

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
January 6, 2022**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Alden, Chair; Phil Batalion; Diane Clemens; Patrick Scheld. (Andrew Boutin was absent)

**ADMINISTRATION:** Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Regina Mahony, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None.

- AGENDA:**
1. Call to Order/Audience for Visitors
  2. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
  3. Minutes – December 16, 2021
  4. Work Session
    - A. Continue updates for the Land Development Code
    - B. Possible discussion for retail cannabis
  5. Other Planning Commission items
  6. Adjournment

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**1. CALL TO ORDER/AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS**

John Alden called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

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

None at this time.

**3. MINUTES**

*December 16, 2021-*

The Planning Commission reviewed the minutes from December 16, 2021.

**MOTION by Phil Batalion, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to approve the minutes as amended.**

**VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

**The minutes were amended as follows:**

- **Modify Condition #15 to read – “Applicant shall install Bollard lights or similar low height lighting (no more than 4 feet tall) along the walkway.”**

**4. WORK SESSION**

A. Continue updates for the Land Development Code

Ms. Mahony said that she would like to discuss any big remaining topics for the Land Development Code. She said that many of the larger items have already been discussed, but asked if the Planning Commission has others. She said that once discussions are completed, she suggested reviewing a handful of chapters at a time during future meetings.

Mr. Alden said that one topic he would like to address is clarifying Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements so that developers know what the Village is looking for prior to drafting an application. Ms. Clemens said that a recent applicant assumed that a density bonus would be given, rather than requesting one from the Village. She said that applicants should be asking for density bonus waivers, rather than assume that they will get one. Mr. Alden said that the application may not be clear enough to call out some of this information, and suggested that the Planning Commission review the project application. Ms. Clemens said that some applicants are missing some of the items that are required, such as landscape plans. She also suggested including the estimated cost of the project on the application. Ms. Mahony said that she would review the PUD regulations and determine whether changes can be made to strengthen or improve them.

Mr. Pierce noted that the Planning Commission has generally been more satisfied with PUDs on larger sites than on smaller sites, and wondered whether there should be different criteria for sites less than or more than half an acre. Mr. Alden noted that the most recent PUD application was for a smaller site and one of its appeals was that it was unique in part due to its size. He said that PUDs are designed to allow flexibility for innovation, and should continue to do so.

Mr. Alden brought up amenities related to alternative modes of transportation, such as indoor bicycle storage. He said that Village regulations don't have a way of acknowledging secure bicycle parking (for example) as an amenity of higher value. He wondered whether more advanced multi-modal connections could somehow be overlaid into Village plans or requirements. He asked whether the LDC or Comprehensive Plan have references to the bicycle path network and alternative forms of transportation. He asked how awareness to these elements could be enhanced. Ms. Mahony replied that if there is connectivity that is desired but doesn't exist, the Village could adopt an Official Map that requires applicants to accommodate specified or desired types of right-of-way. Mr. Alden said that elements related to connectivity should be on the list of items to address in the LDC.

Ms. Mahony asked whether the Planning Commission would like to incorporate more elements of the Transportation Overlay District (TOD) into the LDC update. Mr. Alden replied that he would like more guidance on how the TOD regulations could be improved so that developers can produce projects that align with what the Village is looking for. Mr. Batalion pointed out that design review is being overlaid onto that district, which will allow the Planning Commission to have more of a say in the design aspects of buildings.

Ms. Mahony noted that since the Housing Committee is working on the inclusionary zoning issue, she suggested that the Planning Commission work on other topics for the LDC while that work is being conducted. Planning Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Batalion said that he would be interested in looking at addressing housing needs through potentially increasing density in certain zoning districts. Mr. Alden said that it could be helpful to look at density in all districts and determine which ones to focus on after a broader review.

#### B. Possible discussion for retail cannabis

Mr. Pierce provided an update, noting that there will be another public forum on February 16 at 5:00 PM. He said it will be a hybrid meeting (in person and remote options).

**5. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS**

None at this time.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 PM.

*RScty: AACoonradt*