**Town of Essex Planning Board Meeting Minutes –March 3, 2021**

The Public Meeting of the Town of Essex Planning Board is to be held at the Essex Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium, 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA 01929 and will commence at 7:30 p.m.

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the town’s website, at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org). For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to and/or view the meeting may do so via Video Call (with the option to show yourself on video or not and with the option to use a phone to call in, for audio-only).  No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so using the tools discussed below, despite best efforts, we will post on the town’s website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting

**The link you must follow to get to the video conference is:**<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/pbessex> , and, if prompted, the on-line meeting ID
is pbessex.  Depending on your device and software installed, you may be able to join
directly, by web browser, or, you may have to download the application directly (you will
be shown that choice when you go to the above link).  You should be joined in mute
mode.  However, if that is not the case, please click on the audio icon to mute your
microphone.  You can choose to activate your camera to show yourself, or not.  The
camera should be off, by default, when you join.

If you do not have a digital device to join via the link above, you can also dial a telephone
number and be directly connected to the meeting, via audio only.  The call-in-only
number is: (425) 436-6352 and the access code is 1729820.

**In the event that the video conferencing system fails for some reason, the meeting
will be broadcast on a different conference call line, accessed by telephone only, as
follows:  717-275-8940. The access code is: 8378315.  PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS
BACKUP PROTOCOL UNLESS THE METHODS IN THE TWO PRECEEDING
PARAGRAPHS ARE NOT WORKING (NOT YOU JUST HAVING TROUBLE
CONNECTING), SINCE THE BOARD WILL NOT BE MOVING TO THIS**ALTERNATIVE NUMBER UNLESS THE PLATFORM FAILS FOR THE BOARD.

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**At 7:30 PM the meeting was called to order by Chair, Westley Burnham.**

**Board Members present at Town Hall 2nd floor meeting room:** Westley Burnham, Michael McConnell, William French, S. Sturgis Crocker

**Board Members participating remotely:** Kim Drake, Lisa O’Donnell, Matt Greco

**Also in attendance remotely:** Ruth Pereen-Chairman, Board of Selectmen

 Antonella Muniz, Kim Noble, Jodi Harris

**Administrative Assistant**: Mary Heeney

**BUILDING INSPECTOR’S REPORT:**

The Building Inspector did not have any Building Permit Applications which required review by the Planning Board.

**BOARD REVIEW / DISCUSSION:**

**Ruth Pereen-Chairman, Board of Selectmen-Moratorium**

Ruth Pereen spoke of her concerns where residential properties are being purchased for change of use to business. She proposed placing a two year moratorium for change of use from residential to business.

Discussion was as follows:

Westley Burnham noted that home occupation is not a change of use. He also stated that he supports a moratorium, but feels that there should be time allowed for additional discussion before any decisions are made.

Kim Drake does not support the moratorium.

S. Sturgis Crocker stated that he supports the moratorium but also feels that more time is needed for discussion.

Lisa O’Donnell supports the moratorium and feels that it gives the Board a chance to review the current town issues.

William French is concerned with the effect that a moratorium could have on the current review of the Downtown Zoning District.

Matt Greco also feels that more time is needed to discuss the effect this would have on the town.

Michael McConnell stated that more time for discussion is needed before a decision can be made.

Kim Noble stated that he supported a change of use moratorium.

Jodi Harris In favor of moratorium. She is concerned that with the current bylaw Essex is open to more commercial use because we do not have a commercial tax rate.

Discussion of Downtown Zoning District;

Westley Burnham informed the board that the proposed bylaw amendment for the Downtown Zoning District will be presented at the Spring Town Meeting. Michael McConnell reviewed the outline, as presented by Wes Burnham, that provided the information to present a bylaw amendment at the Spring Town Meeting. Michael proposed several changes to the outline. Kim Drake also reviewed the outline and presented additional changes/comments. Westley Burnham informed that he will be reviewing the updated changes/comments.

**Board review of Meeting Minutes:**

The Board reviewed the Meeting Minutes from February 17, 2021.

S. Sturgis Crocker made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Michael McConnell seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members.

**Adjourn:**

Michael McConnell made a motion to adjourn the meeting

S. Sturgis Crocker seconded the motion

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members The Chair declared the Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.