

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC) Meeting Minutes

October 6th, 2022

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hybrid at 81 Main Street, Essex Junction

Attendees

- *EDC* – Chair Jeff Benjamin, Ta-Tanisha Reddita, Nick Fukuda, Rebecca Robinson, Rey Garfano
- *Staff* - Jean O'Sullivan
- *Public* - Ken Signorello, Irene Wrenner

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:00am by Chair Jeff Benjamin

Updates to Agenda

- No updates to agenda
- Previous meeting minutes for August and September will be reviewed next meeting

Items to Bring to Joint Commission

- 1. The Fort**
 - a. Goal to have Fort rezoned from Industrial to Commercial
 - b. Possible red tape from Zoning Board regarding water runoff
- 2. Transportation**
 - a. Create programs to make it easier for people to get to work
 - i. Will help fill vacancies for Essex Businesses
- 3. Childcare**
 - a. Make more accessible/affordable
- 4. ETC Next**
 - a. Town Designation
 - b. Historic Designation
 - c. ***Vote at Town Meeting in March 2024
- 5. Preserve Saxon Hill Recreational Space**
 - a. While still allowing for businesses to grow

VEDA Loans

- Most businesses at Essex Experience carrying debt
 - Could not be paid off with PPP loans
- Most business application rejected
 - Application criteria (exp. FLP Calc) are difficult to meet
- EDC will draft letter to house commerce asking to amend application criteria

Partner Updates – Sam Anderson

- Idea for retaining businesses – exit interviews (Exp. Citizens Cider)
- Business Assistance Programs
 - Short term forgivable Loan Program Open
 - Start-Ups need technical support
 - Looking to march companies in need w/ approved venders
- GBIC putting together regional priority list
 - Each region to identify 10 infrastructure projects
 - List items deemed priority for grants
 - Two for Essex
 - Crescent Connector
 - Train Station

Community Focus

- Explore Essex
 - \$5200 worth of giveaways
 - Fall/Spring event in future
 - Culminate into town dinner
 - Survey being sent to businesses
- EDC Panel of Business owners (Quarterly)
 - Women owned businesses
 - Childcare providers
 - Manufacturing
 - Hospitality

Next Meeting 11/3

Meeting adjourned at 9:12