

**Essex Strategic Planning Committee**  
**Quarterly Meeting**  
**October 4, 2018**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 30 Martin Street**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** David Gabor, Chair, Mike Burke, Vice Chair, Annie Cameron, Bob Coviello, John Bediz, Julie Scofield, Andrew Spinney

**Staff Present:** Brendhan Zubricki, Matt Coogan

**Public Comment:** None

**School Committee members to present Manchester Memorial School replacement project:**

Ms. Cameron gave an update to the SPC on the elementary school replacement project in Manchester, in advance of the upcoming vote a Town Meeting. She mentioned that children from Essex do attend school at Manchester Memorial. The project budget has been scrutinized by the School Committee and has been value engineered to reduce the amount of space in the building that's not entitled to state reimbursement through the MSBA (Massachusetts State Building Authority). For example, because the MSBA does not fund auditoriums in elementary schools, the new school will have a joint space "cafetorium" that can accommodate meals and presentations. The MSBA reimbursement rate for this project is 24%, which is lower than previous years because there are more districts constructing new facilities drawing on funds. The plan is for the district to rebuild a new Essex Elementary School by 2033. Essex Elementary is in very good condition and the district has made investments to improve the building, including the Green Communities projects.

**Discussion of joint meeting and presentation from Harborlight Community Partners on affordable housing with the Strategic Planning Committee, Community Preservation Committee, and members of the Economic Development Committee and next steps:**

Mr. Coogan reported that after the joint meeting over the summer Harborlight Community Partners notified him of a technical assistance program offered through CHAPA (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association). Essex applied and was selected. Mr. Coogan and Mr. Zubricki will be meeting with representatives from CHAPA to

discuss scope and schedule. The technical assistance is to help communities educate the public on affordable housing and housing production and to help communities develop strategies to address local housing needs.

Continued discussion of how to increase engagement in local government.

Mr. Gabor stated that the Finance Committee was in need of new members. There are other vacancies in other boards and committees as well. The questionnaire that was distributed a few years ago by Mr. Zubricki was very effective in recruiting new volunteers. The SPC voted to recommend that the Board of Selectmen distribute a new town-wide questionnaire to attract more volunteers to boards and commissions.

Mr. Zubricki also mentioned that the Town would be launching a brand new website towards the end of the month. The new design and capabilities will greatly improve the information and resources available to residents online.

#### **Discussion of increasing bike lanes in Essex:**

Julie Scofield mentioned that the Open Space Committee was discussing whether the amount of bike lanes could be increased in Town, particularly along Southern Ave on the way to Manchester. Mr. Zubricki would inquire whether the Board of Public Works would pursue more bike lanes.

There was a discussion of whether grant funding was available to help fund bike lanes or other Town improvements. The SPC asked whether the Town kept track of grant funds awarded to the Town. Mr. Zubricki would provide that information at a future SPC meeting.

#### **Quarterly Report Update:**

Mr. Coogan and Mr. Zubricki reviewed the updates in the quarterly report. The Town received a Municipal Vulnerability Action Grant to help continue resiliency work in the community. The Town continues to work on the feasibility of the thin layer deposition on the marsh using materials extracted from a dredge of the Essex River to raise the level of the marsh to combat climate change. Mr. Zubricki also reported that the Youth Commission is working on staffing and hiring a 0.5 time director. Grove Cottage is also being renovated to accommodate Youth Commission programming. There was also a brief discussion on adding an additional goal of climate change/ resiliency to the strategic plan, and making that goal one of the priorities.