

**TOWN OF ESSEX
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
PRELIMINARY DRAFT MINUTES
MAY 29, 2025**

**Note: This meeting was held on Zoom and at Essex Jct. High School Cafeteria
Essex, VT.**

Full meeting recording available at:

<https://youtu.be/cT0kCNqhm94?si=ZU71bMSvhlymkPZZ>

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

DRB ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT IN ROOM: Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director; Sharon Kelley, Zoning Administrator; Kent Johnson, Planner; Jonathan Greeley; Tracey Delphia; Julian Ughetti; Bruce S. Post; Betsy Dunn; Mary Post; Rhonda St. Amant; Colleen & David Lee; Cheryl Van Epps; Jaclyn Lawlor; Brian Clifford; Rory Cronin; Lynn & Art Johnson; Chuck Vile; Jackson Kelleher; Morgan Vespa; Reagan Murphy; Stephen Down; Anne Miller; Robert Lolancette; Linda Merchant; Tom Wood; Su Ughetti; Ryan Wallace; Gina Barrett; Lorraine Zaloom; Rachel St. Amant; Scott Lee; Pam Schriener; Irene Wrenner; Rev. J. Baker; Renzoe; Jaanna Grossman; Katie DeSante; Duane Millar Barlow; Jordana Churchill; David Skopin; Al Senecal; Ned Daly; Linda Wilson; Henry Jerome; N. Orion Roberts; Jordan Chapman; Sarah Lincol; Logan Allen; Lisa Allen; Paul Davis; Lillian Davis; Amelia Davis; Lena Greenbert; Ken Signorello and Community T.V.

OTHERS VIRTUALLY: Lois Whitmore; Nick & Taylor Wagner; David Whitmore; WCAX; Shannon's Iphone; Linda's iPad; Mark Goldstein; Ella Tabone; Beebe; Mark; Frankit; Madison Y.; ABC 22 News; Dawn Grenn; Julie Macuga; m.i.s.s.; Laura McNally; AP; Katie N.; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Ryan Local 597; Jeanne; Syn Graham; Elizabeth Dunbar; Madison Y; Morri; Syd Partin; Connieparisi; Syd Partin; Craig B. Agricola; Sam Kinghorn; Thomas Titus; Matt McMahon; Shannon Jackson; Ang; Tony; Fran; Paul; Matthew Bush; Katie; Thomas Weaver; Theresa Gookin; Gwendolyn Heaghney; Chris; Caroline Ashley; Lisa M; Jamie; Leslie; Rory Malone; Jackie; Nick Ovitt; Matthew Bush; Peter Senecal; Jean O'Sullivan; Jamie; Krista; Theresa G; Tim Miller; ppnneunited@gmail.com; Joshua Wheelock; Brendan Witherell; leif; Leo M; Allison Millar Barlow; April McCullum; Jeanne Piro; Taylor; and Eli Scheer.

AGENDA ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Carroll called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and read the hearing notice. He noted the original DRB hearing was held on 3/20/2025 and the DRB operates similar to a court hearing as it is a quasi-judicial process and is fact-based. He reminded the audience that the Public Hearing remained open and provided the oath to the audience and zoom attendees.

AGENDA ITEM 2. ADDITIONS/ CHANGES: None.

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPROVE AGENDA: DRB Member Brusco Moved and DRB Member Martin Seconded a Motion to approve the Agenda. The MOTION passed 7-0.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONTINUED FROM MAY 1, 2025 - Site Plan & Waiver: Scannell Properties, LLC - Proposed 107,000+/- sq. ft. distribution facility with associated parking located at 637 Kimo Drive (FKA Saxon Hill Industrial Park, Parcel B, Lot 13) Parcel ID 2-074-004-013 in the Resource Preservation District-Industrial (RPD).

Chairman Carroll provided instructions to the audience on how the meeting will be run and when public comments would be accepted. He attempted to limit these comments to 30 minutes with each person given a 2-minute window to hear as many comments as possible. He requested that citizens from Essex be the first to offer comments. In the end, he accepted remaining comments from citizens, which was answered with applause.

The Development Review Board meeting focused on reviewing Scannell Properties LLC's site plan for a 107,000 square foot distribution facility in Saxon Hill Industrial Park, with discussions centered around stormwater management, buffer zones, and environmental impacts. Public comments from residents and local business owners expressed significant concerns about traffic, environmental effects, and the project's alignment with town zoning regulations, with many opposing the development due to its potential negative impacts on the community. The board addressed various technical aspects of the proposal, including traffic studies, stormwater management, and buffer zones, and agreed to continue the hearing to further evaluate concerns and complete necessary studies.

Leo Leighton, Dave Gagon, Civil Engineer, Jeff Polubinski, Esq. (Gravel & She) and Jonathan Greeley, Head of Economic Development for Amazon in New England, represented this application.

Leo Leighton stated the goal was to serve Essex. The team will cover new materials. He reported that they have had productive conversations with the Tree Warden and they will plant the appropriate tree species he recommends, as well as addressing concerns about soil conditions, salt tolerance, and rooting volume. DRB Member Bixby stated that she wanted sufficient landscaping so that the building would not be seen.

Jonathan Greeley stated the owner of the business will be Amazon and its goal was to serve Essex and customers in Vermont. During the meeting he clarified that van traffic would not be 24/7, departing between 9:30 AM and 12 PM, while tractor-trailer deliveries would occur overnight.

Attorney Polubinski made the following points:

- They revisited the buffer and noted the stormwater remains in the 50' buffer as water pulls to the northwest to southeast portion of the site. In addition, the regulations do not contemplate waivers in the 100-foot or 200-foot buffer.
- He noted that the DRB (former PC) previously approved waivers to the 50' buffer and noted the 50' buffer was waived for the lot across the street from the Amazon lot, as well as on Corporate Drive, Thompson Drive, and Red Pine Circle.
- He stated that there is value to rely on previous decisions, including fairness and guidance to the applicants.

Dave Gagon, Civil Engineer, provided updated materials to the DRB and made the following points:

- He showed landscape changes done since the last meeting on his computer screen and noted how more green technology was implemented.
- 10 EV parking spaces and 49 EV cable spaces with conduits are now proposed on the site.
- He explained changes to the lighting as part of the site were too bright; they lowered the lighting on the east side under the canopy, lowered levels and swapped fixtures to lower LED. Lighting was now in compliance with the regulations.
- They plan to reforest all impacted areas and noted that Chuck Vile, Town Tree Warden felt positive about the species they discussed. They will continue to consult with him.
- He reported feedback from Public Works was to make sure all can see the road. This resulted in shifting some plantings.
- He reported that they will secure a State stormwater permit and will comply with the Town's stormwater management requirements. Concerns were addressed about runoff into the Winooski River.
- He noted that Public Works would dictate the speed limit on the road.

Comments/questions from the DRB included:

DRB Member Norton noted the underground storage system was "pretty intricate" and would like a professional inspector, including reports, on the installation provided to Public Works.

DRB Member Zukowski asked if there would be a fueling station on site and idling. The applicant replied that there is no gas facility on site. The applicants replied that a sophisticated effort is made to prevent idling, however there may be times where there will be idling.

DRB Member Williams asked why they used the ITE trip generation and thought it would be better to use a similar sized facility. The Amazon team replied that they did look at the referenced document and felt the numbers were similar.

Chairman Carroll asked if Amazon anticipated the big trucks that come in loaded would leave in the a.m. and that these particular trucks would leave the site with an empty trailer. The Amazon team replied that the big trucks would depart the facility with empty trailers.

The DRB asked to have Public Work's re-examine the traffic study and provide feedback if an independent study is needed.

DRB Member Bruso stated that he feels the Thompson Drive connection should be completed with this application.

Public Comments were accepted.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

By: _____

Ian Carroll, Chair

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