

**TOWN OF ESSEX
HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

Housing Commission (HC): Katie Ballard, Chair, Evan Einhorn, Vice Chair; Mia Watson, Clerk; Mark Redmond; Gabrielle Smith; Michelle Teegarden;

Administration and Staff: Owiso Makuku, Essex Community Development Director; Robin Pierce, Essex Junction Community Development Director; Darren Schibler, Town Planner; Sharon Kelley, Essex Zoning Administrator

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

Ballard called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There were no comments from members of the public present.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Minutes

Redmond made a motion, seconded by Smith, to approve the minutes of February 17, 2020. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Commissioner Survey Results

Schibler showed the results of the recent survey taken of commissioners, six of whom responded. Schibler also reported that they do have an inventory of Town-owned land.

c. Discussion on need for more housing

Redmond introduced the topic and made a motion: That this commission is in favor of the creation of more housing units in the Town of Essex via new construction and also in favor of upgrading and converting into liveable space any existing units wherever and whenever possible.

Seconded by Einhorn. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Working groups

Discussion

Smith introduced the topic. Working Groups should now be created based off of the suggestions in the Housing Needs Assessment / survey. It was decided there will be three working groups:

i. Inclusionary Zoning and Other Zoning Changes

ii. Rental Unit Inventory/Landlord Survey

iii. Housing Trust Fund

Redmond and Einhorn expressed interest in (a); Teegarden in (b); Ballard and Smith in (c). Schibler will query Watson and McAdoo as to which they wish to join, and then he will let the others know.

Each Working Group should schedule its own meetings and request the presence and assistance of Staff as desired and needed. The next meeting of the entire Commission will take place on April 7 and each Working Group should be prepared to present on its findings and possible recommendations.

e. Staff profile: Owiso Makuku

Grew up in New York City, attended Middlebury College, then served in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. Obtained a Masters degree in architecture and urban planning. Worked in the area of inclusive zoning. Worked for CEDO in Burlington, returned to New York City in the Department of Transportation, then to Detroit in the Mayor's office, then the Governor's office. Returned to Vermont, worked for Farrell Development and then on to the Town of Essex.

Schibler will present his profile at the next meeting.

f. ADJOURNMENT

Smith will take minutes at the next meeting.

Ballard adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Meeting minutes draft submitted by Mark Redmond, Commissioner

Minutes submitted by Mia Watson, Clerk