

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Regular Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2026, 8:00AM

Meeting held at Essex Town Offices, 81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Minutes Submitted by Clerk Keith Dunbar, February 9, 2026

Attendees

Commission Members:

Present: Irene Wrenner, Chair; Ken Signorello, Vice Chair; Keith Dunbar, Clerk;

Remote: Anne Miller

Absent: Igor Polenov

Staff: Tammy Getchell

Public: N/A

Partners: Alex Demoly, GBIC

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM by Chair Irene Wrenner

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- No changes made to the agenda

3. Public to be Heard

- No members of the public were present in person or online.

4. Minutes to approve

- January 15, 2026 - Motion to approve as amended (Signorello / Dunbar) passed 4-0.

5. Partner Updates

Partner updates were provided by Alex Demoly, GBIC:

- Information regarding Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) funding opportunities. Commissioners were advised that NBRC applications are due February 27, 2026, and that placement on the Regional Priority Project (RPP) list in spring 2026 would strengthen future funding applications.
- An update was shared regarding quarterly UVM Office of Engagement economic development roundtables. Commissioners discussed the value of Essex representation at future meetings.

6. Business Items

a. Update on Map of Essex Businesses

- An update was provided on progress toward developing a printed business map of Essex. Outreach to businesses will be ongoing, with advertising placements funding the map at no

cost to the Town. Options for grouping multi-tenant business areas and coordinating with adjacent municipalities were discussed.

- No formal action was required

b. Consider Approval of EDC Action Plan Priorities for Planning Commission February 12 Meeting

- The Commission reviewed proposed Action Plan priorities intended for presentation to the Planning Commission.

Two amendments were discussed and agreed upon:

- Replace the term **“workforce housing”** with **“entry-level housing,”** emphasizing **owner-occupied and standalone senior housing.**
- Update child care language to align with the **EDC resolution passed February 15, 2024,** supporting child care facilities throughout the Town.

Motion: To approve the EDC Action Plan Priorities with the agreed-upon amendments (Signorello / Miller) passed 4-0

c. Town Showcase & Soup Night Invitation to Participate

- Staff reviewed logistics for the upcoming Town Showcase & Soup Night. The Commission discussed having an EDC informational table featuring business outreach materials, maps, and promotional items.
- Commissioners volunteered to assist with staffing the table and providing materials.
- No formal motion was required.

d. Review Current Development Applications

- Current development applications were reviewed. No applications were identified as requiring EDC comment at this time. Commissioners noted the importance of aligning future land use decisions with broader economic development and branding goals.
- No action was taken.

e. Schedule Next Business Outreach Visit(s)

- The Commission confirmed the next outreach visit:
- **February 19, 2026 – LaFountain Family Maple, 125 Bixby Hill Road.**
- Future outreach possibilities were discussed, including a balance of rural, small business, and industrial operations.

7. New Business

Updates were shared regarding:

- Progress on the Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP), including ongoing revisions and incorporation of local imagery.
- Upcoming quarterly Business Bulletin and inclusion of a feature on the business map initiative.
- Legislative and policy updates relevant to economic development, including Act 250 reforms and economic caucus activity.
- No formal action was taken.

8. Reading File

The following items were received and noted:

- Opinion article: *Using TIFs to fund growth is a big risk*
- Email regarding EDC response to Katherine for DRB Meeting on February 5
- CDFA Webinar Series materials
- Governor Phil Scott announcement on the **Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP)**

9. Next Meeting

- Thursday, February 19th, 2026, 8:00 am will be a Business Outreach meeting onsite at LaFountain Family Maple, 125 Bixby Hill Rd., Essex VT 05452

10. Adjournment

- **Motion** to adjourn at 9:10 am, (Signorello / Dunbar) passed 4-0

Meeting recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRyVyG6CtsQ>