

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 25, 2014**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Dan Kerin, Elaine Sopchak, Andrew Brown. (George Tyler and Lori Houghton were absent.)

ADMINISTRATION: Patrick Scheidel, Village Manager; Lauren Morrisseau, Co-Manager & Finance Director; Susan McNamara-Hill, Co-Manager & Village Clerk/Treasurer/HR Director; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Darby Mayville, Community Relations Assistant.

OTHERS PRESENT: Greg Morgan, Joe Kudrle, Erin Parizo, Mike Servetas, Toni Morgan, Susanna Olson, Isaak Olson, Aaron Olson.

1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In the absence of Village President, George Tyler, Dan Kerin called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Add:

- Information re: crime on tracks from Rails to Trails
- Meeting with staff on multi-purpose path and comments from village resident, Jeff Goodrich

3. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Sympathy and condolences were extended to George Tyler and family on the recent loss of Mr. Tyler's 93 year old father.

2. Public Hearing: Multi-use Safety Path

The public hearing was opened at 6:32 PM. Mike Servetas with VHB gave an overview of the project and noted the following:

- Preliminary design is complete. Public information hearings are being held and comments received. Final design will be submitted by April. Contract plans will be done by June.
- The path is 10' wide paved in the rail corridor or rail right-of-way. A grassed safety strip and metal fence separates the path and the railroad tracks.
- Bollards will prevent vehicle access to the path.
- There will be a detectable warning for the visually impaired using the path.
- Solar powered lighting will be used.
- Evergreen plantings will provide screening and bio-retention areas will handle storm water runoff.
- Project cost estimate is \$366,000 (amount for lighting may be high). Village project estimate is \$347,500.

- Public comment received to date concerns vegetative screening for noise and viewing, having steep side slopes to discourage access to backyards adjacent to the path, using solar powered lighting, and safety on the path.
- Additional comments should be forwarded to the village planning department (Robin Pierce or Darby Mayville).

COMMENTS

A gentleman in the audience asked about the proximity of the path to abutting properties and if there will be benches on the path. Mr. Servetas calculated the path is about 10' from abutting properties and benches will be shown in the final design. Benches will likely be located by Grove Street and Central Street.

Isaak Olson, Central Street, asked if the path will be accessible for bikes and rollerbladers. Mike Servetas said the path will be accessible for all users.

Joe Kudrle, village resident, asked about impact by construction on the shed at the back of his property by the bank. Mr. Servetas said the slope will be stabilized as part of the construction.

Darby Mayville relayed that Jeff Goodrich who could not attend the meeting expresses support for the project.

Susanna Olson, Central Street, read a statement of support for the path to improve the safety of the area and help eliminate illegal drug activity that is occurring there. Ms. Olson said the surveillance cameras at the train station have had a positive impact. Cameras and signage on the path would be beneficial.

Greg Morgan, Grove Street, spoke in support of the project incorporating situational prevention techniques that include improved street lighting, sensible space design, and defensible whistle blowers. Research shows rail trails often clean up areas that hosted criminal activities. Reduction in crime can occur with improved street lighting. Trespass on railroad property is often by pedestrians taking shortcuts or loitering or engaged in recreation activities. According to an article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, dated December 2012, pedestrian railroad accidents are the leading cause of death on rails (people walking on the tracks). Mr. Morgan observed the village is lucky that there has not been a death on the railroad tracks to date.

Elaine Sopchak thanked the neighborhood for all the effort to improve the area.

There were no further comments. The public hearing was closed at 7:08 PM.

4. OLD BUSINESS

1. Adopt/Sign Annual Meeting Warning

MOTION by Elaine Sopchak, SECOND by Andrew Brown, to adopt the annual meeting warning as presented for April 2, 2014 at 7 PM at Essex High School (community supper at 6 PM) with voting by Australian ballot on April 8, 2014.

DISCUSSION: Vacancies to be filled include moderator, Board of Trustees (two seats), and Library Trustees (one seat). The bond vote for capital projects will be a separate warning to be adopted by the Trustees on March 3rd at 11 AM. The bond vote will be part of the ballot voting on April 8th.

There were no further comments.

VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

2. Discuss Information Sheet on Bond Vote for Capital Projects

Andrew Brown reviewed the question and answer sheet on the bond vote. The final version will be ready by March 4th. The information sheet explains the projects to be paid for with the bond and the cost burden of the bond on the taxpayer.

5. NEW BUSINESS

1. Approve/Sign Maintenance Agreement with Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) for West Street Extension Traffic Light

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to approve and sign the maintenance agreement with VTrans for the traffic light and crossing at the intersection of Route 15 and West Street Extension. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

2. Draft Trustees Report for 2013 Annual Report

The Trustees reviewed the draft report.

3. Discuss March 2014 Newsletter

Additions to the newsletter include: state of the village report, bond vote Q&A, water and sewer bill information, and the proposed budget.

6. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Meeting Schedule

- March 11, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 25, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 8, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 22, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- May 13, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- May 27, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- June 10, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- June 24, 2014 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

Special Meetings/Events:

- March 3, 2014 @ 11 AM – Special Meeting to Adopt Warning for Bond Vote
- April 2, 2014 @ 6 PM – Community Supper before Annual Meeting
- April 2, 2014 @ 7 PM – Village Annual Meeting
- April 8, 2014 @ 7 AM – 7 PM – Australian ballot voting
- May 24, 2014 @ 10 AM – Memorial Day Parade

2. Insurance Conference

Pat Scheidel will attend a conference in San Francisco in March on insurance.

7. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS & READING FILE

1. Board Member Comments

- There was discussion of the donation in memory of George Tyler's father which is a gesture the village has done in the past with others.
- Elaine Sopchak mentioned the village hosting a mural contest to cover the graffiti on the McClure building along the multi-use path between Central Street and Grove Street to help beautify the area. Money from the land acquisition fund could be used for a prize of \$5,000 to the winner of the mural. The owners of the building must first be contacted for permission to paint the building. Lauren Morrisseau noted the public must vote on use of money from the land acquisition fund. Other sources of funding could be researched, perhaps a public/private funding effort or community development funds. Pat Scheidel commented a mural can encourage walking and visiting the area which could lead to even more activities and improvements in the downtown village area.

2. Reading file:

- Minutes of Planning Commission (2/6/14)
- VLCT 2014 Spring Selectboard Institute 3/22/14

8. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

- 1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings (2/11/14)**
- 2. Approve Warrants including check #10048766 through #10048864 totaling \$506,483.91**
- 3. Approve Amendment to Personnel Regulations**
- 4. Approve Banner Applications for Events at CVE**
- 5. Approve Request to Close Maple Street for Little League Parade 5/3/14**

VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan 

WARNING
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 2 & 8, 2014

The legal voters of the Village of Essex Junction are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Essex Community Educational Center on Educational Drive in the Village of Essex Junction on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 7:00 PM to act upon any of the following articles not involving voting by Australian ballot, said meeting to be adjourned to reconvene at the Essex Community Educational Center, on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 to vote for Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot, said voting by Australian ballot to begin at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the voters act upon the report of the auditor?

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters approve an annual General Fund Budget in the amount of \$3,468,826 for fiscal year July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, \$2,942,914 of which is to be levied in taxes against the Village Grand List?

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters approve holding the 2015 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 to act upon any articles not involving voting by Australian ballot and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 to vote for the Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot?

ARTICLE 4. To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting?

BALLOT QUESTIONS

ARTICLE 5. To elect Village officers required by law including: Moderator (one year term); two Village Trustees (three year terms); one Library Trustees (five year term)?

Dated this 25th day of February, 2014

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By:


George A. Tyler, President

Dan Ketin, Vice President

Lori Houghton, Trustee

Andrew Brown, Trustee

Elaine Sopchak, Trustee

ATTEST:


Susan McNamara-Hill, Village Clerk