

TOWN OF ESSEX HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Housing Commission (HC): Anna Brouillette (Chair), Lauren Ressue (Vice Chair), Carolyn Ellenberger (Clerk); Noah Detzer; absent: Rupesh Asher

Administration and Staff: Kent Johnson (Town Planner)

Guests: Karen Adams (Essex Deputy Town Manager)

- Call to Order
- Agenda additions/changes
- Public to be heard
- Approve minutes from May 6, 2025 meeting
- Business Items
 - Fire Impact Fee Ordinance Change Discussion Continued
- Member and Staff Updates
- Adjourn

1. CALL TO ORDER

Anna called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

No members of the public were present.

4. APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY 6, 2025 MEETING

The minutes from the May 6, 2025 meeting were approved.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Fire Impact Fee Ordinance Change Discussion Continued
 - i. Selectboard has warned for public hearing, but a decision between Options A (no fire station improvements included) and B (new fire station included) has not yet been made and remains up for discussion
 - ii. No formal recommendation to the Selectboard has been made at this time, but the Town Manager's Office and Fire Chief are likely to recommend Option A
 - iii. Housing commission input requested (by June 16) on impact fees, in particular with respect to affordable housing development eligibility for exemption; as proposed, exemption must be requested
 - iv. The Housing Commission members discussed the fire impact fee and desire for it to not deter housing development in Essex
 - v. The Housing Commission supports Option A and recommends that affordable/low income housing projects receive automatic exemption from the fees; the Housing Commission will also request they be consulted in case of future fee changes to assess potential development impact
 - vi. **Action:** Lauren will draft recommendation to Selectboard and share for Carolyn's review prior to submission before June 16

6. MEMBER AND STAFF UPDATES

- a. Community survey of housing-related topics
 - i. Lauren suggested the Housing Commission conduct a survey to gain insight on housing-related community sentiment for which we do not have data, e.g., hopes and dreams for housing? Location of housing? Challenges in housing?
 - ii. In addition to collecting information, survey could serve as an opportunity for community outreach and communication
 - iii. Kent confirmed no existing guidance must be followed in conducting a survey, except to use a specific survey tool posted on the Essex Town website
 - iv. Consider method of survey dissemination and offering incentives for participation (may require small budget)
 - v. Consider bundling the survey with updating the Housing Needs Assessment, which has been delayed due to

competing priorities; HNA update project will be added to the July 1 meeting agenda

vi. Action: Kent to follow up on outcome of 2025 budget request

vii. Action: Anna will invite Deb (or a colleague) to provide an overview/primer on affordable housing at August meeting

7. ADJOURN

Noah motioned to adjourn the meeting; Carolyn seconded. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:14 PM.

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Ellenberger, Clerk.