

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 7, 2016
AGENDA
6:00 P.M.**

- I. Audience for Visitors**
- II. Additions or Amendments to Agenda**
- III. Minutes**
 - A. Regular Meeting – March 17, 2016
- IV. Work Session – Updates for Land Development Code**
- V. Other Planning Commission Items**
- VI. Adjournment**

This meeting will be held at the Essex Junction municipal building at 2 Lincoln St., Essex Jct., VT. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request to the Village, 878-6950, to assure that Village meetings are accessible to all individuals regardless of disability.

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 7, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Nistico (Chairman); John Alden, Amber Thibeault, Diane Clemens, Nick Meyer, Joe Weith, Andrew Boutin.
ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Development Director; Will Hayden, intern.
OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Luck.

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order
2. Audience for Visitors
3. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
4. Minutes
5. Work Session: Land Development Code
6. Other Planning Commission Items
7. Adjournment

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dave Nistico called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Brad Luck, EJRP Director, requested the Planning Commission consider allowing an LED display sign at Maple Street Park to inform the public of recreational opportunities. Presently, the Land Development Code does not allow internally illuminated signs in the village center district. Also, the required 10' setback from the property line (in this case the sidewalk in front of the park) would be challenging in terms of visibility. Details of the proposed sign include:

- The two-sided sign will be 3'8" x 6'9" in size (LED display area is 6'6").
- New LED technology allows the sign to dim during daylight hours and to be programmed to turn on/off at a certain hour.
- The sign could be used to display emergency messages if needed.
- The proposed sign is similar to the sign at Colchester High School or CVU Union High School.
- The support structure for the sign is proposed to be wood with wood posts on each side rather than brick.
- Setting the sign back four feet from the sidewalk will allow for good visibility.

The Planning Commission discussed the design of LED signs for parks versus schools or municipal offices, controlling the number of signs that will be requested, and potential to share a sign to post information. Section 714.M & N of the LDC discusses signs. The Planning Commission is generally in support of an illuminated sign allowance for special locations. Robin Pierce suggested adding language to the LDC to say: "A non-movable internally illuminated sign that uses only text and the purpose is as an informational sign for village residents."

Staff will research what other communities have for LED signs and provide recommendations.

3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. MINUTES

March 17, 2016

MOTION by Amber Thibeault, SECOND by Nick Meyer, to approve the minutes of 3/17/16 as written. VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

5. WORK SESSION: LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE

The Planning Commission reviewed the following:

- Comments from Village Attorney on various items in the LDC
- Updates to the sewer, water, and public works specifications from the Village Engineer
- Public Participation Guide
- Enlarged Map of the Village Center
- Map 6: Non-Motorized Transportation Essex Junction
- Fee Schedule

Staff will add the definition of “new unit” as drafted by the Village Attorney to the Definitions section of the LDC.

Staff will investigate the change by the Village Engineer in the lighting section of the LDC (Section 704) to reduce the interval between streetlights from 400’ to 150’.

The Public Participation Guide should be inserted at the beginning of the LDC document.

There was discussion of including the maps in the LDC as well as the Comprehensive Plan to fully inform the applicant of the vision the village is seeking with development (i.e. superior design). Joe Weith cautioned that if the maps are in the LDC and the Planning Commission requires an applicant to do something that is not on the map the village could lose in a lawsuit if the applicant appeals the requirement. Joe Weith suggested the maps be in the Comprehensive Plan only and staff inform the applicant to look at both the LDC and Comprehensive Plan. It was suggested a statement could be added to the Public Participation Guide to direct the applicant to both the LDC and Comprehensive Plan. Following further discussion there was agreement the enlarged Village Center Map should be included in the LDC and the Non-Motorized Transportation Map should be in the Comprehensive Plan. Joe Weith suggested language in the LDC be strengthened to say ties to the Comprehensive Plan allow the Planning Commission to look at both the LDC and Comprehensive Plan when reviewing an application.

There was also mention of the need to have all the information on an application in place so the Planning Commission knows exactly what is proposed before making a decision.

Robin Pierce assured an application is not put on the Planning Commission agenda unless it meets all the stated requirements in the LDC and is thus complete, so the discussion is really about aesthetic details.

MOTION by John Alden, SECOND by Nick Meyer, to approve the draft of the updated Land Development Code contingent upon further information including:

- Add definition of “new unit”,
- Clarify the reason for the reduction of spacing between streetlights to 150’,
- Add Public Participation Guide to the beginning of LDC document,
- Strengthen language in LDC relative to the tie-in to the Comprehensive Plan for development applications.

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

6. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Letter from Anne Whyte, dated 3/11/16, re: 9-11 Park Street

The Planning Commission will review the letter for discussion at the next meeting.

Tree Advisory Committee Plantings

Nick Meyer announced the tree committee is planning to do plantings and streetscape work on Main Street. John Alden suggested a master tree plan for the village be done. Will Hayden will handle the task for a fee from the Tree Advisory Committee.

Next Meeting(s)

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 – Joint Meeting with Board of Trustees

Thursday, April 21, 2016 – Regular Planning Commission Meeting

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Nick Meyer, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

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