

**HOUSING COMMISSION
(DRAFT)**

**TOWN OF ESSEX
HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

Housing Commission (HC): Katie Ballard, Chair; Gabrielle Smith, Vice Chair; Mia Watson, Clerk; Mark Redmond; Michelle Teegarden; Alison Levy; Emily Taylor

Selectboard: Andy Watts, Patrick Murray

Board of Trustees: Andrew Brown, Raj Chawla

Administration and Staff: Owiso Makuku, Essex Community Development Director; Darren Schibler, Town Planner; Robin Pierce, Village Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

Ballard called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Max Seaton was present but did not speak.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approval of Minutes

Redmond made a motion, seconded by Levy, to approve the minutes from January 5, 2022. The motion passed 6-0.

b. Roundtable with Essex / Essex Junction Board Representatives

Members of the Selectboard and Trustees were Patrick Murray, Raj Chawla, Andrew Watts, Andrew Brown. Smith – would like their input as to whether the Commission stays as a joint one in the event of separation of the Town and Village. She believes it is functioning well as one entity. Brown – concerned how a Housing Trust Fund would work if one commission yet two separate towns, how the Commission would deal with two separate rules, directions, etc. Smith – Trust Fund decisions could be made by representatives from each, even if one Commission and two different municipalities. Watson – echoes Brown’s feedback, that getting Inclusive Zoning for instance through two different groups is daunting, same for the Trust Fund. If there are two different Commissions, they could work closely. Murray – money aspect will be the most difficult and should be kept separate, although he is hesitant to break up a Commission that is new and just started. Watts – best to try to continue as one Commission, daunting to have two different ones, although the Town may not have the financial capacity to contribute to the Housing Trust Fund as there will be tight budgets. Ballard – it’s been a challenge working and communicating with different commissions and groups, would appreciate if Selectboard and Trustees can help with that. Murray – the Housing Commission is as important as any other, and the

36 Repts and Trustees will be willing to help, the Commission should put in any requests
37 as to how. Levy – will there be other joint commissions they plan to maintain if
38 separation occurs? Brown – they are asking feedback from those right now, would
39 like to hear from ours how it could or could not work. Ballard – what is the timeline to
40 get feedback to them? Watts – next Monday or no set deadline after that. Brown –
41 no feedback needed just yet, have another 2-3 months, only firm date is before July
42 2023. Pierce – fantastic if can keep a joint Housing Commission. Schibler – the
43 Town’s ability to spread out is limited. Town and Village can work collaboratively to
44 reach housing goals. Watson - happy to craft an IZ policy that makes sense for both
45 entities. Next step is a roundtable for developers. Brown – it’s been 4-5 years since
46 Trustees discussed IZ, be glad to see it. Chawla – IZ is a great way to cement a
47 partnership between the two entities. Some hesitation on the board but not
48 opposition. Pierce – need to look at some metrics on IZ, there is a way to do it that is
49 right. Watson – open to Planning Commission taking a larger role on IZ.

50 **c. Housing Trust Fund workgroup check-in**

51 Smith and Levy and Schibler met that morning. Smith believes the Housing Trust
52 Fund (HTF) is a good fit for Essex. If separation happens, it will cause difficulties.
53 We should keep planning for a HTF and see what happens with separation. Levy –
54 there are other needs that do not fall within HTF. Schibler – we should start to get
55 the conversation going about what the HTF is and how it should function, narrow the
56 scope. Ballard – put a HTF presentation on the February 16 meeting agenda. Also
57 recommends a join meeting with the Town Planning Commission to talk through our
58 collaboration in Feb or March. All agreed.

59 **4. Adjourn**

60 **Ballard called meeting to close at 4:30 PM.**

61

62 Minutes prepared by Mark Redmond and reviewed and submitted by Mia Watson,
63 Clerk. Minutes approved February 2, 2022.