TOWN OF ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
February 23, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION (PC) PRESENT:
IN PERSON: Dustin Bruso, Chair.
VIRTUAL: Josh Knox, Vice-Chair; John Mangan, Clerk; Jonathan Schumacher and Tom Furland.

OTHERS PRESENT:
IN PERSON: Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director; Kent Johnson, Town Planner; Cat Mawn, C.D. Intern; Planner, Gail Henderson-King; and Peter Bero.
VIRTUAL: Sharon Kelley, Zoning Administrator; Leonara Dodge; Tracy Delphia; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Ken Signorello; Pam's IPhone (unidentified); Michael Peterson; and Town Meeting TV.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Bruso called out the Commissioners present and members of the public who attended virtually. He advised the public to state their name for the record if they were going to provide comments. He noted the amendments to the Agenda, specifically that the 60 Colonel Page Road application will be rescheduled.

<u>**Agenda Item 1: Public Comments**</u>: None.

<u>**AGENDA ITEM 2: CONSENT AGENDA:**</u>

- **SITE PLAN AMENDMENT**: University of Vermont Medical Center, LLC, Pete Bero, Agent, is proposing a 1,710 s.f.,3-sided addition to accommodate a mobile MRI/CT scanner unit to its facility located at 2 Essex Way in the Mixed-Use Development-Planned Unit Development (MXD-PUD Subzone B1) & Business Design Control (B-DC) Overlay Districts. Parcel ID 2:/091-006-001.

Vice-Chair Knox MOVED and Commissioner Furland SECONDED a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as warned. The MOTION passed 5-0.

<u>**AGENDA ITEM 3: TOWN PLAN UPDATE:**</u>

Katherine Sonnick, Vice-Chair Knox and Ken Signorello spoke on this topic.
Sonnick noted that two documents were provided to the PC for discussion, "Public Feedback" and "2016 Town Plan Vision Statement" which listed 6 Core Values.

Vice-Chair Knox reported that they received large feedback from the public and the working group worked on determining which things fit into what category, noting that they were a couple of orphan topics that were given a spot. Comments were categorized in specific groups, in no specific order, entitled, 'Public Feedback' and included the following:

- Agriculture: Working Landscape; Diversity; Programs; Farmers Market; Community Garden.
- Climate: Design Standards; Sustainable Materials; Carbon offsets; Resiliency; Education; Regulations; Rooftop solar; Preserve Trees; Green Incentives; Diversity Equity Inclusion; Pesticides.
- Conservation: Wetlands; Water Quality; Historic; Education; Biodiversity; Invasives; Scenic Views; Wildlife; Forest Management; Regulations.
- Recreation: Sand Hill Park; Community Center; After School; Water Access; Opportunities; Manage Conflicts; Saxon Hill; Parking; Connect Trails.

- Development: Easier Permitting; Lifycycle Housing; Mixed Use; Rural character; Ag-Friendly; Citizen Engagement; Sewer core; Open Space; Industrial Infill; Single family; Consider Impacts; Enforcement; Historic; Rural Development; Low Density; Incentives; Town center; Affordable Housing; Land Trust Home Ownership; Reg. Short term rentals; Aesthetics; Hosing Infill; Diversity Equity Inclusion; Tree Canopy; Compact Development.
- Economic Development: Local Businesses; Workforce Housing; Directory; Home Business; Diversity Equity Inclusion; Business Variety; Community co-op; Incubators; Industrial Planning; Local Option Tax; Tourism; Living Wages; Vacant Reuse; Childcare; Low Taxes.
- Infrastructure: Citizen Engagement; Mass Transit; Diversity Equity Inclusion; Centralize Town Facilities; Recycling; Telecom; School Traffic Resilient Grid; Bike/Ped Connectivity; ADA Accessibility; Composting; Address Circ; Bike Parking; EV Stations; Autos Connectivity; Maintenance; Integrated Planning; Address RT.

Ken Signorello advised that items/topics in the document could be switched around by changing colors or sizes. He noted this was still a working process and asked for input on "looks" of the document.

Katherine Sonnick noted that decisions will need to be made to address Route 15, such as how to handle traffic/safety/parking/speed. Chairman Bruso noted the gap area between the City.

Vice-Chair Knox refreshed memories of the 2016 Intro for the ETC|NEXT Executive Summary. He suggested to build on those summaries for the Town Plan. He reported that they need to see how much work will be needed or if they have to re-invent the wheel.

Sonnick reported that over 118 responses were received from the public. Signorello noted that there were over 579 suggestions put forth with the public outreach.

Chairman Bruso asked if more work is needed by the working group or is it ready for the PC to take dive in. Vice-Chair Knox responded that they only socialized at the two meetings and provided summaries by categories. After that it becomes a Town Plan process where staff and PC start working on an updated draft. Sonnick noted that the work cloud is helpful but it does not explain the details and suggested the working group prepare a paragraph for that area after Town Meeting. She noted that it would be placed on the website and get as much feedback as possible. Her vision is that the PC will have a role in this process, but it will mostly be the working group.

Chairman Bruso thanked Ken Signorello for all the work he brought to the table and recognized the working groups, noting that there were a lot of people from the public involved, and a lot of public responses. He noted that the process has put public participation at the front of the PC process, instead of receiving their comments at the end, noting that this is a positive. Bruso noted that Signorello is also on the Act 171 work group and will do a different output for the Town Plan. Sonnick stated that Intern Cat Mohn has been tasked to reach out to Department Heads and Committees and provide them action stops, and let them know more is coming. Sonnick appreciated here help.

Bruso also noted that the PC will look also need to look at the regulatory necessities of the updated Town Plan.

Commissioner Furland thanked the group for the climate page, design standards and regulations. He noted there was a lot of overlap.

Sonnick ran through the 2024 Town Plan Schedule which provided a timetable of events to keep the process moving forward. She noted that there was a tiny bit of room for date changes.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Minutes February 9, 2023

Commissioner Furland Moved and Commissioner Schumacher Seconded a Motion to approve the 2/9/2023 minutes as written. The Motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Other Business:

Katherine Sonnick informed the PC that the Selectboard decided to move forward with changing the current mode of a Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment to a Planning Commission and a Development Review Board (DRB). Sonnick advised that this will be a part of the Town Charter update that goes to the voters. If approved by the voters, it goes to the Legislature and the switch would occur 1/21/2025.

Sonnick advised that the ArcGIS Urban Grant Update has been working on developing an ArcGIS mode in an area of town, outside the ETC|NEXT area and within the sewer core, is moving slowly but still in progress.

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION

By:__________________________

Dustin R. Brusco, Chair