

RECREATION GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING
Joint Municipal Survey Committee
Meeting Minutes June 22, 2016

**Joint Meeting with the Recreation Study Committee, Prudential Committee,
Village Trustees, and Selectboard**

Albert D. Lawton School Cafeteria
104 Maple Street, Essex Junction, VT

Present:

[From the Recreation Study Committee] Michael Smith, Raj Chawla, Lori Houghton, Kim Maiberger, Erika Baldassarro, Max Levy, Betzi Bilodeau, Theresa Fletcher, Jason DiRosa

[From the Prudential Committee] Michael Smith, Marla Durham, Candace Morgan, Patrick Murray, and Jason DiRosa

[From the Village Trustees] George Tyler, Dan Kerin, Elaine Sopchak, Andrew Brown, Lori Houghton

[From the Selectboard] Irene Wrenner, Max Levy, Andy Watts

Absent:

[From the Recreation Study Committee] Christine Packard

[From the Selectboard] Michael Plageman, Susan Cook

Administrators present: Judith DeNova - CCSU, Patrick Scheidel – Village/Town, Brad Luck - EJRP, Ally Vile - ET Parks and Rec,

Others present: Kim Kedzierski (minutes), Andrew Bolduc, Paul O'Brien - CCSU, Adam Sollace, Adriane Martin, Samantha Crocker, Lou Ann Cioli, Greg Duggan, Harlan Smith, Kayhl Cooper, Craig B. Agricola, Dynan Giambatista, Randy Forguites, Diane Clemans, Lou Anne Pioli.

Call to Order:

This meeting is a joint meeting with the Recreation Governance Study Committee, Prudential Committee, Town of Essex Selectboard, and Essex Junction Village Trustees.

- Michael Smith, Chair of the Prudential Committee and member of the Recreation Governance Study Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:36 P.M.
- Max Levy, Chair of the Town of Essex Selectboard, called the meeting to order at 6:36 P.M.
- George Tyler, President of the Essex Junction Trustees, called the meeting to order at 6:36 P.M.

Introductions: Michael Smith asked the assembled members of the Recreation Governance Study Committee, Village Trustees, Essex Selectboard, and Prudential Committee to introduce themselves to each other and the audience.

Visitors to be Heard:

Lou Anne Pioli - Senior Coordinator - Essex Area Senior Center

- Lou Ann Pioli - Questioning if there will be a line item in the budget for Senior Services?

George Tyler, Village President, responded, saying that the Village would continue to support the senior center space.

Agenda additions or changes: None

Consent Agenda:

Mike Smith moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of meeting minutes from June 8, 2016. MOTION by Lori Houghton, SECOND by Max Levy, to approve the minutes of June 8, 2016 as written. VOTING: unanimous (9-0); motion carried.

Work Session Dates and Final Meeting of RGSC/first meeting of new group - Brad Luck

- The RGSC needs to set works session dates and final meeting
 - June 27, July 14, July 21 were agreed upon by the majority.
 - Aug 10 last meeting of REC study committee
 - At this meeting the RGSC committee will vote to approve and vote to dissolve committee as is.

Sharing Draft of FAQ's:

- Copies of the draft for the RGSC have been distributed to all members of all the boards present.
- Nothing further regarding this will be discussed tonight.

RGSC Presentations with Q&A - Max Levy and Erika Baldasaro:

The RGSC has created a Powerpoint presentation entitled, " Recreation Governance Study Committee" . This powerpoint is a presentation to the Selectboard, Trustees, Prudential Committee, and visitors. The presentation is an overview of the many hours of work done to get to the decision that is being presented today.

- **Slide 1 - 3: Why are we here?**
 - In November 2015, community members in EJSD, ETSD, U46 and Westford voted to consolidate school districts by July 1, 2017 - leaving EJRJ without a governing body.
 - In March 2016, a 10 member study committee (both board and community representation) was formed to study recreation and explore all various options for potential restructure of the Village and Town recreation departments.
 - In March 2016,

- **Slide 4: Governances Options Explored**
 - 14 governance models explored.

- **Slide 5: Let's Get Going**
 - Members agreed to meeting etiquette (ie. on time, one speaker at a time, etc)
 - Members agreed to committee goals, to include:
 - Ensure that the current quality of recreation services are maintained or enhanced
 - Explore all avenues and entities before making a recommendation
 - Actively engage the community in the process and keep them informed by making information easily accessible.
 - Keep the community's affordability in mind and ensure that the funding structure is fiscally responsible and will be supported by the public.
 - Reach a consensus on a final recommendation by the middle of June 2016.

- **Slide 6: RGSC Summary of Work**
 - RGSC held 7 [public] meetings between April 25 and June 22.
 - An informational was created and was marketed to the community via facebook and Front Porch Forum.
 - A community survey was done and 386 responses were gathered.
 - RGSC looked at 7 of the governance options carefully - variations include if the recreation departments stayed separate or combined.

- **Slide 7 and 8: Survey Results**
 - Survey asked 3 questions and 386 responses were gathered.
 - Recreation themes that matter most to you?
 - 38% year-round diversity, 25% variety of recreation facilities, 22% affordable and accessible, 20% maintenance
 - What do you want the committee to keep in mind?
 - 29% Program Affordability, 26% Program Accessibility, 25% Change (appreciation of current programs and fear of changes), 24% Program Quality, 23% Program Diversity
 - Most helpful ways of communication?

- “One-Stop” shopping - reduce confusion
 - Equity in communities
 - Ability to “house” other community initiatives (now and in the future: farmer’s market, senior center, etc.)
 - Another step in line with recent consolidation and unification efforts.
- **Slide 19 to 21: RGSC Approval and Statutes**
 - On Wednesday, June 8, 2016, the RGSC voted in the affirmative, 9-0...
 - MOTION: Approval of the creation of a union municipal district between the Village of Essex Junction and Town of Essex to promote plans for more efficient and economical operation of local government services - specifically related to establishing, maintaining, and conducting a system of public recreation.
 - Next steps: Draft agreement and voter vote whether to enter into an agreement
 - Letters of support:
 - Patrick Schiedel, Municipal Manager and Judith DeNova - CCSU
- **Slide 22: RGSC Roles and Timeline**
 - June 8 - August 9: recommend governance model, develop district agreement, create FAQ’s, file district agreement and submit to Attorney General
 - August 10 - December 13: Publish community info, spread the word, created public outreach campaign, and implement public outreach strategies
- **Slide 23: Recreation Governance Transition Team**
 - The transition team will convene for a one hour meeting to learn about new governance model and timeline, to brainstorm additional questions to be addressed, and have questions answered about the process. Then, the co-chairs will work with different sub groups on an as needed basis to address the relevant issues.
- **Slide 24 and 25: Transition team areas to address and Items to be Determined**
 - Timeline: June 22 to December 13, 2016
 - Exhaustive list includes (but not limited to): Organizational Structures, Job Descriptions, Budget, IT, HR Functions, Maintenance, School use, EJRP debt relief, etc.
 - Items yet to be determined are: Prudential Committee (preschool resolution, etc.), Village Trustees (Park property, etc.), Selectboard (Park Property, etc.)
- **Slide 26 to 28: Next Steps - Draft Timeline**
 - [Starting in July 2016] RGSC prepares agreement for the formation of the district through 1-3 work sessions. Major areas: purpose, composition, election, terms, budget vote, etc.
 - July 25 - District agreement filed with Trustees, Selectboard, Planning Commission, Town

- August 2016 - District agreement presented to Selectboard (8/1), UU Board (8/1), Trustees (8/9), Prudential Committee (TBD)
 - August 10 - District agreement approved by RGSC - RGSC dissolves
 - August 11 - District agreement submitted to VT Attorney General
 - October 8 - Petitions available for candidates to the Rec District Council
 - November 7 - Petitions due
 - November - Selectboard (11/7), Trustees (11/8) warn special meeting for December 13 for the voters to vote on District agreement and elect council
 - November 23 - Absentee ballots available
 - December 13 - District agreement is submitted to voters for approval by Australian ballot at special meeting and vote for Rec District Council
 - January 13, 2017 - District agreement is submitted to VT Legislature for approval
 - January 2017 - New Rec District Council takes seats
 - April 11, 2017 - Rec District budget vote
 - May 2017 - District Agreement approved by VT Legislature and signed by Governor
 - July 1, 2017 - Union Municipal District commences
 - TBD:
 - Trustees and Selectboard land conveyance decision and timeline
 - PC to convey assets/buildings/improvements
 - SB & PC resolution to transfer assets, capital account monies, equipment, etc.
 - Addressing the bond debt for EJRP
- **Slide 29 to 34 - Top 5 FAQ's - DRAFT**
 - Work in progress. Will answer the following:
 - Why is it better to form a new rec district than to follow a similar path to other village/town service consolidations?
 - What will be the tax implications of forming a new rec district?
 - Will forming a new rec district reduce expenses at all?
 - Are there examples of other union municipal districts? Are any related to recreation?
 - If the Village is subset of the Town, which entities are actually forming the new rec district?

Questions & Answers

- Why vote on December 13? Why not vote in general election in November?
 - There are challenges with voting in general election in November 2016 due to:
 - Federal election
 - Absentee ballots timelines are different for local election
 - Folks could in theory get Fed absentee ballots but not Local election ballots
 - Deemed impossible by town clerk
 - If not December - then the next available vote date would be March 2017. A major issue would be budgets which start well before March

- After a meeting with town clerk, it was deemed impossible to hold the Rec Vote in November. The Secretary of State was also consulted and it is confirmed that a November vote is impossible.
- Are you doing articles of agreement like what was done in the RED study? (Marla Durham)
 - Per Brad Luck, yes, the work group will be tackling that.
- Is there going to be a deadline if one of the municipalities wants to pull something out (land)? (Marla Duham)
 - Per Andrew Bolduc, no.
- In a district like this, what's the oversight?
 - Elected board. Rec governance committee will decide how many and from where, etc.
- When a new municipality is formed, normally the Legislature approves, with this only the attorney general needs to approve?
 - Per Andrew, this type is a little different, however, it has been recommended that we submit to Legislature as well as the Attorney General
- Will you base representation upon population or just open to everyone? (Marla Durham)
 - Per Brad, that is up for discussion
- Does all the work to be done by the transition team need to be done by July 25th? All the nuts and bolts, for example, property transfers, won't be done yet. (George Tyler)
 - Andrew Bolduc states that because we are forming a new entity, don't need to deal with land transfers as of yet.
 - Brad Luck states that there are a lot of parts. The public will be provided with as much info and intentions before Dec 13. For example, the Trustees own the 3 parks - they will have to decide on conveyance.
 - Transition team - starting now (Brad). How the new consolidated district will process payroll for example, is info needed now. There will be a communications team to get that info out to the public.

Meeting of the RGSC Adjourned:

Mike Smith moved to adjourn RGSC meeting at 7:56 pm to move on to Prudential Committee Meeting.

**Respectfully Submitted By,
Kimberly Kedzierski**