

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2025
DRAFT**

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Elijah Massey, Chair; Diane Clemens, Vice-Chair; Elena Juodisius; Finn Hamilton (non-voting); Scott McCormick; Kirstie Paschall
ADMINISTRATION: Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
OTHERS PRESENT: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Massey called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

None.

4. MINUTES

a. September 4, 2025

DIANE CLEMENS made a motion to approve the minutes of minutes, seconded by **SCOTT MCCORMICK** of September 4, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Update on Connect the Junction project public engagement and next steps

Mr. Yuen said that in-person and online participation has been occurring throughout the summer. Last Saturday was the in-person open house. Online participation was not as strong as in-person, which may have been due to the fact that the original version of the online open house was not mobile-friendly. The online open house will be available for an additional two weeks. The Planning Commission (PC) plans to hold an additional in-person opportunity on October 11th at the Meet Me on Main event. Clear direction from the City Council needs to be given regarding building heights to finalize this project. A joint meeting is proposed on November 6th for this purpose. The PC discussed public opinion on the issue and if additional outreach would be required. Building heights would need to be included in updates to the Land Development Code, which would require additional public input prior to final implementation. Essex Junction will be reviewing housing targets and determine when these could be reasonably reached when specific adjustments are made to the LDC. Ms. Clemens said that building heights should be discussed individually as the PC prior to making a recommendation. Mr. Yuen said that a recommendation could be given by the PC at a later date if they are not ready to make a recommendation immediately.

b. Review and Consideration of draft RFP for 2027 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Yuen said that the first draft of the Request for Proposals (RFP) is included in the packet. The plan expires in August of 2027, and a municipal planning grant needs to be spent by April of 2027. Mr. McCormick said that he would send additional comments to Mr. Yuen via e-mail and encouraged this

document to be user-friendly and applicable. He said that it should have action items rather than general goals. Mr. Yuen said that Comprehensive Plans can be very large projects and noted the \$40,000 budget for this project. Mr. McCormick encouraged the plan to be condensed and to only include applicable items.

c. Introduction of Housing Infill project collaboration with Burlington, South Burlington and Winooski and 802 Homes – Phase 3 of Homes for All

Mr. Yuen said that Essex Junction is in talks with South Burlington and Winooski to collaborate on an initiative on infill housing. Workshops will be rotated between the municipalities, as each one has slightly different regulations. This will also allow for additional speakers and other opportunities. This project will require volunteer and other engagement opportunities for the PC. Mr. McCormick discussed the staggering costs of construction in Vermont. Mr. Yuen said that Essex Junction has been shortlisted for a grant through the 802 Homes Initiative.

d. Update on mural grant

Mr. Massey said that the local review committee had their first meeting this afternoon. The committee reviewed the work plan and will move forward on the initial solicitation on thematic input, which will target young people and students. The community will be able to weigh in on artist and design selection prior to the development of the final work plan. The project report is due at the end of September 2026, and it is solely a design grant. Mr. Yuen requested that local match information for the second round of the grant be made available as soon as possible.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES

Ms. Clemens said that Williston's Comprehensive Plan took two years to approve and highlighted recent news articles related to housing. She discussed the work of the Essex Energy Committee in engaging the community.

7. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Yuen said that the consultants are working on a draft report on the Pearl Street multi-modal improvements project and plan on presenting to the City Council on November 12th. Municipal Day will be on October 17th.

8. ADJOURNMENT

SCOTT MCCORMICK made a motion, seconded by DIANE CLEMENS, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville