

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 19, 2013**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, John Alden, Aaron Martin, Nick Meyer, Amber Thibeault. (Andrew Boutin and David Nistico were absent.)

ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order
2. Audience for Visitors
3. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Work Session – Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update
6. Other Planning Commission Items
7. Adjournment

1. CALL TO ORDER

Diane Clemens called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

None.

3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 29, 2013

MOTION by Amber Thibeault, SECOND by Aaron Martin, to approve the minutes of 8/29/13 with the global correction of the name spelling of Henri De Marne. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

5. WORK SESSION – Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update

Copies of edits to the plan were provided to the Planning Commission (the information is also online). RPC staff will merge all the changes into one document for the next meeting (October 3, 2013) to be displayed on the flat screen for review/edit by the group.

There was discussion of how to get the public to participate in the update of the plan and understand the vision of the comprehensive plan and how that relates to the land development code of rules and regulations. Suggestions included:

- Using social media (Front Porch Forum and such);
- Posting a map in the meeting room and asking residents to come in and comment on development in the village (housing, commercial/retail, and such);
- Doing a “show and tell” on Channel 17;
- Posting notice of Planning Commission meetings as much as possible (1st and 3rd Thursday of the month);

- Posting proposed changes to the comprehensive plan on the website with an explanation of the reason for the changes;
- Having the Planning Department draft a press release explaining what the Planning Commission is responsible for doing and that the update of the village comprehensive plan is ongoing;
- Communicating at other community events (i.e. Heart & Soul) that the plan is being updated and note the meeting dates;
- Following the template of other towns, such as Town of Essex, with involving the public in the update of the town plan.

MOTION by Nick Meyer, SECOND by Amber Thibeault, that the Chair of the Planning Commission (Diane Clemens) draft a letter to the Village Development Director, Robin Pierce, and the Village President, George Tyler, requesting that the village communications officer, Darby Mayville, distribute appropriate information on planning commission activities and general information in a weekly notice across all available public media. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

The memo from Regina Mahony, Regional Planning, dated 9/12/13, regarding data and technical updates to the plan was reviewed. There was discussion of specifying on each meeting agenda what will be covered in the plan update (i.e. which chapters or sections of the plan will be reviewed) and having the appropriate staff present during the discussion. It was noted the public is invited to comment at any meeting. There was mention of potentially inviting experts to discuss the plan and possible revisions.

6. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Planning Commissioner Job Description

Following discussion the job description was rewritten as follows:

MISSION/PURPOSE

The planning commission is charged with bringing a long term perspective to day-to-day decision making. As such, it must take care to represent all members and interests of the community. Above all else planning commission members must always act in the public interest and put the general welfare of the community above any personal interests.

DUTIES

The seven member Essex Junction Planning Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the Village Trustees on all matters affecting the physical development of the Village, review and make decisions on subdivision, site plan and planned development applications based on the Land Development Code and municipal plan in accordance with Vermont statute, recommend municipal plan and land development code amendments to the Trustees, proactively monitor the comprehensive plan and exercise all other responsibilities as may be provided by Vermont law.

REQUIREMENTS

Any village resident over the age of 18 who cares about the community is eligible to serve on the Essex Junction Planning Commission. The member must be able to attend meetings as scheduled including occasional meetings with the Village Trustees.

LENGTH OF TERM

Three (3) years.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Amber Thibeault, **SECOND** by Diane Clemens, to adjourn the meeting.
VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

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PLANNING COMMISSIONER

Mission/Purpose:

The individual, as part of the seven-member Essex Junction Planning Commission, would be responsible for making recommendations to the Village Trustees on all matters affecting the physical development of the Village, review and make decisions on subdivision, site plan and planned development applications, recommend municipal plan amendments to the Trustees, recommend land development code amendments to the Trustees, proactively monitor the comprehensive plan and exercise all other responsibilities as may be provided by Vermont law.

Preferred skills:

Any Village resident interested in this position is encouraged to apply. Those with a background in law, engineering (civil or environmental), contracting/development, land use planning/law, real estate, transportation planning, architecture, or historic preservation may be particularly interested in applying.

Requirements:

All members of the Planning Commission must be residents of the Village of Essex Junction.

The member must be able to attend meetings as scheduled, including occasional meetings with the Village Trustees.

Length of term:

Three (3) years.