

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
April 4, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Alden, Amber Thibeault, Andrew Boutin, Steven Shaw, David Nistico, Diane Clemens.

**ADMINISTRATION:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Melanie Needle, CCRPC Senior Planner and Harlan Smith.

**AGENDA:**

1. Call to Order
2. Audience for Visitors
3. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
4. Minutes
5. Comprehensive Plan Updates
  - Land Use, Transportation, Energy
7. Other Planning Commission Items
8. Adjournment

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

David Nistico facilitated the meeting and called to order at 6:02 PM.

There were no announcements or disclosures.

**2. AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

**3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**4. MINUTES**

*February 21, 2019*

**MOTION by John Alden, SECOND by Amber Thibeault, to approve the minutes of February 21, 2019 with the following correction(s)/clarification(s):**

- **Page 3, Other Planning Commission Items – correct the spelling of “terrace”**

**VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.**

*March 21, 2019*

**MOTION by Amber Thibeault, SECOND by John Alden, to approve the minutes of March 21, 2019 with the following correction(s)/clarifications(s):**

- **Page 3, paragraph beginning with “John Alden brought up language...” – correct the spelling of Dustin Brusos name.**
- **Page 3, paragraph beginning with “John Alden asked about changes...” , sentence reading “The new trim will be vinyl...”– replace “the new trim will be vinyl” with “the trim where it needs to be replaced may be replaced with wood or alternate materials”.**

- Page 4, paragraph beginning “MOTION by Amber Thibeault, SECOND by John Alden, to approve the application with the proposed stipulations in the report dated March 21, 2019” – include the proposed stipulations in the motion language as follows:
  - “1. All Staff comments in this Staff Report shall be addressed to the satisfaction of Village Staff prior to any Permits being issued.
  2. Stormwater management will be provided entirely on-site. The Village Engineer shall review and approve the site prior to a CO.
  3. If the landscaping proposed does not reach the 2% funding required for this project. Applicant shall provide funding to the Village at a level that will ensure that 2% of the construction costs have been expended on landscaping. This funding shall be specifically used for street tree development for the Village.
  4. Construction equipment and material unloading/loading, etc. shall occur along Park Terrace to avoid disruption/damage to School Street.
  5. All work shall comply with the Village of Essex Junction Land Development Code.
  6. Upon approval of building use a change request will be submitted to obtain additional water and sewer use allocations by the applicant to the Village.
  7. The Village reserves the right to require drainage improvements in the future if drainage problems arise as a result of this project.
  8. There shall be no disturbance to the roadway and curbing along School Street.
  9. All staff comments in the Staff Report shall be addressed and satisfied prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
  10. The proposed trash containers shall be enclosed and meet the requirements of the Village LDC.
  11. The materials proposed shall receive approval from the Planning Commission. Samples of the materials shall be provided to the Planning Commission by the applicant.
  12. The applicant shall complete and sign a Sewer Capacity Voluntary Permit Revocation Form prior to the Village releasing a Letter of Capacity to the State of Vermont.
  13. Applicant shall ensure there is no light trespass onto the adjacent properties.
  14. The applicant shall store snow on the property or have it removed from site.”

**VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.**

## **5. PUBLIC MEETING**

*Comprehensive Plan Update – Land Use, Transportation, and Energy*

Melanie Needle led a discussion of the draft Energy Plan and comments that will be incorporated by reference. She focused on changes to the plan since it was last seen by

the Planning Commission in December, and clarified that the Energy Plan will be incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan and included as an appendix. The Planning Commission agreed with this approach.

Commission members reviewed comments made throughout the Energy Plan from both the Essex Energy Committee and the Town of Essex Planning Commission and discussed proposed changes based on those comments:

- Summary language will be added to the Plan to better describe Act 250 and Section 248 instead of only referencing them;
- A footnote will be added regarding the methodology used to develop energy targets and that it uses conversion factors to ensure technological neutrality;
- Melanie Needle will seek clarification from the Energy Committee regarding proposed additional language to siting policies that references a municipal designation process for large scale energy generation facilities (there is not currently a municipal designation process outside the net metering rule);
- In implementation of land use and development policies section:
  - language in the action steps around implementing higher energy standards will revert to original language for items 1 and 5 (unstrike “consider” where previously deleted)
  - in response to the Town’s questions around first steps for adoption of action steps, Planning Commission plans to incorporate action steps into next update of the Land Development Code (LDC);

There was discussion around design review standards in the energy plan, specifically regarding the aesthetics around rooftop solar panels. Melanie Needle pointed out that because rooftop solar regulation occurs at the state level, municipalities do not have a mechanism through which they can participate in that regulatory activity to propose design standards. Because of this, language in the energy plan refers to design “best practices”, recognizing the municipality’s limited role in design standards. Melanie Needle noted that Table 5 has incomplete data, pending responses from Efficiency Vermont (which tracks electricity data by municipality). She noted that there has been a significant reduction in the commercial sector and hopes to be able to give an update with specifics at a future Planning Commission meeting. She also reviewed the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) methodology for developing renewable energy generation targets and methodology for calculating land area requirements for meeting these targets in future.

Diane Clemens and David Nistico both expressed interest in discussing incentives for increasing solar panel usage on smaller structures at a future Planning Commission meeting.

Next steps:

- Melanie Needle will incorporate changes discussed at this meeting into the draft Energy Plan and distribute to Planning Commission members

- Any outstanding questions or pending information will be reviewed at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting
- At April 18<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, will warn public hearing for May 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Joint Village/Town meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss Energy Plan, and any comments discussed at that meeting will be brought to the Planning Commission's May 23<sup>rd</sup> public hearing

## 6. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

David Nistico updated the Planning Commission on an outstanding question from this group's March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting regarding the Design Five Corners Project. The Commission, through Robin Pierce, sought clarification from the Board of Trustees about intentions for the Design Five Corners Project, due to ambiguity in Comprehensive Plan about usage of terms ("implement" vs "consider implementing" Design Five Corners study). The Trustees voted to approve the Design Five Corners study and asked staff and the Planning Commission to have it included in the Municipal Plan for 2019. Consistent with prior discussion, the Planning Commission will soften the language around the Design Five Corners Project to read as "consider implementing" the Design Five Corners study.

David Nistico also noted that he received an email from Nick Meyer, Chairman of the Essex Tree Advisory Committee, who wanted to ensure that the Planning Commission continue to focus on green streets and green projects when applicants come in front of the Commission with applications.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION by Amber Thibeault, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous (6-0); motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.

*RScty: AACoonradt*