

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 9, 2010**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Liza Kilcoyne (Chair); Dan Kerin, Aaron Martin, John Alden, Andrew Boutin, Diane Clemens. (Nick Meyer was absent.)

ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Development Director; Terry Hass, Assistant Zoning Administrator.

1. CALL TO ORDER and AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Chairwoman Liza Kilcoyne called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Audience for Visitors

There were no comments from the public.

Upcoming Public Hearings and Work Sessions on the Land Development Code

September 16, 2010: Regular Planning Commission Meeting (applications)
October 7, 2010: Work Session (Code update and rezoning requests)
October 21, 2010: Public meeting on Code update
November 4, 2010: Work Session (Code update)
November 18, 2010: Public Hearing on the updated Code; adoption by Planning Commission and forward to Board of Trustees

2. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 5, 2010 – No action taken.

July 15, 2010 & August 19, 2010

MOTION by John Alden, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to approve the July 15, 2010 minutes as written and approve the August 19, 2010 with correction to the spelling of “not” in the sentence at the bottom of Page 1 to read: “In a village like Essex Junction most of the residents are interested in less, not more, land.” VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.

4. REVIEW/SIGN ETHICS POLICY

Planning Commissioners signed the document.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairperson

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to nominate Liza Kilcoyne as Chairwoman of the Essex Junction Planning Commission. VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.

Vice Chairperson

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Liza Kilcoyne, to nominate Diane Clemens as Vice Chairwoman of the Essex Junction Planning Commission. VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.

6. WORK SESSION: LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Planning Commission discussed revisions as presented by planning consultant, Jeff Arango.

Noise Agreement as Addendum to Noise Ordinance

There was mention of attaching a copy of the Noise Agreement as an addendum to the Noise Ordinance. Robin Pierce pointed out the Trustees handle the noise agreements which appear to change each year. Mr. Arango will be asked if it is appropriate to cross reference the Noise Agreement in the LDC.

Signs for Farmer's Market

There was mention of including information on the work done for the signs at the farmer's market in the LDC and the distinction between permanent and temporary/sandwich signs. Robin Pierce stated it is custom and practice in area towns to have the selectboard deal with signs. Information on the work done for the farmer's market signs will be forwarded to Jeff Arango for advice on what is appropriate for inclusion in the LDC.

Re-Zoning Requests

Park Street - 222 Franklin

Staff noted the village comprehensive plan reflects inclusion of the triangular parcel in the adjacent zoning district. The Code will be updated by staff.

North Street – Charbonneau

More discussion is needed of the requested zoning change on North Street. The Planning Commissioners will do independent site visits to the area to view lot size and types of housing. Changing the zoning means existing lots would not meet lot size requirements and would become nonconforming. Many of the residents on the streets oppose multi-family and rental housing in the neighborhood. Mr. Charbonneau created the accessory apartment in their house. There was further discussion of rental properties, affordable housing, and single family residences in the village, traffic congestion, the capacity of neighborhood streets, small lots (on North Street, Grove Street, and Central Street), and the lack of parking.

Old Colchester Road - Kalanges

More information on potential development plans for the Kalanges property to justify the change in zoning is needed. Also, support from the neighbors who live in the village not the town should be provided. Staff will draft a letter from the Planning Commission indicating there is no reason to change the zoning at this time as the property owner has

options to develop his land under the current zoning and written support from neighboring village residents for the zoning change has not been received.

Historic Preservation and Design Control in Village Center (Section 604)

There was discussion of adding more design controls to single family homes and historic buildings in the village center which may limit the ability to increase density. Also, there is need to establish what is historic and what is not historic. For example, the Lincoln Inn building would not be considered historic because there have been numerous changes to the building over time. There was agreement a mechanism is needed to control what new construction will look like in the district relative to mass and scale, but there must also be flexibility. There was also agreement the Secretary of the Interiors Standards should be used as a guideline for review, not a stringent requirement, and anyone developing in the historic district is strongly urged to look at the guidelines prior to submitting a proposal. Language in the Code should reflect this. The intent is to preserve and protect the character on the village that is to be maintained. Staff will 'soften' the language related to Secretary of Interiors Standards.

Protection of Open Space (Section 613, Section 724, Section 908)

The Planning Commission reviewed language related to density bonuses, cluster development, and open space. There was discussion of the meaning of 'buildable' or 'developable' land and if undevelopable land that is part of a parcel is included in the density calculation or considered part of the open space requirement. Following lengthy discussion there was agreement undevelopable land (wetlands, slopes, easements, etc.) can be counted in the density and lot coverage calculation. Statements in the Code relative to excluding undevelopable land should be deleted (Section 724.C.4). It was noted a clearer definition of 'superior design' (Section 613.G.3.a.2) is needed. There was discussion of requiring areas for passive recreation (walking paths and such) on a portion of the open space in a development, and the open space should be designated to show wildlife areas, natural areas, agricultural areas, etc. There was discussion of designating at least 25% as open space in a PUD under Section 908 (recreational open space).

7. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Next Meetings/Work Sessions

September 16, 2010: Regular meeting

October 7, 2010: Regular meeting to be followed by work session (Kolvoord Room at Brownell Library)

October 21, 2010: Public Meeting - Land Development Code

November 4, 2010: Work session on Code

November 18, 2010: Public Hearing on Code; adoption by PC; forward to Trustees

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Andrew Boutin, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan