

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
OCTOBER 3, 2023**

**COMMITTEE:** Amber Thibeault, Chair; Kevin Collins; Karen Dolan; Scott McCormick; Mike Plageman; Justin Rabidoux

**ADMINISTRATION:** Ricky Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Rick Hamlin, City Engineer; Jess Morris, Finance Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

**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. LOT Policy Discussion**

Mr. Rabidoux presented a list of Vermont municipalities who have a Local Options Tax (LOT) and detailed their plans (if any) for using such funds. Some communities use LOT funds as a source of general revenue, and others have allocated these funds for specific purposes. He said that Essex Junction's options are open for utilizing the LOT in whatever model they feel is best. Mr. Rabidoux said that two municipalities have suggested waiting to determine how to use the funds until a few budget cycles have passed, noting recent natural disasters and uncertain economic times.

Ms. Dolan said that it is important to keep in mind why the LOT was originally developed. Ms. Thibeault said that it was intended for capital projects, which could be anything above \$10,000 with some exceptions. There is no clear definition of a capital project. Ms. Thibeault discussed the importance of maintaining an emergency fund and noted that there have been concerns from the public that some of the LOT funds have been allocated to non-capital projects, such as strategic planning and rebranding. Ms. Morris said that the original ballot item did not state that the LOT funds would be used for capital spending, however the discussions prior to the vote implied that it would be used for such.

Mr. McCormick said that the Planning Commission has been working on a rental registry and suggested that some of these funds be allocated to create a program to incentive landlords to make necessary repairs on rental units. Ms. Thibeault suggested that this be discussed after the registry is in place. Mr. Plageman expressed concern about the idea, and Ms. Thibeault said that she would suggest that this idea be reviewed by legal counsel. Mr. McCormick said that this would most likely fall under the Housing Trust Fund mechanism.

Ms. Thibeault said that she would be happy to use the town of Brandon as a model policy, as all members appeared to like it. She said that the updated figures on sidewalk costs would be available at the next meeting. Mr. Collins said that he thinks that it is a good idea to go through a few funding years prior to

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coming up with a plan. Mr. Rabidoux asked if there were any audit findings that showed any shortfalls or other concerns, of which the LOT funds could help remedy. Ms. Morris said no but said that the general fund balance could be increased to be in line with best practice. Ms. Thibeault said that this would be a City Council decision to make, and that this committee should focus on capital projects. Mr. Hamlin said that completing capital projects is an ongoing job, and that there will always be a need to fund other projects. Mr. Hamlin discussed different sidewalk types and what the best type of investment would be. Mr. Collins said that he had been getting questions from voters as to how the LOT is spent, and Mr. Hamlin said that the Capital Committee was instituted to allow the public more of a direct role in how projects are prioritized. Ms. Thibeault said that the City is launching a strategic planning process which will better determine how the public would best give input. Ms. Morris said that she would like to state that the LOT policy needs to be subject to the City Purchasing Policy for legal reasons. Ms. Thibeault said that the City Council will be working on the budget in December and said that she is unsure if this policy will be able to be approved by the next budget cycle.

**5. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES:**

**a. Approve Minutes: August 1, 2021**

**SCOTT MCCORMICK made a motion, seconded KEVIN COLLINS by to approve the minutes of August 1, 2023. Motion passed 6-0.**

**6. ADJOURN**

**KEVIN COLLINS made a motion, seconded by SCOTT MCCORMICK, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 6-0; the meeting adjourned at 6:48 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Darby Mayville  
Recording Secretary