

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Phil Batalion, Diane Clemens, Scott McCormack, Elijah Massey, Patrick Scheld.

ADMINISTRATION: Wendy Hysko, Interim Co-Manager/Library Director; Regina Mahony, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Nick Meyer.

AGENDA:

1. Audience for Visitors
2. Additions or Amendments to the Agenda
3. Elect Chair and Vice-chairperson
4. Public Hearing: Proposed Land Development Code Updates
5. Other Planning Commission items
6. Adjournment

1. CALL TO ORDER/AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Robin Pierce called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Pierce noted the addition of two maps to the amendments to the land development code. He provided a summary of the maps.

3. ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

MOTION by Phil Batalion, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to nominate Phil Batalion for Chair.

MOTION by Patrick Scheld, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to nominate Patrick Scheld for Vice Chair.

MOTION by Scott McCormack, SECOND by Elijah Massey, to appoint Patrick Scheld as Vice Chair. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carries.

MOTION by Patrick Scheld, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to appoint Phil Batalion as Chair. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carries.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Proposed Land Development Code Updates

Chapter 1: Purpose, Application & Severability

Chapter 2: Definitions

Chapter 3: Decision Making and Administrative Bodies

Chapter 4: Regulation of Land Use Activities

Chapter 5: Development Review Procedures

Chapter 6: Zoning Districts Regulations and Use Table
Chapter 7: General Development Standards
Chapter 8: Nonconformities
Chapter 9: Subdivision
Chapter 10: Enforcement
Chapter 11: Sewer Regulations
Chapter 14: Water System Management and Use
Chapter 16: Fees and Charges
Chapter 17: Appeals
Appendix A: Public Works Specifications

Chapter 2: Definitions for Cannabis
Chapter 6: Use Table to include Cannabis

Ms. Mahony began by providing context for and a summary of the changes to the Land Development Code. She noted that changes were made to align with the City's 2019 Comprehensive Plan update and Five Corners Design Plan, to attempt to address the severe housing shortage, to improve stormwater management, to align with State statute changes since the prior LDC update, to make general amendments to reflect the Junction's new City status, to incorporate amendments related to cannabis retail, and clarification amendments to reduce redundancy between process and standard sections.

She briefly outlined the changes related to Design Five Corners. These included more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly changes and creating welcoming streetscapes. These also included the creation of a design review and historic preservation overlay district to apply to the trunk routes that lead into Essex Junction. She noted that this is an added level of review to ensure that developments in those areas are receiving the same level of scrutiny as the heart of the Village, with the goal of creating a more vibrant streetscape. These also include more bicycle parking, amenities, and access throughout the City. These further included feedback from the Tree Advisory Committee on landscaping and trees in the public right-of-way.

She then spoke about amendments related to housing. She noted changes around Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that were made to align with State statute. She additionally noted increased density in Multi-family Residential 1 and 2 (MF-1 and MF-2) Zoning Districts and adding duplexes and triplexes as permitted uses in the R-1 and R-2 Residential Zoning Districts. She further noted clarifications around the purpose and intent of Planned Unit Development (PUD) review. She finally noted reduced residential parking requirements from 2 spaces per unit to 1 space, as well as inclusion of shared parking provisions.

She spoke about amendments related to stormwater. These include more of an emphasis on Green Stormwater Infrastructure, which focuses on managing stormwater impacts through more natural processes such as infiltration, evapotranspiration, storage, and reuse. These also include a focus on Low Impact Development, which seeks to maintain a site's pre-development ecological and hydrological functions through the protection, enhancement, or mimicry of natural processes.

Ms. Mahony briefly walked through the State statute changes that have occurred since the previous iteration of the LDC. These include changes to the duration of site plan and conditional use approvals to

2 years, changes to ADU language, alignment with VTrans highway access permits, minor changes to language around existing small lots and planting project exemptions, changes to PUD definitions, and an increased plat recording fee.

She noted other changes that occurred as a result of the Village's transition into a City. All references to the Village in the LDC have been modified to refer to the City. Additionally, the Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Adjustment model of review has been converted to a Development Review Board model of review.

Mr. Pierce then walked through the Cannabis Regulation Map and Cannabis Use Table for the City. He noted that retail cannabis is permitted in the HA district and TOD district, which are both on Pearl Street, west of the Champlain Valley Exposition. He said that the State requires that they allow retail cannabis if voted on by the community. He noted 500-foot buffer zones around schools, where retail cannabis is not permitted. He noted other categories of cannabis permitted in these districts, which include Home Occupation/Tier 1 Manufacturing. He noted that the Tiers 2 and 3 Cannabis Manufacturing and Laboratory Establishment uses are permitted only in the Light Industrial district, and that the Cultivation use is permitted only in the Agricultural District.

She outlined next steps, which include receiving public comment and then incorporating any changes they see fit. After that, the Planning Commission would amend its written report and send the report and LDC amendments to the City Council, who will then hold their own public hearing. She noted that the Chapter 2 Definitions for Cannabis and Chapter 6 Use Table to Include Cannabis can be sent to the City Council separately if the Planning Commission wishes to handle it separately.

Mr. Batalion opened the discussion up to the public.

There was no public comment.

MOTION by Patrick Scheld, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to close the public hearing. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carries.

MOTION by Elijah Massey, SECOND by Patrick Scheld, to send the amendments to the Land Development Code to the City Council as well as the Definitions of Cannabis, Use Table, and Updated Zoning Map. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carries.

MOTION by Patrick Scheld, SECOND by Elijah Massey, to approve the Definitions for Cannabis and Use Table to Include Cannabis. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carries.

5. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

None at this time.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 P.M.

RScty: AACoonrad