

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Regular Meeting Minutes (Business Outreach)
March 20th, 2025 8:00AM
81 Main St., Essex Junction, and Zoom
Minutes Submitted by Clerk Keith Dunbar, March 23rd, 2025

Attendees

Commission Members:

Present: Igor Polenov, Chair; Ken Signorello, Vice Chair; Keith Dunbar, Clerk

Remote: Nick Fukuda

Absent:

Staff: Jean O'Sullivan

Public: Irene Wrenner, John Leo Sr., Carolyn Leo, John Leo Jr.

Meeting called to order by Polenov at 8:25 AM.

Meeting location: John Leo & Sons Inc. 145 Jericho Road, Essex VT 05452

Agenda Addition/Change:

- Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of confirming **Dunbar** as the TPMA liaison.
- **Signorello** motioned to approve agenda, seconded by **Polenov** and unanimously approved 4-0.

Public Comments:

- No significant public comments were raised.

Approval of Minutes:

- Motion to approve minutes from **March 6, 2025** meeting.
- **Signorello** motioned to approve minutes, seconded by **Polenov** and unanimously approved 4-0.

Business Outreach Discussion:

- The EDC met with **John Leo & Sons** to learn more about their business and discuss its history, operations, and economic impact in Essex.
- **John Leo Sr., Carolyn Leo & John Leo Jr.**

- Key insights:
 - Business was established in **1965**. The business has been at its current location in Essex since 1989. The business has eight full-time employees currently.
 - Operates **automotive repair, excavation, and storage services**.
 - Expansion plans include subdivision.
 - Hiring challenges were discussed, including the need for **CDL drivers and excavation operators**.
 - Discussion on utilizing programs such as **Indeed, Vermont Training Program, and Essex Tech partnerships**.
 - Local economic trends and Essex's regulatory landscape were evaluated.

- **Dunbar's Role as TPMA Liaison**
 - Motion to finalize Dunbar as liaison for TPMA.
 - **Signorello** motioned, seconded by **Polenov** and unanimously approved 4-0.

- **Meeting Schedule Change:**
 - Motion to move the first regular meeting of the month from the first Thursday to **the first Wednesday from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM**.
 - **Signorello** motioned, seconded by **Polenov**. Approved unanimously 4-0.
 - The website will be updated to reflect the change.

- **Economic Impact of Correctional Facility Relocation:**
 - The Planning Commission requested EDC's assessment of the **economic benefits of relocating the correctional facility**.
 - Discussion on sending a letter requesting clarification on specific economic questions.
 - **Signorello** motion to review and revise a prior letter for accuracy and discuss at next meeting, seconded by **Polenov**. Approved unanimously 4-0.

Next Meeting:

- **April 2, 2025, at 11:00 AM** at the Town Office.

Future Business Outreach Visits:

- Upcoming visits planned for **Sandy Pines Kennel on Chapin Road, Glavel, and Tree Farm Management Group.**
- Discussion on hybrid meeting policies for outreach visits; staff involvement to be discussed with the town manager.

Adjournment:

- **Polenov** motioned to adjourn made at **8:52 AM.**
- **Signorello** seconded. Unanimously approved 4-0.

Meeting recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvFXXEKLnf4&t=9s>