



**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

Online and 81 Main Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, October 19, 2021
6:30 PM

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This meeting will be held both remotely and in person. Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live-streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#).
- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#). Depending on your browser, you may need to call in for audio (below).
- **JOIN CALLING:** Join via conference call (*audio only*): (802) 377-3784 | Conference ID: 471 318 120#
- **PROVIDE FULL NAME:** For minutes, please provide your full name whenever prompted.
- **CHAT DURING MEETING:** Please use “Chat” to request to speak, only. **Please do not use for comments.**
- **RAISE YOUR HAND:** Click on the hand in Teams to speak or use the “Chat” feature to request to speak.
- **MUTE YOUR MIC/TURN OFF VIDEO:** When not speaking, please mute your microphone on your computer/phone.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. *Interview and potential appointment: Rupesh Asher for Housing Commission
 - b. *Interview and potential appointment: Alison Levy for Housing Commission
 - c. *Interview and potential appointment: Ta-Tanisha Redditta for Housing Commission
 - d. *Interview and potential appointment: Elizabeth White for Housing Commission
 - e. Presentation and potential action on inclusionary zoning
 - f. **Discussion and potential action on tentative agreements about shared services between Town of Essex and independent City of Essex Junction
 - g. ***Discussion of personnel
6. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board member comments
 - b. List of Boards/Committees/Commission openings
 - c. News Alert: Essex is Among the Top Safest Cities in Vermont, According to SafeWise [2021 report]
 - d. Update on shared priorities from June strategic planning session
 - e. Upcoming meeting schedule
7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. * An executive session may be requested to discuss the appointments of public officials
 - b. **An executive session may be needed to discuss negotiation of contracts and agreements between the Town of Essex and Village/City of Essex Junction
 - c. ***An executive session may be requested to discuss the employment of public employees
8. **ADJOURN**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair or President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-1341 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

Certification: 10/15/2021

SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES

TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES JOINT MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021

SELECTBOARD: Andy Watts, Chair; Susan Cook; Tracey Delphia; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Patrick Murray

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault; George Tyler

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Assistant Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation & Parks Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Rupesh Asher, Bob Burrows, Kevin Collins, Annie Cooper, Patty Davis, Erin Dickinson, Karen Dolan, Essex Distorter, Essex ReTorter, Gina Halpin Barret, Gabriel Handy, Noah Lafoso, Alison Levy, Max Levy, Rachel Lizotte, Deb McAdoo, Timothy Miller, Mary Post, Roseanne Prestipino, Mark Redmond (Essex Housing Commission), Claudine Safar, Angel Segarra, Kristen Shamis, Ken Signorello, Margaret Smith, Mia Watson (Essex Housing Commission), Joe P., MT, Tim

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order for the Joint meeting with the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order for the Joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

No changes, no approval needed.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Mr. Watts explained that this is the time during the meeting for members of the public to speak on items not included in tonight's agenda. He encouraged the public to be civil, brief, use appropriate language, refrain from personal attacks, and address comments to either the Selectboard Chair or Village President.

- Mr. Handy said that he is a developer who built and manages a senior housing complex on Park Street. He requested that the Board take down signage near the property that bans parking past midnight. Mr. Brown said he needed to better understand the issue before responding or taking action.
- Ms. Post's asked about the status of candidates who had applied to be on the Memorial Hall Committee. Mr. Watts and Mr. Teich said that the Selectboard planned to discuss the future of the Memorial Hall Committee during the budget season.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Interview and potential appointment: Rupesh Asher for Housing Commission

Mr. Watts said that he would not be participating in any discussions or decisions regarding the Housing Commission since a close friend of his is up for appointment. Mr. Murray will be serving as chair for the next four agenda items.

Mr. Asher said that he is a pharmacist and has lived in Essex for over twenty years. He would like to join the Commission to give back and serve the community. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked what he felt is the biggest concern regarding housing in Essex. Mr. Asher said that he believes that the housing shortage is very concerning. Mr. Brown asked Mr. Asher what he would like to accomplish should he be appointed to the Commission. Mr. Asher said that he would like to reduce the housing crunch and increase affordable housing in the community. Mr. Tyler asked if Mr. Asher was familiar with what other communities are doing regarding affordable housing initiatives. Mr. Asher indicated that he was not but suggested using partnerships with non-profits to work towards increasing affordable housing. Mr. Kerin asked if there were any other volunteer opportunities that Mr. Asher was interested in. Mr. Asher indicated his interest in serving the community in another capacity that interests him, should he not be selected for this position.

b. Interview and potential appointment: Alison Levy for Housing Commission

Ms. Levy said that she has lived in the community for over twenty-five years and has recently retired from her teaching position at Essex Middle School. She has volunteered for Voices for Inclusion Essex & Westford as well as for Habitat for Humanity. As a teacher, she has seen the demographics in Essex change over the years and said that there are many struggling families in the community. Ms. Delphia asked Ms. Levy what she felt the top three housing concerns for Essex are. Ms. Levy spoke about inclusionary zoning, county-wide partnerships, intentional interconnection between employers and residents and increasing the long-term supply of affordable housing. Mr. Brown asked Ms. Levy what she would like to accomplish should she be appointed to the Commission. Ms. Levy said that she would like to see inclusionary zoning established, county-wide partnerships, and intentional interconnection between employers and residents. Mr. Tyler asked if Ms. Levy was familiar with what other communities are doing regarding affordable housing initiatives. Ms. Levy spoke of work in South Burlington and Burlington regarding inclusionary zoning.

c. Interview and potential appointment: Ta-Tanisha Redditta for Housing Commission

Ms. Redditta was not present.

d. Interview and potential appointment: Elizabeth White for Housing Commission

Ms. White was not present.

e. Presentation and potential action on inclusionary zoning

Ms. Watson and Mr. Redmond introduced themselves and said that they will be introducing the concept of inclusionary zoning and how it might apply to Essex. Ms. Watson said that households should pay no more than 30% of their income to housing costs, however 33% of residents in Essex pay more than that. Many households are paying more than half of their income on housing costs. Many renters do not earn enough to afford housing in Essex. The demand for housing in Essex is growing, and housing prices have increased about 10% since the pandemic. Demand is exceeding supply. Inclusionary zoning incentivizes developers to rent or sell at a below-market rate. With inclusionary zoning, a certain percent of the housing units constructed must be considered affordable. Inclusionary zoning could apply to the entire community or a section of the community. Research has shown that inclusionary zoning does not reduce development if there is sufficient demand for housing in the area. Should the Boards be amenable to this idea, additional research will be conducted, a plan will be created, public outreach will be conducted, and a draft ordinance will be created.

Mr. Kerin indicated his support for the idea but said that it is also important to consider why people do not have the money to purchase housing in the community. Ms. Watson that wages are no longer keeping pace with the housing costs. Mr. Kerin said that density brings larger buildings, and this is something that residents have been reluctant to support. Ms. Watson said that increased density can bring environmental and economic benefits. Ms. Cook asked if the Commission spoke with other communities in the area who have established inclusionary zoning. Ms. Watson said that her discussions with and reading on other communities have shown that it is important to make sure that there are no loopholes in the policies. Mr. Redmond said that South Burlington is similar to Essex, and their policy could be a good template for Essex. Ms. Cook asked if developers will be involved in the process of creating inclusionary zoning. Ms. Watson answered affirmatively and said that she did not want to make this process too burdensome. Mr. Brown encouraged inclusionary zoning to consider homeownership as well as rental needs. Ms. Watson indicated support for this idea and said that other communities in the area have policies that apply to homeowners as well. Mr. Tyler said that tax stabilization has been very successful in encouraging affordable housing in the Village. He said that the Vermont Neighborhood Program, of which the Village is a part of, exempts developers from Act 250 review. Ms. Delphia said that she used to sit on the South Burlington Planning Commission and said that she strongly supports working with developers on this process. Mr. Chawla asked for information regarding the timeframe of this project. Ms. Watson said roughly a year is expected to generate a draft. Mr. Watts said that the executive director of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission had recently spoken to the Selectboard and spoke of the “missing middle [class]” that was in need of housing. Ms. Watson said that middle-income residents can benefit from inclusionary zoning. Mr. Kerin indicated his support for increasing accessory apartments and other home sharing arrangements. In public input, Ms. Davis said that communities in New Hampshire have made restrictions on sub-leases (i.e., Airbnb) in affordable housing. The Selectboard and Trustees indicated support for continued research on inclusionary zoning.

f. Discussion and potential action on tentative agreements about shared services between Town of Essex and independent City of Essex Junction

Mr. Watts said that new documentation had been presented to the Selectboard yesterday that was not included in the packet and asked if the Selectboard would be interested in discussing these today. Ms. Delphia, Ms. Cook and Mr. Murray said that they have not reviewed these documents. Mr. Watts said that some of the documentation received seems to be inconsistent. Mr. Brown said that he is confused by this decision, as the new documents that were sent out today are Selectboard edits and comments. Mr. Watts said that he is also concerned that the public has not had access to these documents. Mr. Brown suggested reviewing the document that consolidated edits, knowing that future opportunities for public input are available. Mr. Chawla indicated his support for this and said that he is concerned that something similar may happen next week. Mr. Tyler encouraged the Trustees to respect the Selectboard’s decision. Ms. Cook suggested that these documents be discussed at next week’s joint meeting. Mr. Brown asked what new information the Selectboard believes is included in this packet and Mr. Watts said that input from legal counsel was not included in prior editions. Ms. Delphia said she has three different editions of the same document, all with different changes. Ms. Cook asked what is driving the urgency in this review. Mr. Brown said that each of these contracts and MOUs will help to clarify how the City of Essex Junction will function and not having them approved could create confusion for voters. Mr. Watts said that it was hoped that the review of these documents would have been done much earlier, and Mr. Murray said that the Selectboard appreciates the Trustees’ patience in this review and said that the Selectboard has the responsibility to conduct timely review of these materials. Mr. Luck said the Selectboard has not provided any comments on the Police Services or Right of First Refusal document and suggested discussing these documents tonight. Mr. Watts said that, due to the confusion as well as other timing issues, the

Selectboard has not had sufficient time to discuss these documents in Executive Session. Mr. Duggan said that updated documents will be available in next week's packet. Mr. Brown said that he would appreciate seeing how the Boards could avoid this situation from happening in the future so that this process can continue to move forward.

g. Discussion of personnel

This was discussed during Executive Session.

6. READING FILE

a. Board member comments: None.

b. List of Boards/Committees/Commission openings

c. News Alert: Essex is Among the Top Safest Cities in Vermont, According to SafeWise [2021 report]

d. Update on shared priorities from June strategic planning session

e. Upcoming meeting schedule

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

~~**a. An executive session may be requested to discuss the appointments of public officials**~~

~~**b. An executive session may be needed to discuss negotiation of contracts and agreements between the Town of Essex and Village/City of Essex Junction**~~

c. An executive session may be requested to discuss the employment of public employees

DAWN HILL_FLEURY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss the employment of public employees in accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3), to include the Trustees, Village Attorney, Town Attorney, Unified Manager and Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN that the Trustees enter into executive session to discuss the employment of public employees in accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3), to include the Selectboard, Village Attorney, Town Attorney, Unified Manager and Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to exit executive session. Motion passed 5-0 at 9:24 PM.

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, to exit executive session. Motion passed 5-0 at 9:25 PM.

8. ADJOURN

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, for the Trustees to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 9:25 PM.

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by SUE COOK, for the Selectboard to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 9:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary

191 **Approved this 25TH day of October, 2021**
192 **(See minutes of this day for corrections, if any)**

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Tracey Delphia, Clerk, Selectboard