

*MINUTES SUBJECT TO CORRECTION BY THE ESSEX JUNCTION TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.*

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2014**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nick Meyer, Rich Boyers, Paula DeMichele, Warren Spinner

**ADMINISTRATION:** Darby Mayville, Community Relations and Economic Development Assistant

**OTHERS:** Mike Servetas, Drew Gingras, Erin Parizo

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by Nick.

**2. ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

None.

**3. DISCUSSION & INPUT ON TREE PLANTING ALONG MULTI-USE PATH**

Erin completed an overview of the proposed location of the path and the project limits. She stated that the intent of the project is to stay completely within the NECR Railroad or Village right-of-way (ROW). The path is a VTrans Local Transportation Project, and is at the 60% project stage. The path is planned to be 1200 feet long and 10 feet wide. There is currently a large amount of pedestrian traffic in this area.

Erin and Mike touched upon the lighting layout and the on/off timing of the lighting. The lights will be solar. They mentioned that other options were discussed for triggering the lighting. Motion sensing was ruled out early on because of issues with functionality. A timer based system, which will on only during peak times, is what is currently being proposed. The lights will have 85 foot spacing with limited spillback.

It was noted that initially, a fence was proposed to separate abutting properties from the path but the design is now proposing the 'natural fencing' of a hedge or tree line. The property owners are interested in having a visual separation between their homes and the path. The issue of vegetation density was brought up as a concern, and it was pointed out that we would want to limb up the evergreens so it does not become a larger maintenance or security issue.

Warren asked if the trees at the North St. intersection are within the railroad ROW, and was told that they were. Once this project is built, the responsibility will lie with the Village to maintain these trees.

The Tree Advisory Committee will take an initial look at the trees that are currently proposed to be saved to determine if they should in fact be saved and maintained in the future by the Village.

Rich mentioned the potential for deciduous plantings. This may be best if there is decreased use in the winter months, as there will be less screening for adjacent property owners when leaves fall off.

Warren mentioned that a combination of both coniferous and deciduous plantings is possible. While the trees are currently evenly laid out, there is the potential to bunch trees in some places and spread them out in others if this is deemed appropriate. He also mentioned that if we can't maintain the currently existing vegetation, overgrowth into the new plantings can occur, and that proper maintenance (mowing, trimming, etc.) is an absolute must in this area. Nick mentioned that it is important not to create hiding places with these clumps of trees.

Warren asked if most of the shrubs and perennials (referencing the quantity spreadsheet) will be planted in the bioretention ponds, and was told that they would be planted there.

It was suggested that a better detail than what we currently have for plantings, and some specifications to go along with it should be obtained and included in the next plan submission.

Rich asked if this path would be plowed, and was told that it would be.

Nick asked whether the fence is directly on the ROW line. The abutting fence appears to be located directly on the property line and for this reason it would act as a backdrop to the vegetation.

Per Warren, VHB will need to properly spec out all necessary landscape work that will be done.

Warren asked when the project would be ready to go to construction. Michael and Erin replied that the intent is to get the project ready to bid as quickly as possible. Preliminary Plan comments were just received from the state and they are coordinating with the RR on some recently discovered issues. As it stands now, they would like to have plans complete by spring and construction to begin this summer. Bidding will also be dependent on what time of year the project is completed and whether or not bids are likely to come in at a high cost due to already secured workload of local contractors. Warren suggested "Johnson Paving" as a potential contractor for the project.

Warren also asked to see the specs when the project goes out to bid so when the contractor gives the plans to their landscape contractor, we have material to work with and base design off of. VHB agreed to come up with specs/warning signs to alert the general public of tree protection measures that will be installed.

As it currently stands, the construction area will be fenced during construction and the planting areas will be fenced off until an appropriate amount of vegetation is grown in. A concern over staging areas was brought up, and the Committee suggested that VHB contact Rick Jones to discuss some options.

It was stressed that there will be a need to talk to the maintenance teams that will be upholding the newly installed pieces of landscaping (vegetation, benches, etc.).

The Village Tree Advisory Committee will plan a site walk in the future to evaluate what currently exists in the area. They will then share this information (along with suggested species to be planted in the area) with the design team. VHB will then work with a landscape architect to develop appropriate layouts along the path.

#### **4. MINUTES REVIEW**

**MOTION by NICK, SECOND by RICH, to approve the minutes. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

#### **5. WORKSHOP PLANNING**

The group discussed PR for the workshop. Warren mentioned that he would be leading the same workshop three days prior in Burlington. The group decided to publicize the event details through as many sources as possible. Darby said that she would draft a poster.

#### **6. ARBOR DAY PLANNING**

Rich said that the Summit Street PTO liked the idea of planting a tree. They are currently pricing out trees. The ceremony will be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Warren will hand out Arbor Day guides. The tree will be planted near the reading garden. They hope to get some press the day of the event.

Paula showed the group an article that she drafted for submission to the Essex Reporter. All of the committee members liked it, and provided some edits. Warren said that he would send a history of Arbor Day to Paula to condense for the article. He said that he could talk to a contact at the Urban & Community Forestry Program if additional sources are needed. Paula said that she wanted to break down the history of Arbor Day to the local level. Warren also suggested adding additional details about the benefits of trees to the article.

Paula said that she would get the article to Darby by the end of the month so that Village management could approve it.

#### **7. MAPPING UPDATE**

Nick and Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent, are working on the tree inventory. Nick said that the KML format is easily adapted to other formats. He added that there are no critical issues with any of the trees on the list.

#### **8. TREE PLANTING 2014 UPDATE**

Nick and Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent, are looking at sites to plant new trees. The group exchanged some ideas, and the decided to walk around the Village Center and brainstorm potential planting areas. Warren suggested focusing the plantings on the main arteries.

Nick brought up the Caring for Canopy grant that the Village received last year. There is some money available for planting and pruning with this grant. He said that there is another round of grant funding coming up, and that he would look more into the details of applying.

## **9. PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

## **10. MEETING SCHEDULE**

### Next meeting

- April 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM

### Agenda Items

- Minutes Review;
- Arbor Day Update;
- Tree Planting 2014;
- Multi Use Safety Path;
- Canopy Grant Progress;
- Public Comments.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by WARREN, SECOND by RICH, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.**