

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

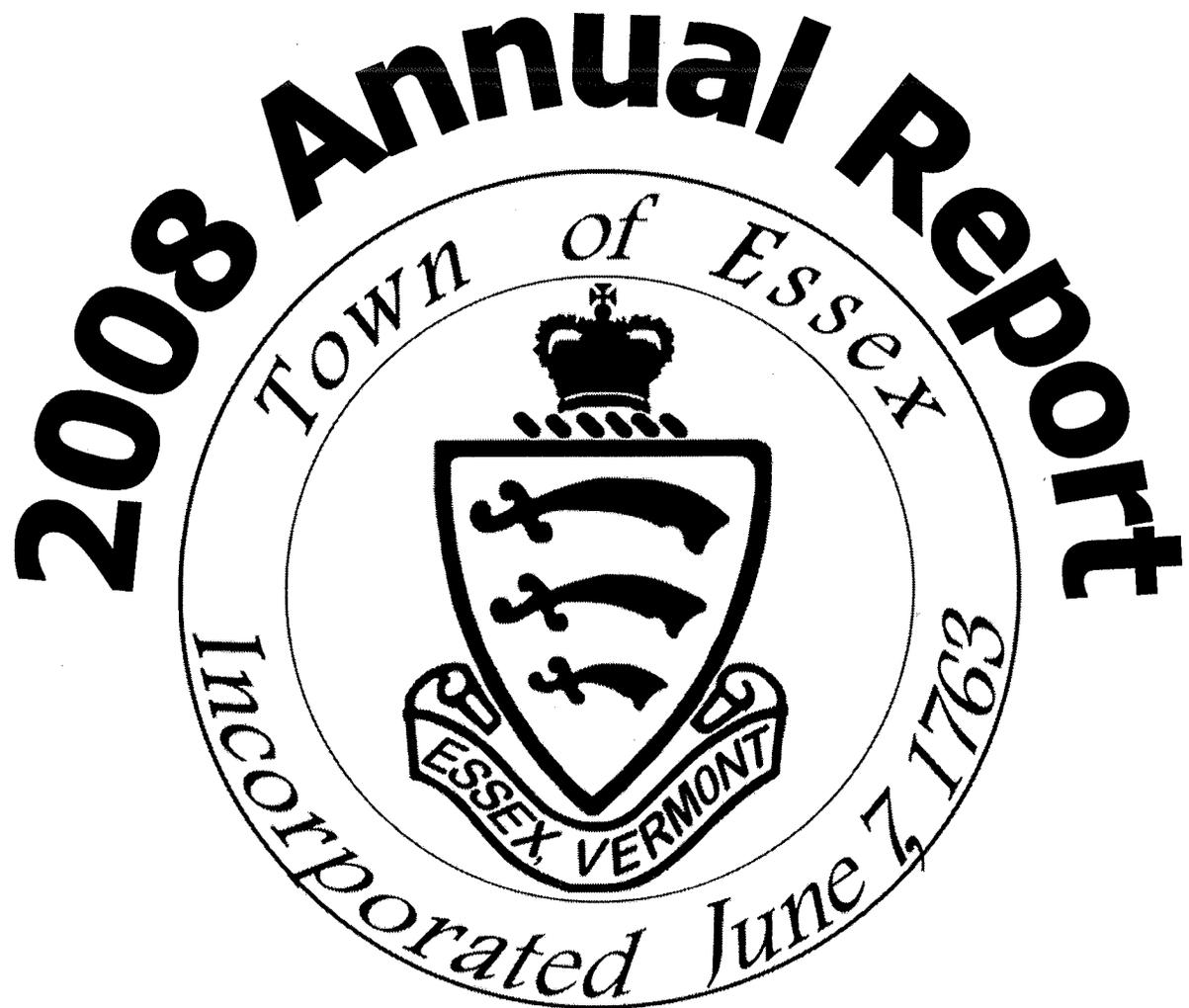
Greg Morgan, Chair

Economic development highlights from the past year include:

- The Economic Development Commission began a process to review and identify the Essex brand. The Commission determined that Essex's urban/rural setting and diverse skilled workforce were unique qualities that set Essex apart from other Vermont towns. The Commission plans on continuing its branding work and potentially dovetailing the effort with future studies.
- The Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce and Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation prepared and provided the Town a review of economic development assets and liabilities as Phase I of a proposed larger initiative to diversify the Town's economic base. This process can be informed by the Commission's effort to develop the Essex brand.
- Researching and recommending to the Selectboard the establishment of a Development Review Board in lieu of the current Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment system for development review. A Development Review Board assumes development review authority, which frees the Planning Commission to focus on planning issues, and bylaw and Town Plan amendments.

The commission is pleased to report that several businesses have chosen to locate or expand their business in our Town:

- Planet Fitness, a national fitness club, opened a franchise in the Pinewood Manor shopping center on River Road.
- The Inn at Essex constructed a fishing pond and broke ground on a health spa. Both of which will add to the Inn's guest offerings.
- Northern Lights Challenge and Leadership Institute at The Inn at Essex opened, offering team development and adventure services. Northern Lights features zip lines, rock and ice climbing walls and low and high challenge courses.
- Biben's Ace Hardware opened in the Essex Shoppe's and Cinema area.
- Revision Eyewear, a leader in ballistics eyewear, added a manufacturing facility to its Essex location in the Saxon Hill Technology Park.
- Autumn Harp submitted plans to expand their location in the Saxon Hill Technology Park.



Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2008