

HOUSING COMMISSION

TOWN OF ESSEX HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, February 16, 2022

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

Administration and Staff: Darren Schibler, Essex Town Planner

Others Present: N/A

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

Smith called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There were no members of the public to be heard.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approval of Minutes

Redmond made a motion, seconded by Teegarden, to approve the minutes of February 2. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Development Review Process Overview

SCHIBLER presented a slideshow on [Essentials of Local Land Use Planning](#). Note that this is a local/municipal/regional level (as opposed to State level). SMITH asked for clarification of threshold population for urban status: >2,500. Described distinctions between Regulations, Bylaws, and Ordinances. Discussion on how the HC can participate in this process as it relates to affordable housing. The Town Planning Commission has requested that HC act as an advisory resource in this process. [SEE SLIDE PRESENTATION ON HC GOOGLE DRIVE](#) for details.

c. Work Group Updates

i. Inclusionary Zoning

WATSON reported on a meeting the Inclusionary Zoning working group had the week before. They discussed the various thresholds established for other towns/cities for IZ. Town and Village have numerous homeownership development projects (set threshold at 10+ units as criteria for Town/Junction). Going to discuss feasibility at Developer Roundtable. Developer Roundtable being offered on Wed. March 9 at 10:30am (Zoom/in-person hybrid). Email messaging to be reviewed, goals, who has a stake, etc.) Bottom line is that Essex needs more homes (affordable and other). Hopeful for a collaborative session – even if push-back from developers. Will be meeting as working group to solidify presentation one more time before March 9. Schibler, Watson, Redmond, planning on attending.

38 **ii. Landlord outreach**

39 TAYLOR and TEEGARDEN reported on Landlord outreach. Ballard, Teegarden and
40 Taylor met to discuss reaching out to several landlords for informal meeting with
41 work group. Rupesh has agreed to meet but other landlords have not responded to
42 our outreach. Schibler offered to provide other landlord names with varying number
43 of properties/units. Schibler suggested a public forum on rental issues and IZ.
44 Watson expressed some concern about the public's level of interest in the
45 "technical" and detailed aspects of IZ at this stage. Recommended focus on rental
46 issues and plan for a separate forum as IZ work develops.

47 **iii. Housing Trust Fund**

48 SMITH reported that Housing Trust Fund work group is currently on hold due to
49 other personal commitments. SMITH shifting attention to short term rental research
50 for the Trustees and Fire Code follow up. Ballard conveyed to Schibler that we
51 should keep the HTF on our agenda and return to those efforts later. WATSON
52 relayed information about Winooski – that they do not have IZ in order not to thwart
53 existing housing developments. Possibly study "opt out" IZ for lower end unit
54 numbers. If there is a dedicated funding source for IZ, a HTF could be used.

55 **d. Other Business**

56 SMITH spoke about Essex Rotary outreach (Greg Morgan) who is asking the HC to
57 present at the Rotary and how they can take on some meaningful affordable housing
58 work (i.e. utilizing their "Shelter Committee"). They meet noon on Wednesdays but
59 they're booked out into the spring. Consider adding to a future HC agenda.

60 Schibler re: Rental Registry Bill – Unclear if Gov. Scott supports it. Energy
61 Committee – grant for electric vehicle chargers and multi-family units – Let Schibler
62 know if you want to help with that grant.

63 Schibler – call to others interested in committee stipend to submit paperwork if
64 interested.

65 WATSON: VHFA has new Vermont Homeowners Assistance Program – mortgage,
66 taxes, fees, etc. Encourage people to apply for "free money"

67

68 **4. Adjourn**

69 **Smith called meeting to close at 4:14 pm.**

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71 Minutes prepared by Michelle Teegarden, reviewed and submitted by Mia Watson,
72 Clerk, and approved March 3, 2022.