

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 6, 2014**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Regina Mahoney, Grant Geisler.

- AGENDA:**
1. Call to Order
 2. Audience for Visitors
 3. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
 4. Minutes
 5. Work Session: Comprehensive Plan
 - Education/Childcare
 - Environment/Flood Resiliency
 6. Other Planning Commission Items
 7. Adjournment
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Diane Clemens called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

2. AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

None.

3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. MINUTES

February 20, 2014

Action postponed due to lack of a quorum.

5. WORK SESSION: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Education/Childcare

Grant Geisler, CCSU, noted the following corrections/clarifications to the Education and Childcare section of the comprehensive plan:

- NECI is no longer located in the village.
- 10 acres was transferred from the Educational Center to CTE Corp. and 10 acres (Discovery Museum site) was transferred from CTE Corp. to the Educational Center.
- Park Street School is owned by the Educational Center and leased to CCSU as the CSSU Central Office. 21 New England Drive was leased and is no longer used by the school department.
- Updated enrollment projections will be forwarded to village staff for inclusion in the plan. K-8 enrollment is approximately 1,000 students.

- There are no plans for a new school.
- The One Campus project cost was \$12.5 million. Renovations to village schools include drainage work at ADL, Summit, and Fleming, kitchen improvements at Hiawatha and Summit, main entrance improvements at Hiawatha, and library improvements at ADL.
- EJRP operates a licensed preschool and after school care. A description of the program will be submitted to village staff for inclusion in the plan.
- Education Goal #1 is already happening with adult education classes being offered.
- The school department does not provide population projections as noted in Education Goal #2 (Regional Planning is the source for this information), but does provide enrollment projections so the wording should be changed to say “enrollment projections within the village”.
- The village is in good shape with regard to sidewalk access to schools as noted in Education Goal #3. There is good communication between the village and school department with regard to sidewalk clearing in winter.
- Education Goal #4 is happening. The schools are well used by the community and service organizations and there is a policy on use of facilities.
- All four village schools are a member of the Safe Routes to School Program. ADL is a ‘silver’ member and Hiawatha, Summit, and Fleming are all ‘bronze’ members. The wording in Education Goal #5 should be changed from “consider participating in” to “continue participating in”.
- The school department is not pursuing and does not plan to pursue bus service with CCTA so Education Goal #6 can be deleted.
- Education Goal #7 is fine as drafted.

Diane Clemens mentioned the 7.92 acres for Hiawatha School and the 7.73 acre Parizo property on West Street and asked if the acreage should be listed as one parcel of 15.65 acres or as separate lots. Grant Geisler will find out if the parcels are contiguous.

Environment

Proposed amendments were reviewed and the following noted:

- The Natural Resources chapter was fleshed out and placed under “Open Space & Recreation” in the plan.
- Delete the paragraph on the Whitcomb Farm. Language on open space will be added to the Agriculture section of the plan.
- There is a difference between fluvial erosion hazard area and floodplain. Property loss from flooding is more likely in the fluvial erosion hazard area. Federal floodplain regulations protect the entire area (floodplain and fluvial).
- In ‘Forested Areas’ change “has subleased the property” to “has sold the property” with regard to the tree nursery on Old Colchester Road.
- Add language to encourage reduction of idling at Five Corners and air quality improvement, for example by closing a portion of Main Street once the crescent connector is built and improving signal timing.

- Add a statement under “Sand & Gravel” saying there are no sand and gravel resources in the village.
- The Educational Center is officially named “Essex Community Educational Center” and the property is 93 acres.
- The Parizo and Hiawatha School acreage needs to be confirmed as one parcel of 15.65 acres or two separate parcels of 7.92 acres (Hiawatha) and 7.73 acres (Parizo).
- Under ‘Other Urban Amenities’, paragraph beginning “Essex Junction has invested...”:
 - delete the sentence reading: “The narrowing of Railroad Avenue in 2003...” ;
 - add a sentence reading: “A thriving farmers market has been accommodated on Lincoln Place.”;
 - delete the sentence reading: “The front lawn of the Park Street School...”
 - delete “another other location in” in the sentence reading: “The development of a green...”
- Under ‘Other Urban Amenities, paragraph beginning “Sidewalks are critical components...” insert “and urban street trees” between “sidewalks” and “critical components” and delete the sentence reading: “With the exception of sidewalks in the village center....”
- Under ‘Other Urban Amenities’, paragraph beginning “Bike paths are also critical components...”, sentence reading: “The Committee has also developed a list...” add to the end of the sentence “and is working on developing this into a future bike and pedestrian plan for the village.” and delete the highlighted sentence reading: “While this is a good idea...”
- Under ‘Other Urban Amenities’, paragraph beginning “In addition, the village tree planting program...” replace “community” with “village right-of-way” and add a sentence reading: “There is a village tree advisory committee.” Robin Pierce suggested adding a statement about working with CTE to develop a nursery program to grow street trees for use in the village and town.
- Under ‘Open Space, Recreation, Environmental Goals’, Goal 1, Objective 1.2 insert “and fluvial erosion hazard area” after “flood prone areas”.
- Delete Objective 1.3 (“Monitor erosion in the fluvial erosion hazard areas...”).
- Begin Objective 1.6 with “If necessary”.
- Rewrite Objective 1.7 to read: “Coordinate with the Town and Region on efforts to establish air quality goals/objectives and air quality improvement.”
- Under Goal 2, Objectives 2.1 and 2.2, the Planning Commission will further discuss use of the word “encourage” versus “engage” in Objectives 2.1 and 2.2.
- Under Goal 3, Objective 3.2 insert “on private property” after “planting of trees” and delete Objective 3.4 (“Consider the preservation of the Whitcomb Farm...”) because the farm is already conserved.
- Under Goal 5, Objectives 5.3 and 5.4 begin each sentence with “Encourage”.

6. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Next Meeting

March 20, 2014 at 6 PM

Community Planning Speaker

Julie Campoli is speaking on community planning in Hinesburg on March 11, 2014.

Article on Neighborhood Design & Sidewalks

Diane Clemens will forward the article to planning commissioners.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Aaron Martin, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

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