



Town of Essex
Housing Commission

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Special Meeting Agenda

Thursday, May 12, 2022 – 1:00 PM
81 Main St., Essex Junction, VT 05452

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

- **ATTEND IN PERSON** at the downstairs conference room of the Town Offices, 81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT
- **JOIN ONLINE** via [Microsoft Teams](#). Depending on your browser, you may need to call in for audio.
- **JOIN BY CONFERENCE CALL:** (802) 377-3784 | Conference ID: 120 122 951#

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

- a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Setting new policy, structure, and role for Town vs. City Housing Commission
- b. Level of collaboration between Town and Village during and after the transition period
- c. Staff support for the commission(s), during and after transition period
- d. Commission membership during / after separation, possible membership expansion during transition
- e. Member appointments by SB / Trustees during transition, including for current vacancy
- f. Commission's work plan for the next year, effect of municipal budgets
- g. Creation of bylaws for current and future Commission(s)
- h. Other information and questions for Selectboard and Trustees

4. READING FILE

5. ADJOURN

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Housing Commission, like all programs and activities of the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Town Manager's office at 878-1341.

Certification: 

Joint Essex Housing Commission Charter

Approved January 14, 2020 by the Selectboard and Board of Trustees

Amended August 23, 2021 by the Selectboard and Board of Trustees

Mission

The mission of the Joint Essex and Essex Junction Housing Commission is to help ensure that any resident (or aspiring resident) of Essex has access to a home that:

- Is affordable (generally no more than 30% of household income is spent on housing);
- Is a desirable type and size for their household;
- Is located with easy access to basic needs (jobs, schools, food, health care, and cultural experiences) via walking, biking, or public transit;
- Is of sufficient quality to ensure the health, safety, and enjoyment of its residents;
- Meets residents' special needs, including senior care, ADA-accessibility, recovery housing, and housing for people who are homeless, etc.; and
- Is made available regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, pregnancy, disability, or status of citizenship, family, and military service.

Purpose

The Commission advises the Selectboard, Board of Trustees, Planning Commissions, and other municipal boards and committees on the housing needs of the community, including review and consultation of policy and zoning changes related to housing. The Commission maintains and analyzes the community's demographic and housing stock information and provides periodic updates on housing issues to elected officials. The Commission also works to educate the public on housing topics and develops partnerships with developers, non-profits, state agencies, and social service organizations to advance the community's housing goals.

Membership

The Commission is composed of up to seven members jointly appointed by the Selectboard and Trustees. Each member shall serve a staggered three-year term with no term limit. In appointing Commission members, the Selectboard and Trustees should select members who represent a variety of relevant interests and backgrounds, including but not limited to: for-profit and non-profit housing developers; housing authorities and agencies; social services organizations;

representatives of area businesses; and at-large members of the community. Four of the members shall be residents; for the remaining members, residency is preferred but not required. The Commission shall receive staff support from the Community Development Departments and other departments as needed.

Operations

A quorum shall consist of four members. At its annual organization meeting, the Commission shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson and clerk and shall adopt such rules/by-laws as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions. Officers shall be elected annually. The Commission shall keep a record of all transactions and meetings which shall be filed with the Town Clerk as a public record and notice shall be posted in the office of the Town Clerk and two other public buildings of the times and places of meetings of the Commission. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

Job Description of Essex Housing Commissioners

Title: Housing Commissioner

Term: Three year term, running from July 1 to June 30 of the year first appointed and for two subsequent years.

Appointment: Jointly by the Selectboard and Trustees

Job Description:

The purpose of the Essex Housing Commission is to “Advise the Selectboard, Board of Trustees, Planning Commissions, and other municipal boards and committees on the housing needs of the community, including review and consultation of policy and zoning changes related to housing. The Commission maintains and analyzes the community’s demographic and housing stock information and provides periodic updates to elected officials. The Commission also works to educate the public on housing topics and develops partnerships with developers, non-profits, state agencies, and social service organizations to advance the community’s housing goals.” The ultimate responsibility of each Commissioner is to fulfill that purpose for the greater Essex community.

Specific duties and responsibilities:

1. The initial expectation is that the Commission will begin its work with two meetings/month, with the potential to reduce to one per month when appropriate. Commissioners should attend all meetings of the Commission, and if a meeting must be missed, notify the chair as soon as possible. If more than 25% of the meetings are missed within a year, it is possible the Chair may recommend replacement.
2. Come to all Commission meetings prepared, meaning all material has been thoroughly read and assignments have been completed.
3. Fully participate and engage in the meeting discussions, including asking pertinent questions, engaging in respectful dialogue, and giving time for all Commissioners and guests to speak as needed.
4. Bring your personal experience and expertise to the Commission to be a voice representing that perspective in discussions. Also be open to hearing other perspectives and experiences that may be different from your own.
5. Be prompt with your time, succinct with your comments, and participate fully.
6. Expect there will be periodic work to be done outside of Commission meetings such as external research, possible interviews of subject matter experts, site visits, or training opportunities. This external work is an important component of making progress for the Commission.
7. There is no expectation that Commissioners have experience in housing development, sales, affordable housing, planning, or any other related field. There is an expectation that Commissioners be willing to learn and absorb the material presented so as to help fulfill the Commission’s purpose (as stated above).

**HOUSING COMMISSION
(DRAFT)**

**TOWN OF ESSEX
HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 20, 2022**

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

Administration and Staff: Darren Schibler, Town Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

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

Ballard requested to add to the agenda an update on the Rotary event she attended and to add an update on the upcoming Community Outreach event.

**Watson made a motion to add the agenda items, Teegarden seconded.
Approved 6-0.**

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Irene Wrenner joined at 3:45 PM. She is on the Joint Energy Commission and was interested to learn about the Housing Commission's plans for separation to inform their own separation.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approval of Minutes

Redmond made a motion, seconded by Taylor, to approve the minutes from April 6, 2022. The motion passed 6-0.

b. Inclusionary Zoning – Developer Forum Debrief

Watson reported that meeting with developers to introduce the inclusionary zoning topic was one month ago. The working group (Watson, Redmond, Schibler, and Patrick Scheld of the Village Planning Commission) did a debrief after that meeting. Developers were slightly negative, which was expected as it will cost them money. For homeownership we will likely have to shift income targeting to higher levels of income, lower for rentals. The working group's next step is to develop the policy and then vet it with the public and developers once again. In terms of moving forward, the Village Planning Commission likely wants to move forward, and while the Town Planning Commission is not against it, they will look for the Housing Commission to lead them. Next steps are to meet as a working group again to narrow down the income levels, to look at the South Burlington ordinances again, and to decide what topics cannot be answered without more input from the Planning Commission.

c. Rotary event

Ballard attended a meeting of the Essex Rotary on April 20, and talked about Inclusionary Zoning, the Housing Trust Fund, also about connecting landowners in town with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and to developers.

d. Upcoming Community Outreach event

The Step in and Come Together event is on May 15, 2-5pm and may be a way to recruit new members.

e. Continued discussion on Village Separation Implications for Housing Commission

The meeting to discuss separation will take place on May 12, 1-3pm, in person. The May 4 meeting is cancelled to allow for this special working session. The Commission refined a list of goals for this upcoming meeting. There will be a need to amend the charter if further members will be added in the interim period. Ballard asked if any members wish to seek separate commissions any time prior to July 2023. No commissioners did.

4. Adjourn

Ballard called meeting to close at 4:10 PM.

Minutes prepared by Mark Redmond and reviewed and submitted by Mia Watson, Clerk.