

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Business Outreach Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2025, 8:00AM
Meeting Held at L'ivresse Lingerie, 21 Essex Way, Essex VT 05452
Draft Minutes Submitted by Clerk Keith Dunbar, September 21, 2025

Attendees

Commission Members:

Present: Igor Polenov, Chair; Ken Signorello, Vice Chair; Keith Dunbar, Clerk; Irene Wrenner, Commissioner; Anne Miller, Commissioner

Remote:

Absent:

Staff: Jean O'Sullivan

Staff:

Public: Nicolette Baron

Partners: N/A

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:09 AM by Chair Polenov.

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- No additional agenda items or changes were proposed
- Motion to approve the agenda:
Signorello motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by **Polenov**.
Vote passed unanimously 5-0.

3. Public to be Heard

- No members of the public were present either in person or online. No public comment was offered.

4. Business Items

a. Presentation by L'ivresse Lingerie – Owner: Nicolette Baron

Business Overview:

- L'ivresse offers over 100 sizes in stock, specializing in lingerie fittings, mastectomy/post-surgery garments, and everyday items.
- Customers travel from across Vermont and neighboring states due to the store's unique offerings (only three comparable stores in the state).
- Strong referral network includes UVM Medical Center and surgical offices.

Accessibility & Location Concerns:

- Customers traveling via Route 15 or Susie Wilson Road often find signage inadequate.

- Suggested improvements: clearer directional signage, potential participation in the state's brown highway sign program (like Chapin Orchard).

Advertising & Branding:

- Current methods: Seven Days, local radio (92.9), Burlington Area News Group, Google reviews (92+ reviews, 4.9 rating).
- Heavy reliance on word-of-mouth referrals.
- Interest expressed in broader Essex-wide advertising (maps, QR codes, regional promotions).

Process of Opening:

- Permitting with the Town was smooth.
- Owner completed the Mercy Connections Small Business Program; SCORE mentorship.
- Financing challenges noted, especially for younger entrepreneurs without collateral.

Community & Retail Discussion:

- Commission discussed opportunities for signage improvements and joint business advertising (e.g., Explore Essex map concept).
- Noted importance of supporting local retailers to offset challenges posed by Amazon distribution and regional competition.

Additional Notes:

- Temporary signage ordinance under review by the Town.
- L'ivresse does not plan to use temporary signage but supports the ordinance for other businesses.
- Owner emphasized that Essex businesses are scattered; an advertising map or QR code could help direct customers.

5. Next Meeting – 10/1/2025

- Logistics discussed due to auditor use of the main conference room for 10/1/2025 EDC meeting.
 - Options: hybrid meeting with one commissioner in-person at 81 Main Street upstairs conference room; alternative locations such as the Essex Police Station or UnCommon Grounds.
- Next meeting will feature a presentation of the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan by TPMA (Lindsay Bloos).

9. Adjournment

- Motion: **Signorello** motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 PM, seconded by **Signorello**.
Vote: Passed unanimously 5-0.