

**SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
DRAFT JOINT MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 23, 2020**

SELECTBOARD: Elaine Haney, Chair; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Patrick Murray; Andy Watts.

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault.

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager; Ron Hoague, Chief of Police; Robert Kissinger, Lieutenant; Owiso Makuku, Town of Essex Community Development Director; Sarah Macy, Assistant Manager/Finance Director; Linda Mahns, Administrative Assistant; Robin Pierce, Village of Essex Junction Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: John Adams; Peg Adoriso; Kevin Collins; Annie Cooper; Patty Davis; Ethan Lawrence; Roseanne Prestipino; Ken Signorello; Margaret Smith; Joyce Stannard; Mike Thorne; Seamus Walsh; Irene Wrenner; Julie ____.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order for the joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard at 6:31 PM.

Ms. Haney called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order for the joint meeting with the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees at 6:31 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Mr. Duggan requested that the boards remove item 6e from the agenda: Discussion of and potential action on whether to mail ballots to voters and to send a letter to the Essex delegation to seek Secretary of State to extend mail-in balloting for local elections.

Mr. Duggan suggested that the Selectboard consider the addition of new item 6e, Discussion of draft merger charter relating to appointing vs. selecting a moderator. The board members requested that the moderator discussion be moved to the December 7th agenda.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, to strike item 6e from the agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees remove item 6e from the agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Ms. Stannard verified that a comment related to the parking ordinance would be heard in item 5a.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public hearing to consider final passage of revised provisions to Title 7, Motor Vehicles, Traffic and Parking of the Town of Essex Municipal Ordinance

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing with the Trustees at 6:38 PM.

Ms. Haney opened the public hearing with the Selectboard at 6:38 PM.

53 Mr. Duggan introduced the revised section of the Municipal Ordinance, Title 7, Motor Vehicles,
54 Traffic, and Parking and explained the processes for public hearings and adoption by the
55 Selectboard and the Trustees. Lt. Kissinger said that some changes to the ordinance were minor:
56 spellings, corrections, etc. He said they also added parking restrictions on Brooks and Warner
57 Avenues and no municipal overnight parking. Mr. Duggan said changes included title
58 clarifications, including “Manager” instead of “Unified Manager” and “legislative body” instead of
59 “Selectboard.”
60

61 Ms. Stannard described parking issues on Warner Ave. and Brooks Ave. related to Pearl Street
62 Park use. She said that the plan for restricting parking, as described in the revised ordinance,
63 punishes residents and is not the best solution to solve the parking problems. Ms. Stannard
64 described an unofficial expansion of parking and discussed people’s unsafe and problematic
65 parking behaviors. She described a meeting she had with Essex Parks and Recreation Director
66 Ally Vile regarding possible solutions, including: clearing and reconstructing some road frontage;
67 making marked, pull-out parking spaces; and posting signs to educate people. Ms. Stannard said
68 some walkers, cyclists, and dog walkers do not follow rules and some drivers speed. She thinks
69 restricting parking on the street will move the problems but not solve them. She suggested that if
70 the alternate parking strategies discussed with Ms. Vile do not solve the problem, they should
71 consider removing the park’s disk golf area or making the park restricted to only neighboring
72 residents. She described how the addition of new development could make the problem bigger.
73 Later in the meeting, Ms. Stannard requested they remove parking restrictions on Warner Ave.
74 and Brooks Ave. from the ordinance so other options could be discussed.
75

76 Mr. Walsh said there is not enough time in the public hearings on the ordinance to adequately
77 consider alternative options for Warner and Brooks Ave. parking. He said parking on this street is
78 a quality-of-life issue and includes safety concerns. He talked about the need to balance
79 recreation for adults and children at Pearl Street Park. He said unsafe adult behaviors, along with
80 a large number of cars, cyclists, speeders, traffic, and volume of people, are ingredients of a
81 dangerous situation.
82

83 Ms. Cooper said the Warner Ave. and Brooks Ave. parking issue needs more discussion and she
84 noted that the Village Bike/Walk Advisory Committee is also considering the issue.
85

86 Ms. Davis said safety should be a priority. She said when the volume of people using parks is
87 big, safety is important and should be monitored by the police.
88

89 Mr. Brown and Ms. Haney closed the public hearing at 7:03 PM.
90

91 The Trustees and Selectboard members discussed the Warner Ave. and Brooks Ave. parking
92 issue. Mr. Chawla shared a picture of the road to illustrate the issue and suggested mitigating
93 concerns. Lt. Kissinger explained that these roads were added to the ordinance in an attempt to
94 help residents. Mr. Brown suggested a next step could be for the Police, Community
95 Development, Parks & Rec, and residents to discuss and resolve the issue.
96

97 Mr. Watts said that by restricting parking in municipal lots overnight, people’s access to a car
98 charger would be limited during the ideal time of day to charge. He suggested making an
99 exception for this spot. Lt. Kissinger said he would include language that excludes the spot from
100 the ordinance’s new restriction, with the exception of during the Winter Parking Ban.
101

102 Mr. Watts identified redundancies in section 7.04.040, on page 12, where numbers 206-210 are
103 the same as 212-215. The Selectboard and Trustees talked with Lt. Kissinger about differences
104 between the Town and Village ordinances. He and Chief Hoague said the Town’s version would
105 include Village and Town outside the Village roads, but the Village’s version would only include

106 Village roads. Mr. Teich said the Warner Ave. and Brooks Ave. issue spans Village and Town
107 outside the Village areas and decisions should be consistent to avoid confusion. The board
108 members referenced an updated version of the ordinance sent to them by email.
109

110 **6. BUSINESS ITEMS**

111 **a. Consider final passage of revised provisions to Title 7, Motor Vehicles, Traffic and Parking**
112 **of the Town of Essex Municipal Ordinance (Selectboard) and Title 8, Motor Vehicles,**
113 **Traffic and Parking, Village of Essex Junction Municipal Code (Trustees)**

114 The Selectboard members and Trustees considered next steps for the ordinance. They talked
115 about the Selectboard's requirement of holding one more hearing and the Trustees' process,
116 which could pass their ordinance at their next meeting. Mr. Chawla asked if the Village would
117 need to abdicate to the Selectboard to change their ordinance in the future and Mr. Watts
118 wondered if an MOU should be established to allow the Village to make decisions on the roads in
119 their municipality. Ms. Haney suggested that another hearing take place after all changes to the
120 ordinances are incorporated, including removing the Warner Ave. and Brooks Ave. parking
121 restrictions. She suggested warning a second hearing, on a new draft of the revised ordinance,
122 for the joint board meeting on the 28th of December.
123

124 Ms. Davis wondered if the public parking lot at Five Corners could be used for the Pearl Street
125 parkgoers. The board members clarified daytime use of this lot and its distance from the park.
126

127 **b. Introduction and discussion of cannabis tax and regulation legislation**

128 Mr. Pierce summarized his memo regarding Vermont's cannabis tax and regulation legislation.
129 He talked about a change to the legislation that allows municipalities to opt-in to allow
130 dispensaries. He said a Cannabis Control Board will be established to issue licenses and to set
131 up metrics for cannabis sales in the State. Mr. Pierce mentioned that there would be no fiscal
132 benefit to Essex without a local options tax. Mr. Duggan and Mr. Teich wondered how much of a
133 priority this is for the boards and asked for input about how they would like to proceed with
134 outreach to determine whether the community wants to opt-in to allowing dispensaries.
135

136 The board members discussed the cannabis issue. Mr. Murray said sufficient time would need to
137 be given to vendors, so they can establish security measures, if they want to establish a business
138 in Essex. He suggested that by spring 2020 they should determine if Essex will opt-in. He said
139 that although there is no tax benefit to opting-in, consumer traffic could yield a fiscal benefit. Mr.
140 Watts wondered if elected officials could make the decision or if an off-schedule vote would need
141 to take place. Mr. Chawla stressed the importance of considering walk-to-school traffic and
142 population density when determining sale locations. He said that zoning, the Economic
143 Development Commission, and the Planning Commission should be involved. He suggested that
144 outreach begin right after budget season because public engagement can take time. Mr. Brown
145 suggested that the board members stay attentive to the legislation's progress at the state level.
146 Ms. Haney said that because the Town Selectboard serves as the municipality's liquor control
147 board, they may also serve as a cannabis control board.
148

149 Ms. Cooper thanked the board members for having the conversation on this topic.
150

151 Ms. Davis said the Planning Commission is good at involving residents in decision-making, and
152 this should be considered, moving forward.
153

154 **c. Consider approval of CivicClerk administrative program**

155 Mr. Teich introduced Ms. Mahns to the boards as the new Administrative Assistant. Ms. Mahns
156 provided an overview of the proposed CivicClerk administrative program, an add-on feature of
157 CivicPlus. She described its work-flow functions for meetings, including managing agendas,

158 compiling packets, scheduling agenda items and producing minutes. She said Ms. Getchell and
159 Mr. Paluba began discussing and researching software solutions for work-flow inefficiencies in
160 this area a year ago.
161

162 The board members discussed the request for approval of CivicClerk. They talked about the cost
163 of the program. Mr. Watts said he would prefer to not add an off-budget item which would include
164 a recurring fee. Ms. Mahns clarified that the annual cost increase, after the second year would be
165 3%. Mr. Chawla suggested that the municipality better leverage their Office 365 subscription. He
166 said spring would be a better time to consider the program. The board members discussed
167 program functionality, including the maximum number of boards that could be managed by it. Mr.
168 Duggan provided an overview of the current processes to prepare for and follow up from board
169 meetings. Mr. Brown said approving the program would result in a net positive return on
170 investment. Ms. Haney said the cost of the program is less than .06% of the budget.
171

172 Ms. Cooper praised Ms. Getchell and Ms. Mahns for their work and said she trusts their direction.
173 She thinks staff would benefit from the program's work-flow efficiencies.
174

175 Ms. Wrenner thanked staff for their work with meeting preparation and minutes. She suggested
176 they check with other municipalities using the program, as they consider it.
177

178 Mr. Signorello suggested making sure that everyone is on board with adapting to the new
179 processes of the program. He asked if other programs were considered.
180

181 Mr. Duggan clarified for Mr. Watts that the cost of the program would come from the Manager's
182 and Administration budget, but the boards would need to decide what percentage to bill the two
183 municipalities. Mr. Teich suggested the cost be billed 50/50.
184

185 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, seconded by ELAINE HANEY, that the Selectboard**
186 **approve the purchase of the CivicClerk 8 enhancement software. The vote tied 2-2, with Mr.**
187 **Watts and Ms. Hill-Fleury dissenting, so the motion failed.**
188

189 **d. Discussion of and potential action on improvements to Veterans Memorial at Five Corners**
190 Mr. Teich described the proposal for improvements to the Veterans Memorial, in preparation for
191 its 20th anniversary on Veteran's Day, and asked if the boards would like to share the cost of
192 repairs. He said Grounds & Facilities Director Harlan Smith and Essex Junction Recreation and
193 Parks would take the lead on this project. Ms. Hill-Fleury and Mr. Brown requested a bid be ready
194 in time for budget discussions. Mr. Watts said some residents still have a concern that a beloved
195 tree was removed in order to build the fountain. A majority of the Selectboard agreed to move
196 forward with the Village on the project, and Mr. Watts said he wanted to consider the financial
197 cost of the project first.
198

199 ~~e. Discussion of and potential action on whether to mail ballots to voters and to send a letter~~
200 ~~to the Essex delegation to seek Secretary of State to extend mail in balloting for local~~
201 ~~elections~~
202

203 **7. READING FILE**

204 **a. Board member comments**

205 • Mr. Teich said that there is no legislation being considered at this time that would allow all of
206 the voters to receive mail-in ballots, as was done during the November election. He thanked
207 everyone who made November voting a success.

208 **b. Upcoming meeting schedule**

209 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**
210

- 211 a. An executive session is not anticipated
212 An executive session did not take place.

213 **9. ADJOURN**
214

215 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ELAINE HANEY, for the Selectboard to**
216 **adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 9:07 PM.**

217
218 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, for the Trustees to adjourn the**
219 **meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 9:07 PM.**
220

221 Respectfully Submitted,
222 Cathy Ainsworth
223 Recording Secretary
224