

Town of Essex Development Review Board
Draft Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday November 20, 2025

A video recording of the meeting is available on the Town of Essex YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@essexvt>. Timestamps are approximate.
Direct link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9EmB9dcqLQ>

Development Review Board Members:

At Meeting: Ian Carroll - Chair, Sharon Zukowski - Vice Chair, Stephanie Bixby - Clerk, Nick Martin, Hubert Norton

Absent: Dustin Bruso, Trefor Williams

Administration and Staff: Kent Johnson – Town Planner

Others Present: At Meeting – Susan Senning - VLCT MAC Staff Attorney.

On Zoom – Cheryl Van Epps, Community Development (Jean), Gina Halpin Barrett, Ken Signorello, Kent Johnson, Lois Whitmore.

1. Call to Order 00:08 in video

- a. Ian Carroll called the Essex Development Review Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Agenda Changes/Additions 00:30 in video

- a. No changes or additions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda 01:19 in video

- a. Nick Martin made a motion seconded by Sharon Zukowski to approve the agenda for November 20, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Public To Be Heard 02:11 in video

- a. No public comments

5. Business Items 02:47 in video

- a. DRB Training presented by VLCT. Susan Senning presented for VLCT. She is a staff attorney for VLCT's Municipal Assistance Center. She shared a presentation with board entitled Effective Development Review Boards: Roles, Responsibilities, Effective Hearings & Decisions. She reviewed our Charter and noted it did not seem to change anything major from statute, so her presentation will just focus on statute 24 V.S.A. § 4460, 24 V.S.A. § 4461, 1 V.S.A. § 310(8). Topics covered were Roles & Responsibilities **06:14**, Effective Hearings **12:52**, Due Process **24:10**, Q&A DRB's Role or Effective Hearings **52:12**, Effective Decisions **1:00:10**, Statutory Elements of the Decision **1:20:50**, Distributing the Decision **1:35:47**, VLCT Resources **1:36:52**,
b. **14:23 in video** Ian Carroll asked "How do we handle previous approvals?" **18:30 in video** Sharon Zukowski said this sounds like discretionary items and that it does not create a precedent. **20:03 in video** Hubert Norton asked "What happens in regard to an appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision?" **52:38 in video** Hubert Norton asked "How do you use personal information, we live in this town, because we can't

present evidence?" **57:52 in video Sharon Zukowski** asked about permits where you are unsure if they actually complied with regulations. **1:12:05 in video Hubert Norton** asked do you have to reveal what the vote was. **1:38:36 Nick Martin** asked if members of the DRB can call on witnesses who aren't providing testimony. **1:40:43** What about meeting room capacity. **1:51:34** Is there a difference between continuing and tabling. **1:52:03** If we are going into deliberative session on an upcoming vote and we disagree with some of the testimony and we want to apply some of that testimony and some of us don't how do we want to move. **1:55:29 Sharon Zukowski** asked, "can you expand on interested people examining witnesses". **1:59:13** asked about a script they had for running meetings. **1:59:51 Hubert Norton** asked about if rules and procedures allow it then a person can cross-examine an applicant directly without going through the chair. **2:01:30** would it be reasonable to deliberate in public and then have a private deliberative session. **2:03:54** swearing in of everyone upfront that is going to speak rather than individually. **2:06:01** I am concerned about if a meeting has a technical problem and might not be able to continue. **2:10:37 Ian Carroll** We allow the public to talk about anything that's not on the agenda at the beginning. How common is that for a DRB who normally focuses on these are the applications to take time out. **2:15:49 Nick Martin** how to address an interested party that wants to provide testimony and they are attending online but there are technical issues. **2:18:54 Cheryl Van Epps** Could you give clarification on which board handles enforcement issues? **2:22:50 Ken Signorello** there are committees and commissions that have a mission statement that states they are to advise the DRB. Are they automatically interested parties, or do they have to do something to be an interested party? **2:26:24 Hubert Norton** when something is appealed to environmental court how is the case presented.

6. Approval of Minutes 2:31:30 in video

- a. Approval of minutes from October 2, 2025, and November 6, 2025.
- b. **Sharon Zukowski made a motion seconded by Stephanie Bixby to approve the minutes for October 2, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.**
- c. **Ian Carroll made a motion seconded by Sharon Zukowski to continue approval of the minutes for November 6, 2025, until the December 4, 2025, meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. Other Business 2:35:32 in video

- a. Ian Carroll brought up that there was discussion on having an alternate for the DRB. It is allowed by our bylaws, and we have the option to request the Selectboard to appoint one. This should be an agenda item for the December 4, 2025, meeting.
- b. **2:14:38 in video Ian Carroll** suggested a January discussion on change in philosophy.

8. Executive Session

- a. No executive session was held.

9. Reading File 2:40:10 in video

- a. VLCT Response on Consent Process.
- b. Upcoming DRB Application Schedule.

10. Adjourn 2:40:29 in video

- 88 a. **Stephanie Bixby made a motion, seconded by Sharon Zukowski to adjourn the**
89 **meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**
90 b. **Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.**
91

92 Respectfully Submitted,
93 Kariella Audrey Tabone
94 Secretary
95

96 Approved this _____ day of _____, 2025
97 (see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)
98
99

100 _____
101 Signed by Name, Title