

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2023**

COMMITTEE: Amber Thibeault, Chair; Kevin Collins; Nathan Doudera; Scott McCormick; Mike Plageman; Justin Rabidoux

ADMINISTRATION: Ricky Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Jess Morris, Finance Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Eustis

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Thibeault called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. New Member Introductions

All members and staff introduced themselves. Ms. Thibeault explained that Capital Committee meetings will generally last an hour.

b. Discussion on Potential Revisions to Ranking Criteria

Ms. Thibeault explained that all committee members rank projects at home based on the project criteria and that rankings are averaged at the next meeting. The ranking system has been unchanged since the start of the committee, and she explained that the “community support” ranking may no longer be necessary. Mr. Rabidoux said that he wanted to spend some more time utilizing the ranking system before he made any changes to it. Answering a question from Mr. McCormick, Ms. Thibeault said that mandates are very unusual. Answering a question from Mr. McCormick, Ms. Thibeault said that the “cost of deferral” refers to if it would cost more to fix a project later than at present. All decided that this would be reviewed in the future. Answering questions from Mr. Doudera and Mr. Plageman, Ms. Thibeault said that projects are generally ranked once or re-ranked as a group if several years have passed.

c. Initial Discussion on LOT Policy

Ms. Thibeault said that Essex Junction passed the Local Options Tax (LOT) last fall. The City Council has requested that the Capital Committee draft a policy detailing how to use these funds. Ms. Thibeault suggested allocating specific LOT funds for sidewalks. Answering a question from Mr. Plageman, Ms. Morris said that the City is able to keep 70% of the total amount collected, minus some fees. She said that she would share the most recent quarterly return with the Committee and said that the annual sum is expected to be around \$750,000. Ms. Morris said that the City Council has decided to cover some one-time expenses with the LOT, including grant matching, paving, and rebranding. Answering a question from Ms. Thibeault, Mr. Jones said that the City has a monetary figure per foot of sidewalk reconstruction that can be used in project estimation, although this would need to be revised for inflation. Mr. Rabidoux asked about the relationship between the LOT and the debt

schedule and capital improvement program. He also requested to see other examples of LOT policies. Ms. Morris said that the intention of the LOT is for it to be used for capital projects, as capital needs have been exceeding spending. However, this was discussed prior to knowing the amount of money that would be earned with the LOT. Ms. Morris said that the City pays \$400,000 per year in debt.

Mr. Eustis said that he would like to see the City stop future borrowing and using the LOT funds for capital needs. He also encouraged the Committee to complete some of the smaller projects that have been on the list for a long time. He suggested that the Committee do the worst pieces of sidewalks in the community rather than completing a full sidewalk project for a specific street. Mr. Collins asked if it would be possible to calculate how much would be needed to complete all of the projects on the list, as he was concerned that the City may not have enough saved to complete these in a timely manner. Ms. Thibeault suggested that this be discussed at the next meeting after the per-foot figure for sidewalks is available. She said that further discussion could occur once Ms. Morris has an opportunity to update the financial figures after summer construction is complete. Mr. Rabideaux will search for and send out other examples of LOT policies in other communities.

d. West Street Sidewalk and CCRPC Sidewalk Inventory Data Presentation at 7/26/23 Council Meeting

Ms. Thibeault said that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) presented their Sidewalk Inventory at the last City Council meeting. This detailed the condition of all paved, but not asphalt, sidewalks. Mr. Jones said that there are numerous map layers and data available with this project. Mr. Jones said that the Public Works Department could do small sidewalk projects, however, bigger jobs would require a sub-contractor. Ms. Thibeault said that she had heard significant complaints about the condition of the West Street sidewalks and that the worst sections would be redone utilizing LOT funds. Mr. Eustis expressed concern about temporary v. permanent fixes of sidewalk infrastructure.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES:

a. Approve Minutes: July 6, 2021

MIKE PLAGEMAN made a motion, seconded by NATHAN DOUDERA, to approve the minutes of July 6, 2021, and June 6, 2023. Motion passed 5-0-1, with JUSTIN RABIDOUX abstaining.

b. Approve Minutes: June 6, 2023

Discussed and voted upon with Item 5a.

6. ADJOURN

JUSTIN RABIDOUX made a motion, seconded by SCOTT MCCORMICK, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 6-0; the meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary