



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

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, October 26, 2022
6:30 PM

E-mail: admin@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be in-person at 2 Lincoln Street and available remotely. Options to watch or join the meeting remotely:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#)
- **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. *Interviews and consider appointments to the Tree Advisory Committee
 - b. Discussion of 1 Main Street Park Design
 - c. Discussion and consideration of the Multijurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan and Essex Junction Annex
 - d. Conversation with Police Chief Ron Hoague
 - e. Discussion and consideration of Library Roof Bid
 - f. Discussion and consideration of Acting Zoning Administrator Appointment
 - g. Discussion and consideration of Accountant II position addition
 - h. **Discussion and consideration of Contracts that are Exempt from Public Records Laws
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Check Warrants #17323 (10/07/2022); #17324 (10/14/2022); and #17325 (10/21/2022)
 - b. Approve minutes: October 12, 2022
 - c. Approve amendment of sanitation capital project
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board member comments
 - b. Brownell Library Report - September
 - c. Junction Jam Follow-up Memo
 - d. Joint Housing Committee Minutes: September 7, 2022; September 21, 2022; October 5, 2022
 - e. Planning Commission Minutes: October 6, 2022
 - f. Local Option Tax Outreach
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. *An executive session may be needed for the appointment of public officials
 - b. **An executive session may be needed to discuss contracts that are exempt from public records laws
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 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 President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the City Council, like all programs and activities of the City of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the City Manager's office at 802-878-6944 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 26, 2022**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Police Chief Ron Hoague;

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Burrows, David Burton, Essex ReTorter, Heidi Clark, Richard Hamlin, Nicole Klett, Bridget Meyer, Nick Meyer, Jess Morris, Mary Lou Reuter, Harlan Smith, Heidi, Ruby.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Councilor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

City Manager Mahony requested that the agenda be amended to remove Business Item 5h and Item 8b.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

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

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. *Interviews and consider appointments to the Tree Advisory Committee
Nicole Klett spoke about her interest in serving on the Tree Advisory Committee. She said that she is a new resident of Essex Junction and is interested in conservation and climate health. She said that if she is chosen to be on the committee, her focus would be on outreach to the community and education. Councilor Tyler asked about the applicant's background in freelance writing, and she provided more detail. Councilor Brown noted that the Tree Advisory Committee is very active and that a focus on outreach would be very helpful.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to approve Nicole Klett to the Tree Advisory Committee for a 3-year term. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Discussion of 1 Main Street Park Design

David Burton, a landscape designer, provided an update on the design for the 1 Main Street Pocket Park. He noted that the last time he was in front of the City Council, they jointly put together a list of considerations and constraints regarding the park. He said that a working group for the park design also added several items to that list. He noted that one consideration was for the park to be a Town green, plaza, or City park. He noted that they also fielded a survey to the public, and one prominent piece of feedback was to use materials in keeping with the historical context of the town, such as brick, granite, and wrought iron.

Mr. Burton presented a conceptual design for the park. He showed a bird's eye view of the conceptual plan. He noted multiple entryways into the park, the use of fences and plantings, and multiple sources

FINAL

54 of shade (such as temporary shadings and a central pergola). He then showed several 3-dimensional
55 views of the conceptual design, pointing out the prominent features, such as multi-level seating areas,
56 bike racks, the location of the trees, and the entrance to the Firebird Café.

57
58 Councilor Brown and Councilor Tyler both expressed support for this conceptual design and its features.

59
60 Mr. Burton noted that they conducted soil testing for the site, and the majority of the space was not
61 contaminated to a severe degree (though there were portions that would require remediation). He said
62 that because the soil testing came back favorably, there is more flexibility in design.

63
64 Mr. Burton noted that this design is above the proposed budget of \$200,000 in terms of its expenses,
65 but does not have firm estimates yet.

66
67 Councilor Kerin asked about considerations for lighting around the pergola or near the brick pillars. Mr.
68 Burton replied that he generally tries to get through the conceptual phase prior to designing the lighting,
69 since the infrastructure heavily influences the lighting. He said that there is a lot of opportunity for lighting
70 this space at night in an attractive and usable way.

71
72 Councilor Chawla asked when Mr. Burton would need feedback and what the next phase would be. Mr.
73 Burton said that the next phase would be exploratory and that he would like to get ballpark estimates on
74 construction costs from several contractors. Councilor Brown said that he would be comfortable moving
75 forward with this design, in order to get cost estimates and explore options for reducing cost. Councilor
76 Tyler agreed, and added that they could put funding into the upcoming budget to accommodate more
77 costs. He said that they may have resources outside of the General Fund budget.

78
79 Bridget Meyer said that this was a very collaborative process for the ad hoc working group.

80
81 Councilor Brown said that one option for additional revenue would be to offer people the opportunity to
82 pay to have their names etched in the bricks in the park.

83
84 c. Discussion and consideration of the Multijurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan and Essex Junction
85 Annex

86 City Manager Mahony noted that this is a document that is put together at the county level and that an
87 annex is put together for each municipality. She noted that these plans are in place to help mitigate for
88 and plan for potential hazards, for example, upgrading culverts in case of storms. She noted that there
89 is a deadline of October 31st for annex approvals to get into the full county plan. She said that if there is
90 a FEMA-declared disaster, this plan gets the municipality a better match rate with the State than if the
91 plan were not in place.

92
93 Chief Hoague said that this process started in February, in cooperation with emergency management
94 staff at the local level. He said that many of the parts of the plan were written prior to July 1st, so there
95 isn't much delineation between the Town and former Junction (now City). He said that this lack of
96 distinction doesn't negatively impact the City, but that it should be better-delineated and separated from
97 the Town in the next update. He further added that the City has its own local emergency management
98 plan that contains more detail than this county-level pan.

99
100 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, that the City Council adopt the All**
101 **Hazard Mitigation Plan in accordance with the attached Certificate of Adoption. The motion**
102 **passed 5-0.**

103
104 d. Conversation with Police Chief Ron Hoague

FINAL

105 Chief Hoague presented an update on the Police Department's current activities, trends over the last 5
106 years in terms of crime data, and staffing. He began by noting that the Police Department has provided
107 law enforcement services to the Town and Village (now City) of Essex since 1980, as well as dispatch
108 services for the local fire departments, rescue squads, public works, and Williston police (part time). He
109 spoke briefly about patrol, investigations, and support services. He noted that the department currently
110 has 26 full time sworn officers (and are authorized for 31), as well as a Community Affairs Liaison, 4
111 part-time officers, 4 full-time and 4 part-time dispatchers, a records clerk, an administrative assistant,
112 and an executive secretary. He noted that Essex has not seen the same staffing issues that other
113 municipalities' police department has, though they are having difficulty finding new qualified candidates.
114 He said that Essex is faring well with its current officer per capita staffing level.

115
116 Chief Hoague spoke briefly about the Police Department's training program, which includes use of force,
117 firearms, de-escalation, investigations, first aid, and mental health crisis. He said that they would like to
118 have more training in mental health crisis response. He noted that Essex is the first police department
119 in the State to purchase a virtual reality training tool, which provides more non use-of-force training
120 simulation than past modules.

121
122 He then touched upon the Police Department's work with Essex BEST (Building Equity, Solidarity, and
123 Trust), with the goal of strengthening positive relations between the community and the Police
124 Department.

125
126 Chief Hoague then spoke briefly about crime over the last several years. He noted that there has been
127 a spike in various crimes over the last several years, which is partially related to Covid and is in line with
128 Statewide trends. He noted that there was a decrease in crime rates between 2021 and 2022. He noted
129 that traffic stops have decreased from 2020-2022 in the City as the number of more serious crimes
130 increased during those years. He said that as other crime rates have decreased, the Police Department
131 is trying to increase enforcement for traffic violations.

132
133 Councilor Brown asked about how the types of calls the Police Department is receiving has changed
134 over the last several years. Chief Hoague replied that in the beginning of lockdown there were very few
135 calls overall, but that they saw an increase in domestic violence cases. He said that they saw more retail
136 thefts, larceny, and drug offenses increase in 2021 and into 2022, though those rates are leveling off.

137
138 Councilor Kerin asked how the City Council can support and help enhance the work that the Police
139 Department is doing to keep the City safe. Chief Hoague replied that the governing bodies can continue
140 to help support the Police Department's efforts in terms of traffic enforcement.

141
142 Councilor Chawla said that the Police Department has been extremely supportive of the Essex BEST
143 program and expressed appreciation for that support.

144
145 e. Discussion and consideration of Library Roof Bid

146 City Manager Mahony said that the replacement of the library roof was included in the Capital Plan, and
147 that they received two bids for this work. She acknowledged that it is a difficult time to find contractors,
148 and said that staff are recommending to reject the two bids, as they were either low-quality or too far out
149 of the City's budget.

150
151 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, the City Council reject the two bids**
152 **submitted for replacement of the library roof. The motion passed 5-0.**

153
154 f. Discussion and consideration of Acting Zoning Administrator Appointment

FINAL

155 City Manager Mahony said that she would like to become the Acting Zoning Administrator when the
156 current Assistant Zoning Administrator is unavailable, until such time that a new Community
157 Development Director is hired.

158
159 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the City Council appoint City**
160 **Manager Reginal Mahony as Acting Zoning Administrator until such time that a new Community**
161 **Development Director is hired, and when the Assistant Zoning Administrator is on leave. The**
162 **motion passed 5-0.**

163
164 g. Discussion and consideration of Accountant II position addition

165
166 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Council authorize the City**
167 **Manager to add the Accountant II position at Grade 8, and incorporate this addition in the next**
168 **full update of the Personnel Policy. The motion passed 5-0.**

169
170 h. ****Discussion and consideration of Contracts that are Exempt from Public Records Laws**
171 **This item was removed from the agenda.**

172
173 6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 174 a. Check warrants: #17323 (10/7/2022); #17324 (10/14/2022); and #17325 (10/21/2022)
- 175 b. Approve minutes: October 12, 2022
- 176 c. Approve amendment of sanitation capital project

177
178 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the consent agenda. The**
179 **motion passed 5-0.**

180
181 7. **READING FILE**

- 182 a. Board Member Comments: none.
- 183 b. Brownell Library Report – September
- 184 c. Junction Jam Follow-up Memo
- 185 d. Joint Housing Committee Minutes: September 7, 2022; September 21, 2022; October 5, 2022
- 186 e. Planning Commission Minutes: October 6, 2022
- 187 f. Local Option Tax Outreach

188
189 8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- 190 a. ***An executive session may be needed for the appointment of public officials**
191 **No executive session necessary.**
- 192 b. ****An executive session may be needed to discuss contracts that are exempt from Public Records**
193 **Laws**
194 **This item was removed from the agenda, so no executive session occurred.**

195
196 9. **ADJOURN**

197
198 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to adjourn the meeting. The motion**
199 **passed 4-0 at 7:56 P.M.**

200
201 Respectfully Submitted,
202 Amy Coonradt