

ESSEX

Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date January 21, 2021
Location Microsoft Teams, Essex Junction, VT
Members Annie Cooper, Jeff Benjamin, Brian Shelden, Botur Kosimi
Staff Owiso Makuku, Robin Pierce, Darren Schibler, Sharon Kelley, Deanna Stoneback, Evan Teich
Partners Sam Andersen, GBIC
Public Irene Wrenner, Ken Signorello

Chairperson Cooper called the meeting to order approximately at 8:05 am.

There were no public to be heard or any changes to the agenda.

Review/Approval of Minutes

- Ms Wrenner noted that she did not receive previous meeting minutes via email. Mr Kosimi responded that they are usually posted on EDC website and Mr Schibler indicated they he will share offline with Ms Wrenner on how to access them. Mr Benjamin made a motion to approve and Mr Kosimi seconded, so Ms Cooper announced the minutes approved.

Updates from Partners and Staff

- Ms Owiso mentioned that Ms Cooper addressed the Planning Commission the other day and they were grateful for her presentation. She said that PPP program is going to be more deliberately distributed to small business, but was not sure if prior issues raised would be addressed. Ms Owiso and Ms Kelley met with Mr Edelman of Essex Experience to discuss new ideas and changes.
- Mr Pierce remarked that he is about to finish small grant proposal involving Park and Main St. He said Planning Commission is going to meet to discuss updates to land development code and shared news about various development projects and applications.
- Mr Teich commented that not all local businesses fit traditional business criteria to be eligible for federal funds, but local state representatives are working hard to accommodate and help them as much as possible to meet requirements. Mr Benjamin asked about fundraising status that Champlain Valley Expo held recently to which Mr Pierce replied that he is meeting with their management to learn more. Mr Teich noted that the village waived \$15K payment by CVE in lieu of tax that was planned this year.
- Mr Teich suggested that EDC members plan for community discussion on cannabis possibly around middle of summer, whether the village and town should opt in or out. He also shared updates about the role of GBIC and CRPC in connecting small businesses with state and federal programs, initiatives to coordinate outdoor dining permits with local restaurants and fire department's assistance to Global Foundries with major water leakage.
- Ms Andersen spoke about the commissioner for economic development going before State House requesting specific funding for businesses that started in 2020 which were left out of previous funding round. She recommended referring businesses looking for financial assistance to ACCD website that is conducting weekly webinars to answer any questions. Ms Andersen emphasized the importance of trying to recruit businesses that offer high paying jobs if the community wants to attract higher income earning residents.

Work Plan 2021, LOT, Business Census, Boards and Committees

- Mr Kosimi suggested creating shared spreadsheet for adding items in Work Plan 2021 as well as list of committees the EDC members can sign up for.
- Mr Shelden recommended using Doodle to plan for separate meeting on local option tax.
- Mr Kosimi said that he has been busy at work, but will try to complete organization and verification of business database in the next two weeks.

Ms Cooper made a motion to adjourn at approximately 9:13 am, seconded by Jeff Benjamin and passed 4-0.

Prepared by
Botur Kosimi
02/03/21