

May City Council Meeting Summary

As we close the calendar on May, we also complete the first month of the new term for your Essex Junction City Council. The City Council typically meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, with a few exceptions around holidays.

Our first meeting was on Wednesday, May 8th. As this was the first meeting with the newly elected Council members, the first order of business was reorganizing the board. There were no major changes as Raj Chawla and Amber Thibeault were re-elected to their positions of President and Vice President, respectively.

Also discussed at the May 8th meeting were the next steps for the urban park at 1 Main Street. This would be a redevelopment of the lot in front of Firebird Café. While we have a \$200,000 grant from the Vermont Downtown Transportation fund, the Council as a whole felt the total design cost of \$478,000 is not a priority at this moment. We have asked staff to investigate if the grant money would still be available for use in a much smaller-scale project. So, there will be more to come on this topic in the near future.

The second meeting on May 22nd was to include a presentation on the results from the City's Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan. Unfortunately, the presenter was unable to make the meeting, so that will be rescheduled for the June 12th meeting.

The Bike/Walk Advisory Committee updated us on their work around the city to improve pedestrian safety. They identified troublesome crosswalks where pedestrians would benefit from the installation of rapid flashing beacons (aka flashing lights) to bring attention to those folks using the crossings. Additionally, there was some discussion around long term goals to improve cycling through our community.

If this work interests you, there are several open committee positions, and we encourage you to apply on the City's website: <https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/become-a-committee-member>. In fact, there are a number of committee positions open, and you can see the latest Junction City News episode for more information: <https://www.essexjunction.org/news/junction-city-news>.

Also at this meeting, EJRP Director Brad Luck provided both a look back as well as a look forward into the happenings of his department. EJRP concluded another successful winter/spring season, which included Holiday Lights, Train Hop, Essex Has Talent, and the egg hunt in the park. As they enter the summer, he noted the completion of projects at the pool, including new diving boards as well as a new ADA lift, and renovations to the lifeguard room. Director Luck also noted a large number of returning staff and that they are fully staffed for the season. A full-time adult program director will also be hired in the near future.

There were also discussions around future needs. It was noted that the tennis and pickleball courts are beyond their life and are not suitable for more advanced level players. Director Luck discussed a Master Plan and Facility Feasibility study to determine the right number of courts for our community going forward. Additionally, discussion evolved around the reintroduction of a

Recreation Advisory Board as previously existed. If you think a position on that board interests you, please continue to follow along as we work through what exactly that will look like.

At the start of every meeting, there is an opportunity for the public to speak about items that are not on the agenda for the evening. If there's something you feel is important to discuss, we all encourage you to speak during this time. If you are unable to attend the meeting either in-person, or via Zoom, or perhaps you find public speaking to be intimidating, feel free to reach out via email. Individual email addresses are provided in the URL below. The more we hear from everyone, the better sense of direction we have.

Agendas are typically published the Friday before our scheduled meetings. You can find them on the City's website: <https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/city-council> on FPF or on the bulletin board outside City Hall.

Tim Miller
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