

**TOWN OF ESSEX / CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
JOINT HOUSING COMMISSION
Minutes of October 19, 2022**

City Representatives: Katie Ballard, Chair; Gabrielle Smith, Vice Chair; Ned Daly, Tanisha Redditta.

Town Representatives: Emily Taylor, Clerk;

Administration and Staff: Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director, Town of Essex; Regina Mahony, City Manager of Essex Junction.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADDITIONS / CHANGES

Ballard called the meeting to order at 3:04 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

There were no corrections made to the minutes from October 5, 2022.

Smith made a motion, seconded by Daly, to approve the minutes of October 5, 2022. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Subcommittee Organization

Ballard is wondering if any Housing Commissioners (HC) can join the Town Plan workgroup. Smith is able to assist Ballard where needed but cannot take on more tasks. Taylor offered to attend workgroup meetings as needed but cannot commit to being the consistent representative and asked if the other Town Commissioners may be able to cycle in to meetings as a shared representation. Ballard will look at emailing the Town Commissioners to see if a different structure for representation can be created.

c. Town Plan 2024 Working Group Update

Smith appreciates that the Town will host meetings to receive input from community members through various locations in the Town. Two of three Town commissioners couldn't make today's meeting which opens conversation about separation of Town and City. Separation needs to happen by June 30, 2023 and the HC hasn't discussed a plan yet for steps leading up to that.

Daly points out that steps leading to separation are going to look different for the Town and the City in terms of existing structure and community goals. In thinking about

separation, Daly states that the different tracks each community is on needs to be taken into consideration.

Smiths agrees and adds that at the time of separation, each Commission will need time with their respective Boards to discuss goals and forward movement. Smith acknowledges that the Joint Commission is still considered new as a whole when entering into separation conversations, and notes that existing members have varied experience as we continue to fill vacant seats. Smith doesn't feel strongly about when the HC separates but would like the Commission to be thoughtful about where each HC will be and would like to identify concrete steps to take as a group leading up to separation.

Greg Duggan (Town Manager) stepped into the room at 3:33 pm. Smith asked Duggan if he had input on whether or not Commissions should meet with their respective Boards before or after separation. Duggan thought it would make more sense to meet once separated. Duggan also advised that having open conversation between HCs would be beneficial. Duggan left the room at 3:36pm. Ballard will be thoughtful of any presentations at Joint HC meetings on topics that would be helpful and educational for both Commissions, also being aware that what one Commission decides to move forward with, the other may not.

Leadership for the Town Commission before separation has to be considered as well and hasn't yet emerged. Taylor would like to discuss further leadership with her agency before making a commitment. Taylor would also like to hear from the other two Town representatives about their capacity for larger roles or more tasks, and also to increase membership ahead of time. Taylor can help with more outreach. Ballard can speak with staff about posting vacant seats through Front Porch Forum and other avenues. Ballard has continued to do outreach with housing providers and community members, and encourages the HC to continue with outreach and recruitment for vacant seats.

Smith wonders if the HC could spend time debriefing on the onboarding process to see if we can improve our procedures to make sure new representatives feel supported to encourage new members to join. Ballard states she and staff have reached out to newer representatives for their feedback and would like to make sure everyone is clear on their role and has the support they need when joining the HC. Ballard wants the separation to be smooth and wants both groups to have equal foundations to build on.

Mahony agrees vacant seats need to be posted and will also look into information listed on the Town's and City's website.

Ballard asked for items for November's agenda. Taylor asked for specific updates on Town Representatives' capacity and outreach efforts. Taylor offered to attend the next

Town Plan workgroup meeting if she can work it into her schedule and bring back updates. Ballard will have Taylor added to the email list.

4. Reading File

a. Commissioner Comments

The November 16, 2022 Joint Housing Commission meeting will be cancelled.

There was no discussion on the reading file.

5. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:03pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Emily Taylor, Clerk.