



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, September 11, 2024
6:30 PM

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www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be in-person at 2 Lincoln Street and available remotely. Options to watch or join the meeting remotely:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#)
- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free audio only): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825; Passcode: 635787

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public
5. **RECOGNITION**
 - a. Moment of Silence in Observance of 9/11
6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Development Review Board Update and Presentation
 - b. Discussion and Consideration of Establishing a Governance Committee
 - c. *Discussion and Consideration of and Executive Session to discuss Personnel
 - d. **Discussion and Consideration of and Executive Session to discuss a Contract
7. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Meeting Minutes: August 28, 2024
 - b. Approve Road Closure for Pleasant Street Block Party
 - c. Approve Banner Application for the Connect the Junction Project
 - d. Approve Iroquois Avenue Waterline and Road Reconstruction Design and Construction Services
8. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**
9. **READING FILE**
 - a. Check Warrant #24053 09/06/2024
 - b. Regional Boards and Committees Minutes Memo
 - c. August Financial Report
 - d. Global Foundries Battery Application – Response to Noise Questions
 - e. Information on Green Mountain Transit’s Service Reduction Plan and Public Meetings
 - f. Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce 2024 Annual Report
 - g. BWAC Minutes 8/19/24
10. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. * An Executive Session may be needed to discuss Personnel – City Manager Evaluation
 - b. ** An Executive Session may be needed to discuss a Contract - CVE
11. **ADJOURN**

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
MEETING AGENDA September 11, 2024**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the President. Regarding zoom participants, if individuals interrupt, they will be muted; and if they interrupt a second time they will be removed. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the City Council, like all programs and activities of the City of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the City Manager's office at 802-878-6944 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Raj Chawla, President; Amber Thibeault, Vice-President; Marcus Certa; Elaine Haney; Tim Miller, Clerk

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: John Alden, Resa Mehren, Joanna Rankin, Tim Shea

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Chawla called the meeting of the City Council to order at 6:30 PM.

5. RECOGNITION

a. Moment of Silence in Observance of 9/11

A moment of silence was held.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

No changes, thus no approval required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments for Public on Items not on Agenda

Mr. Chawla noted that in previous meetings members of the public had made racist and anti-Semitic comments. The City Council will continue to condemn such comments publicly. Ms. Mehren asked if Connect the Junction would be put on hold considering the potential changes to the Green Mountain Transit (GMT) bus routes. Ms. Mahony said that the project elements are still relevant, and Mr. Chawla encouraged members of the public to contact their legislators about the GMT changes. Ms. Mehren said that SSTA requires that users be located within a certain distance of a bus stop, and that GMT changes could affect them. Joanna Rankin said that Burlington has passed a resolution asking the congressional delegation to change the mission of the Vermont Air National Guard. She requested that Essex Junction consider the same. The Board will communicate with her to let her know if it will be placed on the next agenda.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Development Review Board Update and Presentation

Mr. Alden, Chair of the Development Review Board (DRB), discussed development trends. He said that most developments are occurring around the Five Corners area. The DRB has approved 167 new housing units, many in mixed-use buildings. He discussed the highlights of some recently approved projects. Mr. Chawla asked about the challenges that the DRB is facing. Mr. Alden said that the DRB has continually worked with the same developers over time and said that they hope to continue to elevate the architecture standards of new buildings. He said that the DRB is a new board and that they need additional time to grow into the role and discussed recent staff turnover. Answering a question from Mr. Chawla regarding the role of design review, Mr. Alden said that the DRB can require additional standards for appearance. He said that this is balanced with a desire to maintain housing growth for all income levels. The DRB is always open to input in whatever format that members of the public wish to give it and encourages residents to specifically

50 articulate what they would like in their community. Ms. Mahony encouraged residents to participate in the
51 Connect the Junction project so that they can influence future regulations for development.

52

53 Answering questions from Mr. Certa, Mr. Alden said that it would be helpful for the DRB and Planning
54 Commission to meet jointly, as well as hold a joint meeting with the City Council. Mr. Alden said that the
55 biggest hurdles to development are the long and risky state permitting process in Vermont, and the high cost
56 of such. He said that there is a very high learning curve and a limited group of developers willing to construct
57 as a result. Changes to state regulations will hopefully make this easier, especially for small developments.
58 Mr. Alden said that housing is concentrated along Pearl Street, and most development is infill. Mr. Alden
59 said that he has seen many concepts for the former Lincoln Inn building, however nothing has moved
60 forward. Mr. Miller expressed gratitude to Mr. Alden for his service.

61

62 **b. Discussion and Consideration of Establishing a Governance Committee**

63 Ms. Mahony said that the Essex Junction charter requires the examination of the current governance structure
64 within three years of establishment. She displayed a draft mission statement for the committee and said that
65 if there is a need for charter changes it should be voted on by November 2025. Mr. Chawla suggested that
66 something be added in stating that the goal of this is to make Essex Junction a more inclusive community.
67 Ms. Haney agreed and said that it is also important to offer as many opportunities for public comment as
68 possible. Mr. Chawla said that the establishment of wards/districts is something that will be explored, as
69 well as a potential mayoral system. He spoke of the importance of establishing equity in the wards. Ms.
70 Haney suggested that a discussion of establishing neighborhood planning districts be included, as well as
71 reading past studies on governance in Essex. Funding for professional services and a potential committee
72 budget were discussed.

73

74 Mr. Certa encouraged a more open-ended look at governance so that diversity of experiences is heard and
75 that the Board is making efforts to be a representative government. He suggested removing the listed
76 examples as a way of achieving this. The Council decided to include “up to nine” members, including City
77 Council members. Additional members can be added if need be. Mr. Miller said that he feels like the
78 committee should not be pushed to come to decision by 2025. Ms. Haney noted that this is an advisory
79 committee, and their decisions will require the Council’s approval and possibly a full community vote. Mr.
80 Certa expressed concern about the use “advisory,” stating that the Council should move forward with the
81 recommendations if there are no serious issues. Ms. Mahony will develop the language further and the
82 Council will potentially approve this at their next meeting.

83

84 **c. Discussion and Consideration of and Executive Session to discuss Personnel**

85 This was discussed during Executive Session.

86

87 **d. Discussion and Consideration of and Executive Session to discuss a Contract**

88 This was discussed during Executive Session.

89

90 **7. CONSENT ITEMS**

91 **ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, to approve the Consent Agenda.**
92 **Motion passed 5-0.**

93 **a. Approve Meeting Minutes: August 28, 2024**

94 **b. Approve Road Closure for Pleasant Street Block Party**

95 **c. Approve Banner Application for the Connect the Junction Project**

96 **d. Approve Iroquois Avenue Waterline and Road Reconstruction Design and Construction Services**

97

98 **8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**

99 Ms. Mahony said that the meeting schedule has been revised for the fall. The Crescent Connector is almost
100 finished. A community newsletter began this month, with heavy interest and signups. It is available via both
101 print and e-mail. GMT is hosting a public forum tomorrow at Brownell regarding potential service cuts. Mr.
102 Certa encouraged all to participate in the conversations regarding GMT service cuts. He said that he is
103 especially concerned by how these cuts may impact SSTA users.
104

105 **9. READING FILE**

- 106 **a. Check Warrant #24053 09/06/2024**
- 107 **b. Regional Boards and Committees Minutes Memo**
- 108 **c. August Financial Report**
- 109 **d. Global Foundries Battery Application – Response to Noise Questions**
- 110 **e. Information on Green Mountain Transit’s Service Reduction Plan and Public Meetings**
- 111 **f. Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce 2024 Annual Report**
- 112 **g. BWAC Minutes 8/19/24**

113

114 **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

115 **a. An Executive Session was needed to discuss Personnel – City Manager Evaluation**
116 **Motion by MARCUS CERTA, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the City Council enter into executive**
117 **session to discuss a personnel evaluation, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to include the City Council**
118 **and the City Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**
119

120 **b. An Executive Session was needed to discuss a Contract - CVE**
121 **Motion by MARCUS CERTA, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the City Council enter into executive**
122 **session to discuss a contract, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A) to include the City Council and City**
123 **Manager. Motion passed 4-0-1, with Elaine Haney abstaining.**

124 Ms. Haney said that she will abstain from the vote and discussion due to a conflict of interest. Ms. Haney
125 left Executive Session at 8:48 PM.
126

127 **Motion by RAJ CHAWLA, seconded by MARCUS CERTA, to exit executive session. Motion passed**
128 **4-0 at 9:40 PM.**
129

130 **11. ADJOURN**

131 **Motion by RAJ CHAWLA, seconded by MARCUS CERTA, to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0 at 9:40**
132 **PM.**
133

134 Respectfully Submitted,
135 Darby Mayville
136 Recording secretary
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