

TOWN OF ESSEX HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 3, 2024
APPROVED OCTOBER 24, 2024

Housing Commission (HC): Anna Brouillette (Chair), Lauren Ressue (Vice Chair), Carolyn Ellenberger (Clerk), Rupesh Asher, Deb Flannery (absent)

Administration and Staff: Kent Johnson (Town Planner)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Anna called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Section 4 (Approval of Minutes) of the agenda was changed from “Approve minutes from July 2, 2024 meeting” to “Approve minutes from August 6, 2024 meeting”

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There were no members of the public present.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lauren motioned to approve the August 6, 2024 meeting minutes, Rupesh seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Discussion and Potential Vote on Comments on 53 Center Road Development
 - i. Lauren and Anna shared draft recommendations for the HC to consider; recommendations were based on needs identified in the Essex Housing Needs Assessment and 2024 Town Plan
 - ii. Recommendations were revised as shown below based on HC discussion, in particular inclusion of references:

1. We encourage this housing project because it supports a number of our goals/priorities:

- located in the areas in Town identified as appropriate for growth: the Town Center, the Susie Wilson Road Corridor, and a portion of Essex Center (as per the [2024 Town Plan, page 16](#), 4(S).2)
- located in proximity to basic needs such as jobs, schools, health care, and cultural experiences and is accessible by walking, biking, or public transportation (as per the [2024 Town Plan, page 16](#), 4(b)).

2. It would better fit our goals/priorities if:

- the units could serve more income levels (as per the [2024 Town Plan, page 16](#), 4(a)).
- some or all of the units are studios or 1-2 bedrooms units (as per the [Essex Housing Needs Assessment, pages 62-63](#)).
- had more accessible, shared amenities for residents (trails, a playground, a garden, etc.), especially if it continues to be considered as a Planned Unit Development proposal ([2024 Town Plan, page 16](#), 4(S).1)

iii. Carolyn motioned to vote on whether to submit the HC recommendations to the Planning Commission, Rupesh seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

iv. **Action:** Kent to include HC recommendations in staff report to Planning Commission

b. Update on Workforce Housing Project in Essex Experience

- i. Topic is on the Sept 12 Planning Commission meeting agenda, more information will be available then
- ii. Currently there are no set restrictions on employers that may participate; larger tech and manufacturing companies have been discussed as potential employer participants
- iii. This project and the 53 Center Road project would require additional water and sewer capacity. An ongoing study to be completed this fall will help assess the situation

c. Resource Website Development: Update from Carolyn and Lauren

- i. Carolyn reviewed draft proposal and contents for Housing Resources webpages; further input is needed on links to include on the webpages
- ii. HC members agreed to not include list of contractors or real estate agents, but to look for links to existing resources
- iii. **Action:** Carolyn to test the housing.commission@essex.org email address to see who receives

- iv. **Action:** All HC members to review the draft proposal posted with the minutes and send feedback to Carolyn on content and additional links by September 20
- d. Updates on Other Recent HC Conversations/Priorities
 - i. Anna is awaiting a response from the Jericho Housing Commission
 - ii. HC members had previously considered participating in the Explore Essex Fall Festival, but are currently at capacity; consider similar future activities
 - iii. Essex Town Select Board would like an update from the HC; consider presenting workplan and any actions to date at October 2024 meeting; note that now is the time to request budget for the next fiscal year, if needed; HC has no budget needs at this time, but will consider for 2026 (e.g., update housing assessment); **Action:** Kent to check if HC previously had a budget and whether any current FY25 plans align with potential HC activities

6. MEMBER REPORTS

- a. Lauren reported that The Vermont Housing Needs Assessment was released by the State of Vermont ([link](#)) and the Health Needs Assessment conducted by the Vermont Health Department identified housing as a priority

7. ADJOURN

Lauren motioned to adjourn the meeting, Rupesh adjourned. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:11 PM.

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Ellenberger, Clerk.