

**TOWN OF ESSEX / CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
JOINT HOUSING COMMISSION
Minutes of Wednesday, September 7, 2022**

City Representatives: Katie Ballard, Chair; Mia Watson; Ned Daly, Ta-Tanisha Redditta.

Town Representatives: Emily Taylor, Clerk; Rupesh Asher; Mark Redmond

Administration and Staff: Darren Schibler, Town Planner.

Members of the Public: Jean MacBride, The Essex Reporter

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

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

2. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There was no public to be heard.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approval of Minutes

Watson made a motion, seconded by Redditta, to approve the minutes of August 17, 2022. The motion passed 6-0.

b. Inclusionary Zoning Policy Development

Watson provided an overview of Inclusionary Zoning with the intention to create IZ policy in Essex to present to the Planning Commission.

IZ incentivizes or requires private developers to sell or rent a certain percentage of units in a new housing project below market rate to foster permanent affordability. Policy in the City would say the ordinance applies to all areas while in the Town, the ordinance would apply to all areas covered by the existing sewer system. Income limits would be in place for the IZ units and determined through Area Median Income (AMI) thresholds established by HUD. These thresholds are updated annually. The municipality has control over the AMI threshold chosen to determine eligibility for IZ units. Current proposal is to target rental units at 80% AMI and 120% AMI for homeownership, determined through numerous factors including Essex's existing PUD/density bonus requirements, and Vermont's definition of a priority housing development project. Commission is looking to mandate IZ in 10% of units in a new housing project (so a project with 100 units would see 10 units contributed to IZ).

Too many restrictions on development could mean developers look outside of Essex for new housing projects which exacerbates an already tight housing market. Incentives to developers include fee reductions, parking exceptions, expediting the permitting process, and density bonuses. Incentives in the Town and in the City could be different. IZ is a concrete policy for a municipality to adopt and will not solely address inclusion, affordability, and housing availability in communities, but is

39 meant to be a policy to point to as the community continues to develop with a focus
40 on ensuring diverse affordability for housing. Watson states that the Commission
41 needs to decide if the income thresholds and unit percentage threshold is firm and
42 what should be brought forward to the Planning Commission. Watson does not have
43 a schedule for presentations to the City and Town Planning Committees yet which
44 gives the Commission more time to discuss IZ and determine a path forward for
45 income eligibility and percentage of units to IZ. Ballard says firm decisions should be
46 made at the next Commission meeting. Watson will send information via email for
47 the Commission to review before the next meeting on 9/21/22. Further discussion
48 will be held for the 9/21/22 meeting.

49 Due to limited remaining time in the meeting, all other agenda items were tabled until
50 the 9/21/22 meeting.

51 **4. Reading File**

52 There was no discussion on reading file.

53
54 **5. Adjourn**

55 **The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:29pm.**

56 Minutes prepared and submitted by Emily Taylor, Clerk

57 Minutes approved September 21, 2022