

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 5, 2025
DRAFT**

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, Chair; Scott McCormick, Vice-Chair; Elena Juodisius; Elijah Massey; Kirstie Paschall

ADMINISTRATION: Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Clemens called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

None.

4. MINUTES

a. April 3, 2025 & May 1, 2025

ELENA JUODISIUS made a motion, seconded by ELIJAH MASSEY, to approval of the minutes of April 3, 2025 and May 1, 2025, with changes. Motion passed 5-0.

May 1, 2025

-The spelling of Ms. Juodisius's first name will be corrected.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Updates on "Center" boundaries

Ms. Yuen presented a draft map from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). The CCRPC has taken into consideration the PC's recommendations to extend the Center designation to the Transit-Orientated Development (TOD) district. For that reason, the CCRPC is modifying the draft "Center" designation area to include the TOD study area, but to end at the Expo/the Dunkin Donuts along Pearl Street. Going down Park St, they are considering ending at River St to align with the City's zoning districts.

b. PC Recommendation for Tier 1B Status

Tier 1B is an opt-in program that will allow for Act 250 exemption for residential developments up to fifty units.

ELENA JUODISIUS made a motion, seconded by ELIJAH MASSEY, that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council request to have the Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area qualify and be mapped for Act 250 Tier 1B area status. Motion passed 5-0.

c. Animating Infrastructure Mural Grant

Mr. Massey said that Essex Junction has been invited to submit a full application based on the positive response to their pitch. This application is due on June 16th. The PC, as well as other local entities, have been requested to sign a letter of support for the project.

ELIJAH MASSEY made a motion, seconded by SCOTT MCCORMICK, to move that the Chair sign a letter on behalf of the Planning Commission in support of the City's Animating Infrastructure grant application to the Vermont Arts Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Connect the Junction TOD Master Plan Public Engagement

Mr. Yuen said that the draft plan is expected to be available to the public next week. He said that it is important to ask targeted questions and provide readable information to get the best feedback. Summary boards will be available online and for in-person events. The PC discussed the possibility of engaging the public at the Fourth of July event. Framework is contracted to do additional public engagement, such as focus groups and an open house. The plan will need to be adopted by the City Council. Mr. Massey suggested creating an interactive timeline and the utilization of stickers to show support/lack of support for specific ideas in the proposed plan. Ms. Juodisius suggested obtaining feedback on height and density in specific areas. Mr. McCormick suggested making a list of potential contentious ideas for feedback. Ms. Clemens said that it is important to make sure that the public knows that the plan is not complete and that public input is still being requested. Ms. Juodisius suggested framing questions by asking if specific ideas will make Essex Junction more vibrant, rather than if the person liked the idea. Mr. Yuen said that he will relay the feedback to Framework, and request that they make an outline of the summary boards and the online open house. Mr. McCormick and Mr. Massey suggested that more information be included to educate the community about the housing crisis and how some of these suggestions can assist in helping to solve it. Mr. Yuen shared the informational materials that will be in the document regarding the housing shortage, as well as the benefits of developing around public transit.

e. Review and Feedback on Printable Bike Route Map Draft

Mr. McCormick left the meeting.

Mr. Yuen said that staff has been working on developing a ~~comprehensive-printable~~ map ~~of the City's for~~ bike ~~facilities~~lanes and paths. This will be made available to the public and can be updated yearly. All Planning Commissioners reviewed the map. The PC discussed the formal v. informal paths. Ms. Pascall suggested better delineating highways and other less desirable places to bike. Mr. Massey asked about the process to increase trail networks, and Mr. Yuen suggested discussing this as a part of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Massey also said that it is important to have bike lanes to all the schools. PC members added additional areas where they were aware of bike lanes/amenities to the map.

f. Review and feedback on Municipal Code Chapter 18

Mr. Yuen said that tickets can be issued for zoning violations. He would like this tool to be available for more circumstances, including this chapter. He asked the PC what is reasonable in regulating junk on private property. He asked about screening regulations, and if it makes sense to be more lenient on things that are screened from view in some way. The PC discussed the volume of "junk" that would be allowable, noting that common sense would be used.

g. Upcoming Planning Commission Re-Appointments

Mr. Yuen said that annual reappointments are coming up. He encouraged all who are interested and up for re-appointments to reapply. A reorganization meeting will be held next month.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES

None.

7. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Yuen said that the Pearl Street Road diet is being scoped. The Amtrak station project is ongoing. The Hilton Hotel and 17 Park Street projects are in development.

8. ADJOURN

**ELENA JUODISIUS, made a motion, seconded by ELIJAH MASSEY, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed 4-0 at 8:35 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville