

1 **Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)**
2 **Business Outreach Meeting Minutes**
3 August 20, 2026, 9:00AM
4 Meeting held at 520 BBQ and Grill, 90 Center Rd.
5 Essex, VT 05452
6

7 **Attendees**

8 *Commission Members:*

9 Present: Irene Wrenner, Chair; Anne Miller, Vice Chair; Alex Solverson

10 Absent: Alistair Deakin

11 Staff: Tammy Getchell

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13 Public: Ken Signorello, Matt Desautels (Owner 520 BBQ and Grill)

14
15 Partners: N/A

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17 **1. Call to Order**

18 The meeting was called to order at 8:58 AM by Chair Irene Wrenner

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20 **2. Agenda Additions/Changes**

- 21 • No changes were made to the agenda.
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23 **3. Public to be Heard**

- 24 • No comments.
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26 **4. Minutes to approve**

- 27 • Minutes will be approved during next business meeting
28

29 **5. Partner Updates – N/A**
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31 **6. Business Items**

32 **Business Outreach Visit – 520 BBQ and Grill**

33 The Commissioners met with owner, Matt Desautels, of 520 BBQ and Grill to learn about the
34 business, its operations, opportunities, and challenges associated with opening and operating a
35 new business in Essex.
36

37 **Discussion topics included:**

- 38 • The owner shared his experience and history learning barbeque techniques in the Army and
39 in the southern part of the United States and his start with concessions. Eventually, he
40 made the decision to bring barbeque cuisine to Vermont, where it is less competitive than
41 in the south.
42 • The business opened in March 2026, experiencing some unfortunate delays, primarily with
43 the ventilation hood.

- Owners selected the location for the inexpensive rent and size of the building. The business employs 1 FT and 4 PT employees besides his full-time commitment. They offer catering and event services and still operate a food truck. The owner is interested in learning more about possible food truck opportunities in the Saxon Hill Industrial Park.
- Lack of good signage is a hurdle for him, particularly as his establishment is so far from the road and there are trees blocking the storefront. He wishes the landlord would consider a multi-tenant sign near the road.
- The commissioners shared tips and discussed 520 BBQ and Grill's online presence. The owner is hoping to work on increasing positive Google reviews, which brings his establishment to the top in searches. Alex mentioned the importance of making sure the business is on Apple Maps and Google Maps.
- Matt mentioned that he has talked about a summer outdoor event with the neighboring business (Gaston Weed Company), better signage, and an outdoor seating area could all be possibilities after this initial start. He is being cautious with expenditures for these first months.
- Sales tax and the upcoming vote on the Local Option Tax was discussed, with the owner noting that he believes most of his customers are Essex residents.

The Commission thanked Matt for hosting the outreach meeting and for sharing information about his business and experiences operating in Essex.

No formal action was taken.

7. Next Meeting

- Thursday, September 3, 2026, 8:00 am at the Essex Town Offices

9. Adjournment

- **Motion by Anne, seconded by Alex** to adjourn. Motion passed 3-0 at 9:47 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Getchell

Staff Representative to the Essex Economic Development Commission