riverwalk

Purpose: Can the village utilize its proximity to the Winooski River to create a walkway or path for public recreation?

Status: Initial discussion has occurred but will probably be moved to long range planning.

13) Building and zoning empty/blighted building ordinance

Purpose: What can be done to compel property owner, commercial and residential, to not allow their buildings and grounds to become eyesores?

Status: In progress. Trustees have agreed that this will probably require a new local ordinance. Planning commission's role has not been defined. Specific details of the ordinance will require further definition.

14) Chicken/fowl Ordinance

Purpose: Village presently only allows chickens in zoned agricultural areas. Should this be changed?

Status: Some initial discussions have occurred. Will require collaboration with the Planning Commission and amendments to Village's land use code.

15) Village-wide multi-use path

Purpose: A long-term vision is to have several bike/pedestrian paths along the railroad tracks from North St to Pearl Street. The railroad has expressed tentative approval.

Status: Has been included in the Village's package of Circumferential Highway Alternative planning which is currently under review by CCMPO.

16) Tax equity with town

Purpose: Village residents presently support two municipalities. The town government does not fund village services or capital projects. The imbalance is unsustainable and needs to be resolved.

Status: No new efforts have occurred. Awaiting outcome of Fire truck MOU between the two boards.

17) Revenue Generation

Purpose: If tax equity with the town cannot be achieved, what alternatives are there for increasing revenues within the village to provide tax relief for village homeowners and businesses? Should we reconsider a local sales tax?

Status: Some discussion but no definitive action plan.