

TOWN OF ESSEX  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
January 14, 2021

PLANNING COMMISSION (PC) PRESENT: Dustin Brusco, Chair; Joshua Knox, Vice-Chair; John Mangan, Clerk; David Raphael; Tom Furland; Ned Daly; and Jonathan Schumacher (arrived at 6:45 p.m.)

VISITING VILLAGE COMMISSIONER: John Alden.

OTHERS PRESENT: Owiso Makuku, Community Development Director; Sharon Kelley, Zoning Administrator; Darren Schibler, Planner; John Pitrowski; Andrew Pitrowski; Paula Duke; Annie Cooper; Tracy Delphia; Katie Ballard; Ken Signorelli and Sharon Zukowski.

Chairman Brusco stated that the Village Planning Commissioners were invited to attend this meeting. He stated that they will continue to invite the Village Planning Commissioners in an attempt for more collaboration. He thanked Commissioner John Alden for his attendance. Alden stated that if needed, he would sit in the meeting as the designated alternate for the application since one of the Commissioners was expected to arrive late.

Chairman Brusco noted the changes to the Agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM 1: PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Darren Schibler described a minor correction to Condition 7 of the Draft Consent Agenda Approval letter. The PC had no issue with the correction, and there was no other discussion.

**AGENDA ITEM 2: CONSENT AGENDA: Boundary Line Adjustment: Andrew Pitrowski: Proposal to redraw a boundary line to accommodate a SFH on the undeveloped lot located at 306 & 314 Lost Nation Road in the Agriculture-Residential (AR) Zone. Tax Map 13, Parcels 15 & 15-1.**

**Commissioner Furland MOVED and Vice-Chair Knox SECONDED a MOTION to approve the Consent Agenda Boundary Line Adjustment application for 306 & 314 Lost Nation Road, with the following correction:**

Condition 7 to read, "Prior to the issuance of a zoning permit for the new dwelling on Lot 2, the applicant shall pay the gravel road fee of \$1,079.59, or the fees in place at the time of application."

**The MOTION passed 6-0.** (Commissioner Schumacher had not yet arrived.)

**AGENDA ITEM 3: INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION:**

- **ANNIE COOPER – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Annie Cooper thanked the PC for the invitation and for all the work they do for the Town. She reported that she was recently appointed to the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and is also the Chair as Jim Bernegger, former Chair, stepped down and retired from the EDC. She noted that she moved to Essex in 1996, with 2 young children, living on Sand Hill Road, and now resides in the Village since approximately 2008. She talked about the recent

50 project, entitled 'Out and About' that the EDC worked on with the town and village  
51 planning departments. A \$10,000 dollar grant was given to both the town and village. A  
52 \$15.00 coupon was given to Essex residents to spend on Essex businesses.  
53 Approximately 40 businesses participated in the project. The function also included  
54 bands and musicians situated in both the town and village. She was happy to report that it  
55 was a tremendous success. She has started a local business and contact sheet as a result  
56 of this project.

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58 Cooper continued to state that the EDC is now working on the possibility of a local  
59 option tax initiative; and they are working with as many committees as they can.

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61 Commissioner Daly stated that the EDC is tackling a big task. He asked two questions,  
62 1) "What do you feel the PC can do to help you achieve your goals?" and  
63 2) "What can the EDC do to generate interest in good high paying jobs?"

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65 Cooper asked if Daly was talking about the restaurant/hotel businesses? Daly replied yes  
66 and stated that Essex needs to get past minimum wage businesses. Cooper stated that  
67 part of the solution is "to talk to folks like you." The EDC spoke about visiting other  
68 committees and their members. He invited Commission Daly and the PC to attend the  
69 next virtual EDC meeting on 1/21/21 @8:00 a.m.

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71 Owiso Makuku pointed out that the Community Development Departments is a useful  
72 tool to the EDC and will also be advisory to them. She reported that she has been  
73 pushing for a part-time EDC Coordinator. This position will assist in laying a foundation  
74 and to help understand businesses we now have or how to expand them. Owiso reported  
75 that she had a conversation with the Town Manager and he understands that Essex needs  
76 to "toot its horn and promote Essex." She noted that the Essex Town Center is evolving  
77 as an arts venue, with higher paying jobs, such as Babaroosa, which has a starting salary  
78 of \$43,000 per year. Owiso stated that the EDC is about chipping away at the goals.

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80 Commissioner Alden was confused if the Town includes the Village in its plans. He  
81 reminded everyone that the ETC|NEXT plan is a vision that includes a mix of business  
82 versus rentals versus housing. The goals are already targeted and useful. He stated that  
83 Owiso and Robin Pierce (Village C.D. Director) need to work with the EDC together.

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85 Cooper stated that the town and village are involved with the EDC. She stated that a joint  
86 meeting with the PC and EDC is a great idea.

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88 • **KATIE BALLARD – HOUSING COMMISSION**

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90 Katie Ballard stated that she is the Chair for the new Housing Commission that was  
91 formed by the Selectboard and the Trustees. The Housing Commission started in  
92 October, 2020 and meets 2x/month. The focus right now is on education and getting  
93 structurally organized. They are trying to figure out what their role will be going  
94 forward. Some topics the Housing Commission suggested included inclusionary  
95 zoning, alternate zoning, charges for a housing trust, etc. She stated that they  
96 Commission is getting to the point to start to figure out where they are going and how

97 to start partnerships.

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**AGENDA ITEM 4: RESIDENTIAL PHASING REPORT**

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**AGENDA ITEM 5: MINUTES 12/10/20:**

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**Commissioner Daly MOVED and Commissioner Mangan SECONDED a MOTION to approve the 12/12/19 minutes as written. The MOTION passed 5-0.**

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**AGENDA ITEMS 6: OTHER BUSINESS:**

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Sharon Kelley informed the PC that November 11, 2021 is a scheduled meeting and also a holiday. The PC instructed staff to find a different day to hold the meeting near that date.

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Kelley reported that a petition of T-Mobile regarding replacement of 4 antennas and equipment located on Dave Whitcomb's premises at 199 & 200 Jericho Road, was submitted to the Public Utility Commission. Kelley noted that the petition had been sent out to the PC for review. There were no concerns with the petition as the Chair noted that this petition bypasses PC review.

143 Owiso Makuku reported that the Selectboard decided to come to a Planning Commission  
144 meeting to discuss the ETC|NEXT Plan and asked the PC what dates might be convenient for  
145 them to discuss. The PC instructed staff to find a meeting night that did not have an application  
146 or only had a consent agenda application as they wanted the meeting to be dedicated to the  
147 ETC|PLAN.

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149 Owiso Makuku reported that in years past the PC and the Zoning Board did not have a page in  
150 the Annual Town Report. However, she was just informed that this year it is possible. Owiso  
151 took the liberty to write something up for the PC as the document was due the next day. She  
152 noted that she distributed the draft to the PC by email and asked if they had any comments.  
153 She noted that she already received some comments back from Commissioner Mangan.  
154 Chairman Brusco stated he would like Owiso to add a note stating Commissioner Furland has  
155 returned to the PC and to acknowledge Commissioner John Alden as a Town alternate.  
156 Village Commissioner Alden stated that he was disappointed that the other members of the  
157 Village PC did not attend the meeting as an invitation was put out to them.

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159 The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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PLANNING COMMISSION

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By: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dustin R. Brusco, Chair

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