

**Essex Conservation and Trails Committee (CTC)**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**81 Main St. Essex Jct., VT 05452**  
**August 13, 2024**

Minutes Submitted by Clerk Duane Millar Barlow, August 16, 2024 Approved September 10, 2024

**Attendees**

**Committee Members:**

**Present:** Ken Signorello, Chair; Shannon Jackson, Vice Chair; Morgan Kirk; April Peterson; Paul Davis; Duane Millar Barlow, Clerk; Betsy Dunn (Remote); Steve Dowd (Remote);

**Absent:** Bino Cummings

**Staff:** Kent Johnson

**Public:** David Skopin, Chuck Vile (Town Tree Warden)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Kent Johnson at 6:31 PM, The committee confirmed they had a quorum.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Moved land purchase advisory draft (item 4e) to follow development reviews. Moved tree nursery MOU (item 4g) to follow land purchase advisory. Moved by Shannon, Seconded by April, (8-0)

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

David Skopin from the Essex Energy and Climate Committee spoke about the importance of cooperation between committees to address climate change and suggested the town could do better in this regard.

**4. POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS**

a. Approval of Minutes from July 9, 2024: Moved by April, Seconded by Betsy, (8-0)

b. **Development Review:**

## 60 Colonel Page Road

Recommendations:

1. **A written document outlining how the field and landscape will be maintained.** The committee expressed concern about the long-term maintenance of the central field area, which is divided among different property owners. They want to ensure that the field continues to look cohesive and maintains its scenic character. The written plan should detail how all property owners will coordinate to maintain the field consistently.

Moved by Ken, Seconded by April, (8-0)

**50 Gauthier Drive:** No recommendations made.

## 21 Essex Way

Recommendations:

1. **Commit to creating the 'Future Roadway' that would connect to Route 15 and be available to new dwellings.** The committee is concerned about traffic flow and access for the new development. They want to ensure that there's an additional access point to Route 15 to alleviate congestion on Essex Way and provide better ingress/egress for residents.
2. **Include more green space and show landscape plans including shade trees.** The committee felt that the current plan lacks sufficient green areas and wants to see more balance between built structures and natural spaces. They requested detailed landscape plans that incorporate shade trees to improve the overall environment and aesthetics of the development.

Moved by Ken, Seconded by Morgan, (8-0)

## 53 Center Road

Recommendations:

1. **Include plans for stabilizing slopes.** There are concerns about erosion, particularly along Alder Brook. The committee wants to see detailed plans for how the developer will prevent erosion and stabilize slopes, especially for homes located near the edge of the ravine.
2. **Include public trail access to the town forest as well as VOREC in the plan, and anticipate easements.** The committee sees this development as an opportunity to improve trail connectivity. They want

the developer to incorporate public trail access that connects to the town forest and considers future VOREC (Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative) trail plans, including any necessary easements.

3. **Address anticipated traffic increases at Saybrook Road/Center Road intersection.** With the addition of new homes, the committee is concerned about increased traffic. They want a traffic study and potential mitigation measures for the Saybrook Road/Center Road intersection.
4. **Reduce the number of units along the ravine and increase the number of multi-family units.** The committee is worried about the environmental impact and safety of single-family homes placed close to the ravine edge. They suggest reducing these units and compensating by increasing multi-family units in more stable areas of the property.

Moved by Ken, Seconded by Shannon, (8-0)

### **132 Thompson Drive**

Recommendations:

1. **The proposed pedestrian path should be multi-use fitting the standard for Vermont multi-use paths (10ft wide).** Recognizing the potential for both pedestrian and bicycle traffic, especially given the proximity to Saxon Hill biking area, the committee wants to ensure that any new paths are designed to safely accommodate both uses. They specifically recommend adhering to Vermont's standards for multi-use paths, which require a width of 10 feet.

Moved by Duane, Seconded by Morgan, (8-0)

c. Update and Adopt Work Plan for FY25: Moved by Betsy, Seconded by Duane, (8-0)

d. Action on EMS Project proposal: Deferred to next meeting.

e. Adopt Land purchase advisory draft: Made amendments to and moved to approve and transmit letter to Select Board recommending purchase of land for public non-motorized river access. Moved by Ken, Seconded by April, (8-0)

f. Potential action on Indian Brook parking area cleaning: Deferred discussion to fall cleanup.

g. Approve any Tree Nursery MOU significant changes: Deferred to next meeting, subcommittee to meet and revise draft.

h. Act 171 next steps regarding protecting forest blocks and habitat connectors: Betsy to bring list of potential outreach events to next meeting.

## **5. UPDATES AND REPORTS**

Due to time constraints, updates and reports were deferred to the next meeting.

## **6. READING FILE**

Not discussed due to time constraints.

## **7. ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn: Moved by Betsy Dunn, seconded by Morgan Kirk (6-2). Ken Signorello and Shannon Jackson dissented.

Adjourned the meeting at 8:44 PM.

## **MOTIONS**

1. Approve agenda changes. Moved by Shannon, Seconded by April, (8-0)
2. Approve minutes from July 9, 2024. Moved by April, Seconded by Betsy, (8-0)
3. Approve recommendation for 60 Colonel Page Road development. Moved by Ken, Seconded by April, (8-0)
4. Approve recommendations for 21 Essex Way development. Moved by Ken, Seconded by Morgan, (8-0)
5. Approve recommendations for 53 Center Road development. Moved by Ken, Seconded by Shannon, (8-0)
6. Approve recommendation for 132 Thompson Drive development. Moved by Duane, Seconded by Morgan, (8-0)
7. Adopt Work Plan for FY25. Moved by Betsy, Seconded by Duane, (8-0)
8. Approve and transmit land purchase advisory letter to Select Board for boat launch. Moved by Ken, Seconded by April, (8-0)
9. Motion to adjourn. Moved by Betsy Dunn, seconded by Morgan Kirk (6-2). Ken Signorello and Shannon Jackson dissented.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Steve to work with Kent to complete the edits for the Tree Nursery Proposal
- Steve, Chuck, and Kent to meet to discuss tree nursery
- Betsy to compile list of potential outreach events for Act 171 discussion for next regular meeting
- April to track and report on Tree City USA progress at each meeting
- Review and revise Street Tree Management Plan
- Committee to consider plans for Indian Brook parking area during fall cleanup

Next Meeting: September 10th, 2024 6:30pm