

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 16th, 2024 8:00AM

Hannafords Conference Room 21 Essex Way, Essex, VT

Draft Minutes Submitted by Clerk Ken Signorello, May, 20 2024

Approved June 6th, 2024

Attendees

Commission Members:

Present: Nick Fukuda, Vice Chair; Ken Signorello, Clerk; Ta Tanisha Redditta

Remote: Melissa Stewart

Absent: Rebecca Robinson, Chair

Staff: Jean O'Sullivan

Public: Irene Wrenner

Meeting called to order by Fukuda at 8:09 AM

Updates to the Agenda: None

Public To Be Heard: None

Motion to Approve 5/2/24 Minutes by (4,0)

Partner Updates: None

Business Outreach - Hannafords - Store Manager Rolland Tessier

Founded 1883 in Portland, Maine, now part of the Ahold Delhaize group.

16 stores in Vermont

Currently 200 employees - 49 full time - target is about 230 total.

Staffing is a large issue - currently offering a \$2/hour incentive.

Donates to many not for profit food shelves.

Does zero waste.

Uses many Business Retail Group to satisfy DEI

Fukuda asked about housing - 5 full time vacancies now - affordable housing is the problem - many driving in from long distances. Even Burlington - Public Transportation needs to be better.

Tessier asked if the new town muni center will include housing.

Signorello asked if a change to delivery access would be a worth while trade off for more close housing.

Tessier indicated the ability to work around many things.

Signorello noted that Tessier was not informed about the hearing on the neighboring 170 housing unit sketch presentation at the Planning Commission.

Signorello asked about a town LOT.

Tessier personally feels it is a burden on residents. Business wise Hannifords will do whatever the town requires.

Signorello asked about the Price Chopper/Market 32

Tessier - competition is welcome and good for the community

O'Sullivan asked if there is a change in buying patterns.

Tessier - yes cherry picking and more frequent small purchases. Grab and go is becoming more popular.

Redditta - asked about local suppliers. Tessier said Hannafords is big on local and labels products as such and store brand milk is locally supplied.

Fukuda asked if there has been an increase in shoplifting. Tessier - yes it is on the rise.

Signorello asked if there were any plans to use facial recognition. Tessier - no.

Signorello asked about Challenges doing business in Essex. Tessier: Housing, and public transportation. Generally the town has been easy to work with except for lawn signs. They were asked to remove signs from their parking lot.

Signorello asked if there was a legal program for temporary signage would it be useful. Tessier - yes.

Redditta asked if she could include a QR code for hiring in welcome materials. Tessier - yes.

Explore Essex Update

Fukuda gave an update - passport program board is set with the first meeting at the end of the month.

Tessier asked about Explore Essex and is very interested in participating in both passport and community day.

Staff Update

O'Sullivan met with the Deputy Commission of Housing and Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Workforce housing is recognized as very important. The Essex Experience housing proposal has been identified as a potential workforce housing model. Permanent affordability is a big challenge. Also employment connected occupancy/eviction is a problem. TIF financing may help.

Next business outreach - Redditta - Tentatively Mad Taco

Motion to adjourn - moved by Signorello, seconded by Redditta (3-0)

Fukuda adjourned the meeting at 9:03 AM.