

**TOWN OF ESSEX
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2025**

Pre-Draft Minutes. The minutes will be updated and reposted prior to the next DRB meeting.

Note: This meeting was held on Zoom and at 81 Main St Conference Room, Essex, VT.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD (DRB) PRESENT IN ROOM: Ian Carroll, Chair; Sharon Zukowski, Vice-Chair; Hubert Norton; Nick Martin; and Dustin Bruso.

DRB VIRTUALLY: None.

DRB MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephanie Bixby and Trefor Williams.

OTHERS PRESENT IN ROOM: Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director; Kent Johnson, Planner; Sharon Kelley, Zoning Administrator; Bryan Currier; David Skopin; Nicole Senecal; Al Senecal; Jeff Wane; Betsy McGavisk; Katie Garson; Sam Puddicombe; Kenzie Hiney; Julia Ginoria; Isaac Danuloff; Drew Dean; Dawn Grenn; Bruce Post; Elizabeth Dunbar; Susan Tohn; Gretchen Owen; Mary Post; Jim Carroll; Linda Wilson; Henry Jerome; Ron & Jeanne Piro; Lynn & Art Johnson; Rey Ritiner; Robert Lalancette; Paul Gilman; James Mix; Lois Whitmore; Ken Signorello; Bryan Currier; Eliza & Curt Ferguson; Patty Woodham; Bill Wiltshire; Jennifer Perry; John Larkin; Katie DeSanto; Nate Schramon(WPTZ); Alexis Crandall(WPTZ); Renee Reiner; Sheila Ryan; Betsy Dunn; Irene Wrenner; Matt McMahon; David Gagnon; Chris Mclean; David Shenk; Janet Bowker; Leo Leighton; Jeff Polubinski; Betsi White; Kelsey Adams; Judy O'Brien; Art Loeffler; Frances Kinghorn; J&F Lovett; Jenna Danyew; David Goodrich; Kaity Mazza; Andy Hamlin; Caroline Hauser; Bob Presso; Lisa Wartenbert Vetez; Rob Shimko; Eli Scheer; Bil Calfee; Elliott Drinkwater; Sylvia Hokes; Scott Lee; Pam Schriener; Linda Merchant; Austin Dukes; Joyn Henry Trudeau; Anna Davis; Maegan Beckage; Joyn Kinghorn; Jonathan Grey; Else Anderson; Lisa Allen; Cil Allen; Nichol Baron; Tom Waters; Carolyn Lewis; Emma Husos; Lillian Davis; and Alexa Krupp.

OTHERS VIRTUALLY: Michelle ?; Dennis Bergeron; Lorraine Zaloom; iphone (unidentified); Gina Halpin-Barrett; Thomas Titus; Becky's Computer; Robert ?; ABC22 News; Aedan's iphone; Alexis Dubief; Alison Jones; Billy Bob; Brian Donegan; Brian Palma's iPhone; Cam Smith; Cara Simoneau; Carolyn Lewis; Casey Engels; Catie Calabese; Cheryl VE; Christina ?; Danielle Hammond; Davis Wildman; Dawn-Hill Fleury; Debbie; Dennis Bergeron; Devan ?; Elissa Lee; Essex Family; Frankjt; Gaudreau/Goodwin; Geneva Yager; Georgia ?; Gina Halpin Barrett; Iphone; Jackie ?; Jean White; Jennier ?; Joe Kudrle; Johnny Mendez; Jon ?; Karen Lemnah; Kate Lapp; Keren Sita; Kim O'Leary; Laura McNally; Liz and Steve Coleman; McLaughlin; Megan M; Mike Provost; Mitch; Natalee Braun; NBC 5; Nick Ovitt; Pat Bradley; Patty Davis; Phyl Newbeck; Rachael Lizotte; Robert Vickery; Ryan Teamsters Local 597; Sam Anderson, GBIC; Shannon Jackson; Sharon Yandow; Susan; Tegal Pollak; Thomas Titus; Vinca ?); and Zoom user.

AGENDA ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Carroll called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. in order to give attendees time to sign in and enter the room.

AGENDA ITEM 2. ADDITIONS/ CHANGES: Sharon Kelley requested that the 1/16/2025 minutes be added to Agenda Item 7 for review and approval.

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPROVE AGENDA: DRB Member Martin Moved and DRB Member Bruso Seconded a Motion to approve the amended agenda. The Motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM 4: PUBLIC TO BE HEARD: Chairman Carroll stated that comments or questions relating to the Consent Agenda will remain on the 'Public to be Heard' portion of the meeting, as well as any other public comments for items not on the agenda. There were no public comments regarding the Consent Agenda.

David Skopin, 11 Skyline Drive, Essex, VT, stated that he wanted to make certain he understood that the Development Review Board is taking the place of the Planning Commission.

Chairman Carroll stated the DRB has taken over application reviews and the Planning Commission still does 'Planning'. He clarified that the purpose of the meeting was to review site plans for compliance with regulations and not to discuss any specific business.

Board Member Norton stated that the DRB is a quasi-judicial board, and applications must adhere to the regulations, including elements that allow for deviations. Board Member Norton stated that the DRB is not present to make personal judgments.

Cheryl VE (attending remotely) asked what the capacity was for the room as she concerned for the safety of the public in the room.

Irene Wrenner, 15 Thrush Lane, Essex, VT, asked that the Town investigate microphones and to make sure everyone at the table had a microphone and one for the public to speak. Wrenner stated that attendees may have received a flyer that read 'Not in Essex' with regards to replacing the current prison facility in So. Burlington, VT, to Essex, and she is concerned as there is much misinformation about this project.

Lorraine Zaloom asked what the process is to review the RPD-I Regulations. The DRB explained that the Planning Commission would hold workshops on zoning regulation amendments, and public hearings on those changes would be held by the Planning Commission. If approved, the draft regulations would be forwarded to the Selectboard for review and approval.

Sharon Kelley reported that she confirmed with the Public Works Director and Fire Chief that they had no concerns with the request to re-approve the 35 Thompson Drive Consent application.

Board Member Norton stated that the DRB is a Quasi-Judicial board and the members were to determine that the applicants adhere to the regulations, including allowed deviations, and they were not present to make personal judgments.

Chairman Carroll provided the oath to the room and to people online.

AGENDA ITEM 5: CONSENT AGENDA: SITE PLAN-BLACK BAY VENTURES XIV, LLC AND SHENK ENTERPRISES, LLC: REQUEST FOR RE-APPROVAL OF A APRIL 28, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVAL FOR A 106,372 SQ. FT. WAREHOUSE FACILITY LOCATED AT 35 THOMPSON DRIVE, PARCEL ID 2-070-671-5669 IN THE RESOURCE PRESERVATION DISTRICT – INDUSTRIAL (RPD-I).

Board Member Brusco MOVED and Vice-Chair Zukowski Seconded a Motion to approve the application as written. The Motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM 6A: SITE PLAN & WAIVER – ALLEN BROOK DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSING A 33,600 SQUARE FOOT COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE BUILDING WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING LOCATED AT 572 KIMO DRIVE, PARCEL ID: 2-074-004-011 IN THE RESOURCE PRESERVATION DISTRICT - INDUSTRIAL (RPD-I).

Kent Johnson, Planner pointed out on the zoning map for this development area in the Saxon Hill Industrial Park. He walked through the site plan elements of the project and noted that the proposal will be a spec building as the landowner did not yet have a tenant.

Bryan Currier, P.E. and Al Senecal represented this application. The applicants present a revised lighting plan, adding two pole lights to address gaps in coverage. The Conservation and Trails Committee expresses concerns about replacing mature trees with saplings and using buffer areas for water retention. Public comments raise issues about traffic impacts, noise pollution from trucks, and environmental concerns. The applicants clarify that the project is expected to generate 10 peak PM trips, which is within the approved 180 peak trips for the entire industrial park. Some confusion arises between this project and another application with higher traffic projections.

The discussions included:

- The need for a connection between the shared use path and the applicant site.
- The need for bicycle parking facilities that complies with the VTrans design guidelines.
- The need to adjust the lighting plan to meet the town's standards.
- Submit enhanced landscaping plan with additional screening elements for the 50-foot buffer area, to be approved by staff.
- Submit revised plans to include a connection from the shared use path along Kimo Drive to their site.
- The need for a connection between the shared use path and the applicant site.
- The need for bicycle parking facilities that comply with the VTrans design guidelines.
- Submit a revised lighting plan that comply with the regulations.
- Submit a revised parking plan to break up parking into 3 bays with maximum 20 spaces per bay.

Board Member Bruso Moved and Vice Chair Zukowski Seconded a Motion to open the Public Hearing. The MOTION passed 5-0.

Ken Signorello, Conservation & Trails Committee Member, stated that the Committee decided that a member will attend each meeting to provide its comments. The concerns included the 50' buffer and the water retention pond.

The following people spoke from the public and provided the following comments:

John Larkin, 6 Saxonhallow Drive, Essex, VT.

Renee Reiner, 2 Essex Way, Essex, VT.

Lorraine Zaloom, did not state address.

Patty Davis, did not state address.

Gile Allen, 5 Whitetail Lane, Essex, VT.

Mary Post 1 Cindy Lane, Essex, VT.

Rey Ritner, 7 Suffolk Lane, Essex, VT.

Board Member Bruso Moved and Board Member Martin Seconded a Motion to close the Public Hearing. The MOTION passed 5-0.

Board Member Bruso Moved and Chairman Carroll Seconded a Motion to approve the application as warned, including a Friendly Amendment by Vice-Chair Zukowski to add a condition for a more robust landscape plan, that includes elements of screening, to be approved by Staff, as well as the following changes:

Condition 3a: Delete.

Condition 3b, Line 386: After "their site" add a "." and delete the remainder of the sentence.

Condition 3d, Line 391: Replace with, "The applicant shall submit a more robust landscape plan that includes elements of screening, to be approved by Staff.

The MOTION passed 4-1 (Zukowski voted no.)

At 9:05 p.m. a 5-minute recess was taken.

AGENDA ITEM 6B: SITE PLAN & WAIVER: SCANNEL PROPERTIES LLC IS PROPOSING A 107,000 SQUARE FOOT COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE BUILDING WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING LOCATED AT 637 KIMO DRIVE, PARCEL ID: 2-074-013-011 IN THE RESOURCE PRESERVATION DISTRICT - INDUSTRIAL (RPD-I).

Kent Johnson, Planner, provided the zoning map for the Town of Essex on the overhead projector and noted the location of the subject parcel. He noted that the RPD-I zone allows for different types of uses such as light manufacturing, warehouse, indoor and outdoor recreation, and vocational training facilities. He described how the applicant proposed the layout of the building, parking, landscaping and the waiver of allowing the 50' buffer to be cleared and replanted.

Leo Latman, Dave Gagon, Civil Engineer, Jeff Pauliski, Esq., and Jonathan Gruely, spoke on behalf of this application. The applicants discussed a proposal for a 107,000 square foot distribution facility by Amazon, located in the Saxon Hill Industrial Park. They stated that the facility would serve as a last-mile delivery station, improving delivery times and efficiency. The site was previously used for sand extraction and pine tree plantation. The proposal includes a waiver of the 50-foot buffer, which was discussed in detail. The team also addressed concerns about truck traffic, stating that 18-wheeler trucks would arrive between 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

The attendees expressed concerns about the impact of the facility on the environment, traffic, and the local community. They also discussed the potential effects on small businesses and the labor practices of Amazon. The attendees emphasized the need for careful consideration and evaluation of the proposal, with some suggesting that the facility could have negative consequences for the community and the environment.

Points of discussion between the DRB, staff, applicants and attendees included:

- The traffic analysis and the need for subsequent studies if the traffic projections exceed the approved threshold.
- The need to adjust the lighting plan to meet the town's standards.
- Submit waiver request with mitigation plans for the 50-foot buffer area, including documentation and pictures of existing conditions.
- Public comments primarily consisted of people against the proposed tenant (Amazon), how poorly they treat their employees, and the amount of proposed traffic.
- Suggestion to have the applicant submit a hydraulic analysis for the town's water model.
- Address ground mounding analysis concerns for stormwater system.
- Address traffic study concerns, particularly regarding Sand Hill Road and North Williston Road impacts.
- Verify bike parking requirements and indoor bike facility options.

Vice Chair Zukowski Moved and Board Member Bruso Seconded a Motion to open the Public Hearing. The MOTION passed 5-0.

The following people provided public comment.

Ken Signorello, Conservation & Trails Committee, repeated the same concerns as noted from the prior application.

Aedan's Phone, Montpelier, VT (did not provide complete address).

Julia George, Burlington, VT (did not provide complete address).

Lorraine Zaloom, ___ Center Road, Essex, VT

Robert Lalayette, West Sleepy Hollow Road, Essex, VT

Dawn Grenn, Essex, VT

Bill Calify, Hinesburg, VT

Issac Donulof, Burlington, VT

Nathan O’Conner, 63 Cushing Drive, Essex Jct., VT
Jenna Daniel, River Road, Essex, VT
Tony St. Hilaire, did not state address
Elizabeth Dunbar, Essex, VT
Melissa White, 178 Old Stage Road, Essex, VT
Gina Barrett, did not provide address.
Alyssa Graves, Jericho, VT
Gretchen Owens, did not state address
Paul Cross, Williston, VT
Lynn Johnson, 7 Circle Drive, Essex, VT
Rachel Lizotte, did not provide address
Drew Dean, Winooski, VT
Betsy McGavis, Burlington, VT
David Skopin, did not provide address
Pam Schriener, did not provide address
John Trudeau, 247 River Road, Essex, VT
Sam Puti-Comb, Montpelier, VT

Due to the lateness of the hour, the conversation ended with a decision to continue the discussion to a later date.

Staff informed the audience to look to the Town website for a re-notice of when the next meeting will be scheduled.

Board Member Martin Moved and Vice Chair Zukowski Seconded a Motion to Continue the application to the next available meeting as determined by staff. The MOTION passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVE JANUARY 16, 2025 & MARCH 6, 2025, MINUTES:

Board Member Bruso MOVED and Board Member Norton Seconded a Motion to continue the aforementioned minutes to the next meeting. The Motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM 8: OTHER BUSINESS: None.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

By: _____

Ian Carroll, Chair

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