

**TOWN OF ESSEX / CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
JOINT HOUSING COMMISSION  
Minutes of April 5, 2023.**

**City Representatives:** Katie Ballard, Chair; Gabrielle Smith, Vice Chair; Ned Daly, Ta-Tanisha Redditta.

**Town Representatives:** Emily Taylor, Clerk (joined at 3:10p); Rupesh Asher (left at 4:00p); Deb Flannery.

**Administration and Staff:** Kent Johnson, Regina Mahoney, Katherine Sonnick, Chris Yuen (joined at 3:10p).

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Ballard called the meeting to order at 3:06 PM. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

**2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

Roseanne Prestipino is present at today's meeting.

Jean McBride from the Essex Reporter is present at today's meeting.

**3. BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Approval of Minutes

Flannery made a motion, seconded by Smith, to approve the minutes of March 15, 2023. The motion passed 6-0-1.

b. Discussion and Planning related to the upcoming separation of the Joint Housing Commission

Discussion began by reviewing the current Housing Commission Charter.

Ideal capacity for each Commission would be five members. Quorum would be the majority needed to vote on motions and continue work of the Commission and would also impact the size of workgroups that form outside of Commission meetings to work on projects. There was discussion on whether the number for quorum needed to be a specific number of appointed Commissioners, or if it could be listed as majority. Quorum may not be the same in each Commission. Seven appointed members on each Commission would be ideal. The HC would like to have flexible language to allow for as many as possible. The HC would make a proposal to adjust the Charter to submit to the City Council and Select Board for approval.

The current Charter says three Commissioners must be residents. The HC will propose that the majority of Commissioners are residents of the respective municipality, so language will change from three Commissioners to four Commissioners. Beyond quorum and residency requirement, the remaining language in the Charters make sense to keep as is.

Smith asked what would need to happen to allow for the Commissions to separate and operate with fewer members. Ballard clarified that even without quorum, meetings can still be held but motions and votes can't be held. Ballard will work with Staff to make changes to the Charter and the HC will vote on adapting it at the April 19, 2023 meeting.

Ballard asked again if any Town representatives can take on a leadership position. Taylor confirmed she will continue to hold the role as Clerk as the Commission separates. Flannery and Asher confirmed they are able to take on a leadership position for the Town Commission. Ballard reiterated that the HC needs to identify the three roles beyond hearing commitment. Flannery,

Asher, and Taylor decided that Flannery would serve as interim Chair, Asher as interim Vice Chair, and Taylor as Clerk. Taylor is a representative of the Town which opens a future position for Clerk in the City Commission; Daly volunteered to take on the Clerk position. There is commitment amongst City representatives to hold leadership positions even if current positions shift.

Discussion then shifted to scheduling for meetings. It's been proposed to return to one meeting per month and adjust the length of meetings. Johnson offered from the staff perspective that having more time for Staff to focus on HC projects, rather than scheduling and organizing meetings, could give more capacity to work on HC items. Ballard cautioned against decreasing time spent on meetings and working on HC projects with formal separation only three months away.

Taylor made a motion to adjust the HC meetings from the first and third Wednesday of the month from 3:00-4:30p to the first and third Wednesday of the month from 3:30-4:30p. The motion failed. Taylor will follow up with Johnson via email about scheduling challenges.

Ballard outlined topics that will need to be wrapped up before Separation, including IZ and the HTF. Johnson advocated for summarizing the work the HC has done in the last three years on projects and outlining what worked well and what challenges were, could be helpful as Commission separates and other groups form to have a model to follow.

c. Updates on the Housing Trust Fund

This item will be on the next meeting's agenda for April 19, 2023.

d. Updates on Inclusionary Zoning

The HC will work to wrap IZ up and the topic will be on the agenda for May 3, 2023. Rental Registry will be revisited as well and Taylor will have context for the previous workgroup making connections with housing providers in the community and reviewing housing stock.

e. Updates on the Town Plan

Flannery provided an update that staff are summarizing the data collected from outreach sessions and working to provide the summary to the Select Board.

**4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**5. READING FILE**

There was no discussion on the reading file.

**6. ADJOURN**

Ballard adjourned the meeting at 4:20pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Emily Taylor, Clerk.