TOWN OF ESSEX
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES
OCTOBER 2, 2025

The video of this meeting can be viewed online at https://www.youtube.com/@essexvt

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

DRB ABSENT: Dustin Bruso

OTHERS PRESENT IN ROOM: Kent Johnson, Planner; Tabrina Karish, Justin Lang, Jon Lang, Bryan Currier, Peter Edelmann, Michael Koch.

OTHERS VIRTUALLY: Ken Signorello; L. Zaloom; Jean O'Sullivan; Sharo; Gina Halpin Barrett; and TK6.

AGENDA ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Carroll called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Due to technical zoom difficulties with the audio for zoom attendees, the meeting did not resume until 6:40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 2. ADDITIONS/CHANGES: Approval of the Minutes was moved to item 4.

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPROVE AGENDA: The DRB approved the Agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Board Member Moved and DRB Member Seconded a Motion to approve 9/18/2025 minutes with minor corrections as previously reported to the recording secretary. The Motion passed 6-0.

AGENDA ITEM 5: PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

Lorraine Zaloom expressed her confusion and concerns about how items are selected for the consent agenda and questioned the lack of clear standards and the reliance on staff discretion. Planner Johnson explained that the consent agenda is for minor, non-controversial items. Zaloom raised concerns about the legality of grouping multiple development applications in a single vote, suggesting it may violate open meeting law. Chairman Carrol explained that staff prepares the draft approval, and it then gets scheduled to go before the DRB for a vote. Chaiman Carroll asked Ms. Zaloom to document her points and turn them into the Community Development Department. The discussion highlighted the need for clearer policies and better notification processes for interested parties. Chairman Carroll worked through the confusion of Mr. Edelmann's consent application regarding the path.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSENT AGENDA:

6a. Site Plan Amendment - The State of Vermont is proposing a 372 square foot main building addition to River Valley Therapeutic Residence located at 260 Woodside Dr (Parcel ID #2-005-003-001) located in the Open Recreation (O1) District. The proposed addition will not result in any new beds at the facility, nor does the applicant anticipate an increase in employees. **A Motion and a Second were put forth and the Motion passed 6-0.**

6b. Site Plan Amendment - The Essex Resort is proposing an 8 foot wide path on the southern portion of the parcels located at 70 & 74 Essex Way (Parcel ID #2-093-001-000 and #2-093-001-002) in the Mixed-Use Development-Planned Unit Development (MXD-PUD) District. The proposed trail is to be cleared of existing trees with no gravel or pavement proposed.

Chairman Carroll understood that the consent agenda for The Essex was to be rescheduled and apologized to the applicants that they were not made aware that application had been removed from this meeting. A lengthy discussion ensued. Lorraine Zaloom expressed her belief that there should not be a consent agenda; asked how it works and who was the "gate keeper." She believed there should be some policy on consent agendas. Chairman Carroll asked the planner what the requirements were for consent agenda. Johnson stated that he will get back to Ms. Zaloom to let her know the requirements. Johnson noted that the applications were minor enough with the expectations to not be long conversations about application and to make sure the public is aware of a consent application. He stated that if concerns do arise, it can be taken off the consent process and the DRB can proceed with the application as a normal application. DRB Member Bixby was upset as to the time it takes to review packets to prepare for a meeting. DRB Member Zukowski does not believe there should be a consent agenda process. Chairman Carroll stated that it is currently allowed and the issue can be discussed at another meeting.

The DRB decided to hear the application. Bryan Currier and Peter Edelmann spoke on behalf of the application.

Vice-Chair Zukowski Moved and DRB Member Martin Seconded a Motion to remove the Essex Way application from the consent agenda. The Motion passed 6-0.

After discussion, DRB were at a consensus to approve the application.

A Motion was made and seconded to approve the application however, the Motion was withdrawn after determining that abutting residents were advised that the application would be removed from the agenda. The application will be rescheduled as a regular hearing item.

The MOTION passed 6-0. Chairman Carroll would push for the November 6th hearing.

AGENDA ITEM 7a: PUBLIC HEARING: CONTINUED FROM AUGUST 21, 2025 - Site Plan - Why Not, LLC is proposing the redevelopment of the existing clubhouse for the Links at Lang Farm Golf Course located at 127 Stinson Drive (Parcel ID 2-091-010-000) located in the Mixed-Use Development-Planned Unit Development (MXD-PUD) District. The proposed building is approximately 3,600 square feet and will operate as a pro shop and restaurant.

Kent Johnson, Planner, stated that he had a couple of issues on parking and he referred to Line 187 of the Staff Report. He explained that they did not use the Town requirements and instead used the ITE manual which shows a lesser number of spaces. The second issue was related to landscaping and was minor in that the new shrubs needed to be spaced differently and referred to the comments provided by the Town Tree Warden. The issue is to keep the trees/shrubs away from the sidewalk.

Bryan Currier, Jonathan Lang, and Justin Lang represented the application. Currier reported that Public Works issues have been satisfied and agreed a traffic study was not required. He addressed the Fire Chief's concern regarding pedestrians coming from the parking lot by adding a sidewalk on the south end of the parcel that connects to the existing bike path to the building. He reminded the DRB of his conversation at the last meeting regarding parking. Currier stated that the ITE Manual has a range for uses and this application falls in the low end of that range. Currier explained how he used the means to calculate parking and walked through how he determined same. Currier stated that the property is used as a golf course, and the landowner is proposing a new clubhouse and restaurant to serve patrons using the golf course. Vice Chair Zukowski asked if the public would also be using the restaurant and about the 20% slopes. Jonathan Lang replied that the restaurant was proposed to serve his clientele from the golf course, however he would not say no to a person coming just to the restaurant. Currier described where the 20% slopes were located on the parcel and noted the location of the existing retaining wall. He stated that the toe of the slope would have minor disturbance and reminded the DRB that remnants of earth materials were placed on the loot when the Circ was built. DRB Member Norton asked if patrons currently park on the existing sidewalk. Jonathan and Joshua Lang both stated that people will park there even when there are empty parking spaces available.

Vice-Chair Zukowski Moved and Stephanie Bixby Seconded a Motion to approve the application as warned. The Motion passed 6-0.

AGENDA ITEM 7b. Site Plan Amendment - Cameo Holdings, LLC is proposing a parking lot expansion and related stormwater management upgrades for the existing warehouse located at 3 Bushey Lane (Parcel ID #2-009-003-016) in the Industrial (I1) District.

Kent Johnson, Planner, spoke on this application. He referred to Line 88, regarding the Fire Chief's comments and noted that they are noted in the conditions. He noted that the tree warden had a few comments regarding the landscaping noting that some of it was located too close to the dumpster and to the parking lot. Johnson stated that the applicant would likely be needing to ask for more water and sewer allocation as more employees would be working on the site and this would need Selectboard approval.

Mike Hutch, Civil Associates was present on behalf of the applicant. He noted that the existing 20,000 square foot building was located off a private drive, Bushey Lane, is down a steep slope and is obscured from the public by vegetation and topography. The stormwater basin near driveway will be upgraded to a sand filter system. Currently the building was used for record keeping and allowed 3 parking spaces. He referred to Sheet 2.0 and noted that 19 parking spaces, not 18, were proposed. He noted that 30 spaces were allowed, however they only need 19 parking spaces.

DRB Member Norton asked if the upgrade for the retention area was because of more impervious area or if it was a state requirement. Hutch replied that the upgrades were to treat the expansion. Norton referred to Condition 7&8 and suggested those may be boiler plate conditions that were left in this application. Johnson agreed.

DRB Member Williams asked for clarification on the location of the parking area. Johnson replied that there is opportunity for shared parking in the future. Chairman Carroll asked for confirmation on the maintenance of the graveled drive. Hutch stated that access is provided to the north and anticipates there is an easement to same.

Chairman Carroll called upon Ms. Zaloom for public comment. Zaloom asked out of curiosity if gravel was pervious or impervious. Hutch replied impervious and his understanding that unless it was a continuous paved area it was considered impervious because rainwater tends to sheetflow off from it – similar to asphalt. Zaloom also asked about shift change and the number of parking spaces available. Hutch was not aware of the shift change times and the goal was to comply with the parking requirements needed for the expansion.

Board Member Martin Moved and Vice-Chair Zukowski Seconded a Motion to approve the application as warned with the following changes: Delete Conditions 7 & 8. Board Member Norton made a Friendly Amendment to change so that the parking spaces indicate 19 spaces. Member Martin accepted the Friendly Amendment. The Motion passed 6-0.

AGENDA ITEM 8: BUSINESS ITEMS:

Review Draft Handbook for Board, Committee & Commission Members, and their Staff Representatives.

The board provided feedback on a draft handbook for board members and staff, raising concerns about language regarding minority opinions and the requirement for individual signatures, suggesting instead to acknowledge receipt of the handbook. The conversation ended with a brief discussion about environmental court procedures and the potential for AI-assisted transcription of meeting minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

By: ______________________________

Ian Carroll, Chair

G:commdev\drb\minutes\2025\OCT 2 2025 web & draft