Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 6th, 2025 8:00AM
81 Main St., Essex Junction, and Zoom
Minutes Submitted by Clerk Keith Dunbar, March 9th, 2025

Attendees
Commission Members:
Present: Igor Polenov, Chair; Ken Signorello, Vice Chair; Keith Dunbar, Clerk
Remote: N/A
Absent: Nick Fukuda
Staff: Jean O'Sullivan
Public: Irene Wrenner
Partners: Sam Anderson, GBIC

Meeting called to order by Polenov at 8:03 AM.

First order of Business:
Updates to the Agenda:
Signorello requested to add approval of response to the person who asked about our resolution to the Planning Commission
O'Sullivan asked to add the staff report from meeting with consultants
Signorello moved to amend the agenda, seconded by Polenov, passed 3-0.

Public To Be Heard: No public to be heard

Approval of Minutes from 2/6/2025
Signorello asked to amend minutes to include the following:
- Change "their" to GBIC focus
- Change "Polenov made a motion to extend first meeting of the month to one hour" to by one hour
- Change Signorello "changed the motion" to "Signorello amended the motion"

Motion to Approve 2/6/2025 Minutes by Signorello, Seconded by Dunbar, Passed (3-0)

Business Partner Updates: GBIC, Sam Andersen

Sam reviewed information from 2/6/2025 meeting regarding NBRC (Northern Borders Regional Commission) program has been put on hold, NBRC is now moving forward with spring round, even with the funding uncertainty in Washington. Pre-applications will be due by March 7th, 2025, applications will be reviewed then the committee decides which projects will be invited to complete a full application.

RPP (Regional Priority Projects List) is moving forward with on spring round, that is what GBIC is involved in. The notice was included in the GBIC newsletter. The only current project in the area of

Essex Town is on the City of Essex Junction's train station. If there are additional projects that come up they could be proposed for the RPP list. Applications can be submitted until April 18th, 2025. NBRC will be using the fall 2024 RPP list.

GBIC is very involved with speaking to legislators regarding proposed legislation specific to economic development. GBIC is especially interested in bills focused on housing. There are concerns in the legislature around TIFFs.

Business Items:

Appoint a commission liaison with TPMA Consulting regarding the Economic Development Study

O'Sullivan suggested to move item to Staff Report.

Signorello pointed out this is a separate item on the agenda and should be dealt with now.

Polenov brought up the number of current members on the commission. **Dunbar** asked what the liaison does.

O'Sullivan shared information about timing and content of the meeting with TPMA. **Polenov** asked **Dunbar** if he was interested in becoming the liaison from the EDC. **Dunbar** needs to ensure this will not interfere with other commitments.

Signorello moved to appoint **Dunbar** as the TPMA liaison, seconded by **Polenov, Signorello** moved to table this until the next meeting, seconded by **Polenov**, motion carried 3-0. Added to agenda for the next meeting.

EDC Response to Letter Received from Essex Resident

Signorello drafted a response letter, presented to Commission for approval prior to formalizing and send to resident, Diane Percy.

Andersen did ask why the letter was not in the reading files for the meeting, **Signorello** shared it was not reading by the time items needed to be submitted. Letter was shared during the meeting using Zoom for all participants to review.

After reviewing the letter **Polenov** motioned to approve the response letter as is, seconded by **Signorello**, motion carried 3-0.

Staff Report

O'Sullivan shared with EDC Commissioners available time slots so the EDC can meet with the consulting form TPMA. **O'Sullivan** reiterated how important the meetings with TPMA are and how organized as an organization they are. The EDC will be getting regular updates from these meetings. It was pointed out how crucial the input from the EDC will be during the discovery period. There will be a survey going out to the town, the technical person for TPMA is hoping for a response rate of 400 responses. The EDC will be included on correspondence between TPMA and Town staff.

O'Sullivan reiterated how important this study will be as we are essentially a new town since the separation. **Signorello** asked for clarification on which of the meeting times, Wednesday's from 11:00am on or Thursdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm, could work best for TPMA. There was discussion around the timing of the meeting and offering both of the available time slots and see which works best for all parties involved. There was additional discussion around the function of the board as a volunteer organization. **Signorello** pointed out that the RFP for the study was originally to be produced by the EDC and choose the winner of the bid.

Polenov made a motion to offer the available time slots to TPMA and see which would work best for all parties involved, TPMA and the EDC. Seconded by **Dunbar**, motion carried 3-0. **O'Sullivan** asked for clarification on times to be presented to TPMA. It was decided that the timeframes of 11:00am-to 1:00pm would be used for both Wednesday and Thursday to keep it consistent.

There was additional discussion around the timing of the EDC meetings. It was discussed that instead of having a one-hour meeting the first Thursday of the month, extend that by one hour to accommodate the meeting with TPMA. **O'Sullivan** pointed out the commission is only slated to have two one-hour meetings per month, as per the Town Manager. **Signorello** pointed out the commission could meet for an additional one hour meeting for business outreach. After extended discussion around timing for EDC meetings **Signorello** proposed the following motion:

Signorello moves to extend the first business meeting of the month to two hours either on the first Wednesday from 11:00am to 1:00pm or first Thursday from 11:00am to 1:00pm, depending upon TPMA availability. This will be a staff supported meeting. The second meeting of the month will stay as is, with or without, staff support. If staff is not available the EDC will need credentials to hold a hybrid meeting, or permission to hold an in-person only meeting. This motion was seconded by **Polenov**. There was additional discussion about a possible amendment, but upon further clarification the amendment wasn't necessary. Vote was called, passed 3-0.

There was additional discussion around the stipend for EDC commissioner but all commissioners present agreed this was a non-issue.

Polenov moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:44am, Seconded by Signorello, Passed (3-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:44am

Meeting Recording available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ussq-1n6vrA