



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 6 Lincoln St.
(Brownell Library)
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, August 31, 2022
6:30 PM

E-mail: manager@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6951

This meeting will be in-person in the Kolvord Room at the Brownell Library, 6 Lincoln Street, and available remotely. Options to join the meeting remotely:

- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free audio only): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825; Passcode: 635787

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 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. Discuss Land Development Code updates
 - b. Approve awarding backhoe bid to Milton CAT
 - c. *Discuss real estate purchase or lease options
6. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Check warrants: #17315 (08/15/2022); #17316 (08/ 19/2022)
 - b. Approve minutes: August 10, 2022; August 18, 2022
 - c. Approve Power of Attorney by Applicant form
 - d. Approve Pleasant Street Block Party application: September 17
 - e. Approve becoming a member municipality of IDEAL (Inclusive, Diversity, Equity, Action, & Leadership) Vermont
 - f. Approve intent to terminate Consolidation of Public Works Services Agreements
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Letter from Joyce Stannard re. local purchasing
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*An executive session may be necessary to discuss securing or negotiating real estate purchase or lease options
9. **ADJOURN**

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**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
August 31, 2022**

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Andrew Brown, President; Raj Chawla, Vice President; Amber Thibeault, George Tyler.

ADMINISTRATION: Wendy Hysko, Library Director/Interim Co-Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation & Parks Director/Interim Co-Manager;

OTHERS PRESENT: John Alden, Heidi Clark, Diane Clemens, Scott McCormack.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Brown called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Mr. Brown asked to move Consent Item #6G to Business Item #5B.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5-0.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from the public on items not on the agenda
None.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discuss Land Development Code updates

Mr. Luck said that this is an initial discussion of the updates to the Land Development Code (LDC) and that they can continue the discussion at their September 14th meeting if they have questions and potentially need to engage with the Planning Commission to answer them.

Mr. Kerin noted that the schedule of fees/fines had updates and that some of the fees increased slightly and others doubled. He asked what methodology or logic was used to determine the increases. Mr. Brown said that some of those updates came from budget meetings a few years ago where there was a request to increase the fees. Mr. Alden added that the Junction's fees were amazingly low compared to other communities, which are triple or quadruple what the Junction charges. He said that the Planning Commission believed that these changes would attempt to catch up to what is reasonable and fair market value fees. Mr. Kerin asked about the methodology for changing the fees. Mr. Alden replied that it may appear haphazard, but they reviewed each of the fee line items independently to determine increases. Mr. Chawla asked if this should be reviewed every year to ensure parity with neighboring communities and whether there is a way to identify a process to catch up and mitigate some of that disparity. He noted that the Junction wants to start doing more code and ordinance enforcement, which will be expensive. Mr. Alden agreed and noted that the fees have not been adequately scrutinized for some years since the LDC is only updated every five years or so. Mr. Kerin asked how the Junction's fees compare to the Town's fees. Mr. Alden replied that the Junction's fees are lower. Mr. Kerin said that the enforcement aspect needs to be implemented equitably across the Junction, and Mr. Alden agreed. He said that one of the Planning Commission's goals was to more clearly articulate requirements for developers.

Mr. Chawla asked to what extent the new changes take climate change into account in the next 7-10 years. He noted that the updates don't mention charging facilities for electric cars and electric bikes but

54 acknowledged the thoughtful changes around more emphasis placed on multi-modal transportation. Mr.
55 Alden replied that the Planning Commission made a number of updates to the LDC to align its language
56 with State mandates around the commercial/residential energy code, but the LDC itself does not include
57 much language around how to deal with climate change. He noted a climate change task force at the
58 State level, which has developed a road map of guidelines for how to achieve climate change targets
59 for 2030 and 2050. Mr. McCormack added that the Junction should discuss what they want their own
60 next steps and goals to be around climate change. Mr. Brown and Mr. Chawla agreed. Ms. Clemens
61 said that there should be a robust discussion between the City Council, Planning Commission, and
62 Development Review Board when they conduct the next update to the Comprehensive Plan and
63 incorporate more climate change goals.

64
65 Mr. Brown noted that there were updates to the Residential 1 (R1) and Residential 2 (R2) zoning districts
66 to allow for duplex/triplex/quadplex housing (where previously only single-family dwellings were
67 permitted). He asked why these updates are occurring all at once and not in a tiered or phased approach.
68 Mr. Chawla said that the Junction needs to make the community more welcoming and affordable, and
69 this does try to address that. He asked whether the Housing Committee and Bike/Walk Committee
70 offered feedback on LDC updates. He said that he would like to hear their thoughts on these changes
71 prior to a public hearing on the LDC updates. Mr. Alden, the former chair of the Planning Commission
72 (and now the chair of the Development Review Board [DRB]), noted that the Planning Commission met
73 with the Housing Committee several times and that the entire LDC update process was managed by
74 Regina Mahony (who is now the new City Manager). He said that the Planning Commission feels
75 comfortable that the LDC updates make the community more welcoming and provide more capacity in
76 the Junction. He said that they wanted to permit higher density uses in certain districts while still
77 maintaining adherence to setback and parking requirements. He said that the DRB must still review and
78 approve all applications to ensure adherence to those requirements but that certain lots will be able to
79 take advantage of that added flexibility around density.

80
81 Mr. Brown said that in terms of the next steps, once the City Council has concluded its review and
82 approval of the cannabis requirements, they will return to the remainder of the LDC updates through the
83 public hearing process and potentially have another discussion (also involving the Planning
84 Commission).

85
86 b. Approve awarding backhoe bid to Milton CAT

87 Mr. Brown noted that the amount that was budgeted for the backhoe bid was \$114,000, and the bid
88 selected by staff was \$124,000 (and was also the bid with the highest dollar amount). He asked how the
89 funding gap would be addressed. Mr. Luck replied that the equipment from Milton CAT is higher quality
90 and has a higher trade-in value and that the Junction has experienced very high-quality service from
91 Milton CAT. He said that the Junction also has several other pieces of equipment from Milton CAT, and
92 it is convenient to use the same vendor for servicing purposes. Mr. Luck also confirmed that there is an
93 existing fund source for the extra \$10,000.

94
95 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the City Council award**
96 **the bid for the backhoe to Milton CAT for the net amount of \$124,000. The motion passed 5-0.**

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98 c. *Discuss real estate purchase or lease options
99 See item #8a below.

100
101 **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

102 a. Check warrants: #17315 (08/15/2022); #17316 (08/19/2022)

103 b. Approve Minutes: August 10, 2022; August 18, 2022

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- 104 c. Approve Power of Attorney by Applicant form
105 d. Approve Pleasant Street Block Party application: September 17
106 e. Approve becoming a member municipality of IDEAL (Inclusive, Diversity, Equity, Action, &
107 Leadership) Vermont
108 f. Approve intent to terminate Consolidation of Public Works Services Agreements
109

110 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the consent agenda. The**
111 **motion passed 5-0.**
112

113 7. **READING FILE**

- 114 a. Board Member Comments: no comments.
115 b. Letter from Joyce Stannard re: local purchasing
116

117 8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- 118 a. *An executive session may be necessary to discuss securing or negotiating real estate purchase or
119 lease options
120

121 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that City Council go into**
122 **executive session to discuss negotiating or securing real estate purchase or lease options under**
123 **the provisions of 1 V.S.A. 313(A)(2) to include the interim co-managers. The motion passed 5-0.**
124

125 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to exit executive session. The**
126 **motion passed 5-0 at 8:24 P.M.**
127

128 9. **ADJOURN**

129
130 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to adjourn the meeting. The motion**
131 **passed 5-0 at 8:25 P.M.**
132

133 Respectfully Submitted,
134 Amy Coonradt