



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
7:15 PM (or immediately following
Village Trustees Meeting)

E-mail: manager@essex.org

www.essexjunction.org
www.essex.org

Phone: (802) 878-1341

The Selectboard and Trustees meet together to discuss and act on joint business. Each board votes separately on action items.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [7:15 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Approve creation of Essex Housing Commission
 - b. Approve outreach plan for 2020 merger process
 - c. Discuss creation of Greater Essex 2020 Companion Facebook Page for events
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve application for Emerald Ash Borer Management Grant
 - b. Approve minutes: November 26, 2019 – Joint Meeting (Trustees only)
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Email from David Gunn on behalf of Karen Horn re: U.S. Census Information
 - c. Letter from Boys & Girls Club of Burlington re: gift in memory of Rod Willingham
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. An executive session is not anticipated
9. **ADJOURN**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair or President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-1341.

Certification: 01/10/2020 *Amitchell*

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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 14, 2020**

SELECTBOARD: Elaine Haney, Chair; Annie Cooper; Max Levy (Andrew Watts and Patrick Murray not in attendance).

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; Amber Thibeault; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; (George Tyler not in attendance).

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/ Assistant Manager; Robin Pierce, Village of Essex Junction Community Development Director; Darren Schibler, Town of Essex Community Development Planner.

OTHERS PRESENT: Maura Collins; Nick Meyer; Michael Nosek; Ken Signorello; Margaret Smith; Neil Watson; Mia Watson; Irene Wrenner.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Trustees back to order from recess, and Elaine Haney called the Essex Selectboard to order, to enter into the Special Joint Meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard at 7:26 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

With no changes to the agenda, approval was not required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public at this time.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approve creation of Essex Housing Commission

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees approve DAN KERIN as the Chair Pro Tem for this agenda item. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Brown recused himself from this agenda item due to a potential conflict of interest with his employer and joined the audience to participate as a community member.

Mr. Kerin introduced the issue of whether the Village Trustees and Selectboard would approve the creation of an Essex Housing Commission. He recapped the recent events leading up to this, including the adoption of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan on November 26, 2019, at which time the boards instructed staff to develop a proposal for a joint Town and Village housing commission. Mr. Schibler explained that staff collaborated with Maura Collins and Mia Watson of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) to develop a charter for such a commission. He added that the proposed charter outlines roles, responsibilities and structure of the committee and includes a potential job description. Mr. Shibler and Ms. Collins clarified that the commission will focus overall housing, not only affordable housing. They described other areas of focus, including rental and housing accessibility and said they will consult the Health

55 Officer as needed. Mr. Teich discussed a vision that the commission be long-standing,
56 address relevant needs and be made up of experts in the field from Essex and potentially
57 beyond. Mr. Chawla, Mr. Kerin and Ms. Haney clarified the commission member appointment
58 process of interviewing candidates at joint meetings. Mr. Chawla suggested that the
59 commission regularly provide updates of its work to the boards.
60

61 Ms. Haney opened the floor to community comments. Mr. Meyer requested that the
62 commission implement a rental home registry and inspection process to ensure community
63 safety. Ms. Smith expressed concern that the wording in the charter could result in all of the
64 people on the committee being from the Village of Essex Junction, and not equally
65 represented from the Village and Town outside the Village.
66

67 **MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by ANNIE COOPER, that the Selectboard approve**
68 **the proposal for a Joint Essex Housing Commission and authorize staff to begin**
69 **advertising for members. The motion passed 3-0.**
70

71 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees approve the**
72 **proposal for a Joint Essex Housing Commission and authorize staff to begin advertising**
73 **for members. The motion passed 3-0.**
74

75 **At 7:41, Mr. Brown returned to the meeting.**
76

77 **b. Approve outreach plan for 2020 merger process**

78 Ms. Haney introduced the issue of outreach for the 2020 merger process, explaining the goal
79 of engaging in discussions with residents on the topics important to them. This would take
80 place at public meetings on the weekends, with snacks and childcare available. She proposed
81 a four-month timeline for the meetings based on topics: why we chose merger, taxation,
82 representation, and impacts on departments and finances. The board members discussed the
83 challenge of constraining conversations to specific topics but agreed with the importance of
84 encouraging community feedback. Mr. Kerin and Ms. Cooper brainstormed additional
85 outreach strategies including attending events, sharing leaflets and conducting on-the-spot
86 polling. Mr. Teich discussed possible polling software. Mr. Chawla suggested that busing be
87 available to the meetings and Mr. Teich requested that board members work with staff to
88 identify dates and accessible locations.
89

90 Ms. Haney opened the floor to public comments. Ms. Wrenner spoke about the Town outside
91 the Village being delineated through polling software. She also expressed her concern that
92 board members may not use the feedback gained from the public meetings to help inform the
93 merger process. She mentioned various efforts that she felt did not seem to inform decision
94 making. Ms. Haney countered with examples that she viewed as effective feedback-gathering
95 efforts and described how compromise in decision-making served a role when multiple
96 opinions on the topics related to this merger were presented.
97

98 **MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by ANNIE COOPER, that the Selectboard approve an**
99 **outreach plan as designed in the memo for the 2020 merger process. The motion passed**
100 **3-0.**
101

102 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees approve**
103 **the outreach program as presented. The motion passed 4-0.**
104

105 **c. Discuss creation of Greater Essex 2020 Companion Facebook Page for events**

106 Mr. Duggan introduced the issue of whether the boards would approve the creation of a
107 GreaterEssex2020.org companion Facebook page for the purpose of creating Facebook
108 "Events" to invite the public to public meetings regarding merger. The Selectboard members
109 and Trustees discussed and agreed that it is important for the handler of the page to ensure
110 that any "comments sections" on the page or on any of the events are not visible or used by
111 the public. Mr. Levy pointing out that there is no policy written that identifies how to handle
112 these types of comment and Mr. Kerin added that the page should clearly state how to
113 forward questions to staff, Selectboard members and Trustees. Mr. Chawla reminded the
114 board members that when an event is shared by someone on their personal pages, they will
115 not be able to control comments made on these other pages.
116

117 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees approve the**
118 **creation of a Greater Essex 2020 companion Facebook page for the primary purpose of**
119 **creating Facebook Events for public meetings regarding the merger, with comments**
120 **turned off. The motion passed 4-0.**
121

122 **ANNIE COOPER made a motion, seconded by MAX LEVY, that the Selectboard approve**
123 **the creation of a Greater Essex 2020 companion Facebook page for the primary purpose of**
124 **creating Facebook Events for public meetings regarding the merger, with comments**
125 **turned off. The motion passed 3-0.**
126

127 **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

128

- 129 a. **Approve application for Emerald Ash Borer Management Grant**
130 b. **Approve minutes: November 26, 2019 – Joint Meeting (Trustees only)**
131

132 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to that the Trustees approve**
133 **the Consent Agenda. The motion passed 4-0.**
134

135 **MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by ANNIE COOPER, that the Selectboard approve**
136 **the Consent Agenda with Selectboard comments:**

- 137 • Mr. Levy praised the inclusion of Emerald Ash Borer management information.

138 **The motion passed 3-0.**
139

140 **7. READING FILE**

141 a. **Board Member Comments**

- 142 • Mr. Levy announced that he will not be seeking a fifth term on the Selectboard in March
143 2020.
144 • Mr. Chawla, Annie Cooper and Mr. Teich discussed the success of the Gather at the
145 Table event, noting up to 500 people in attendance, good food and active community
146 engagement in planned activities. They described it as professionally executed and
147 expressed thanks to the committee who organized it.

148 b. **Email from David Gunn on behalf of Karen Horn re: U.S. Census Information**

149 c. **Letter from Boys & Girls Club of Burlington re: gift in memory of Rod Willingham**

150

151 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 152 a. ***An executive session is not anticipated**
153 An executive session did not take place.
154

155 **9. ADJOURN**

156

157

158 **MAX LEVY** made a motion, seconded by **ANNIE COOPER**, for the Selectboard to adjourn
159 the meeting. The motion passed 3-0 at 8:32 PM.

160

161 **ANDREW BROWN** recessed the meeting to enter back into the meeting of the Village of
162 **Essex Junction Trustees** at 8:32 PM.

163

164

165 Respectfully Submitted,

166 Cathy Ainsworth

167 Recording Secretary