

ESSEX

Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date February 4, 2021
Location Microsoft Teams, Essex Junction, VT
Members Annie Cooper, Brian Shelden, Botur Kosimi
Staff Owiso Makuku, Robin Pierce, Darren Schibler, Sharon Kelley, Evan Teich, Greg Duggan
Partners Sam Andersen (GBIC)
Public Irene Wrenner, Ken Signorello (Essex Reporter)

Chairperson Cooper called the meeting to order approximately at 8:06 am.

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

Review/Approval of Minutes

- Ms Cooper noted that Ms Andersen's last name be corrected from "Anderson" and Mr Shelden shared comments by Mr Benjamin regarding corrections to last names of Ms Makuku and Mr Edelman. Mr Shelden then made a motion to approve and Mr Kosimi seconded, so Ms Cooper announced the minutes approved.

Updates from Partners and Staff

- Ms Andersen talked about GBIC carefully watching the legislature waiting to see what the next round of recovery grants are going to look like and remarked that various venues like museums and movie theaters are opening up. She expressed concern that some legislation currently under discussion could be problematic for VEGI (Vermont Economic Growth Incentive) and proposed bill and changes could make it life difficult for businesses.
- Mr Teich asked whether Ms Andersen was familiar with what is going on with education budget and sales tax. She replied that she is not well versed with details, but could find out if there is a specific question. He mentioned hearing about possibility for a 9% education tax increase that may wither away based upon internet sales tax that the state collected during pandemic.
- Mr Shelden joined the discussion noting that the Essex delegation is holding their community conversation this Saturday and he is going there so would be happy to relay any questions like that. Ms Makuku commented that school tax was not going to be dire as expected because of allocation of COVID funds to the states and mentioned Senator Leahy lobbying for smaller states receiving guaranteed minimum relief money from the federal government.
- Ms Makuku shared about community development delving into zoning regulations and rallying for changes that can be positive for businesses. Mr Pierce mentioned that planning commission will have a meeting tonight and Ms Cooper has signed up to participate as well.

GLOBALFOUNDRIES Award

- Ms Cooper brought up the news about Global Foundries receiving Community Impact Award by Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce in recognition of organization's consistent and meaningful impact in

their community. She said it was her hope to bring someone from Global Foundries to speak about their initiatives, but unfortunately, did not get around to it.

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

- Ms Cooper then moved on to 2021 Work Plan for the commission noting that we've created a shared document for it to include the list of boards and committees for members to sign up for and separately from that document there's a growing yet uncompleted list of all Essex businesses with contact information that will be transferred over to staff. She said that the commission almost completed its part and soon will transfer thorough directory to staff, so they have what they need when they want to reach out to local businesses.
- Ms Cooper also commented that we are currently forming out all our plans for the year, including documents mentioned earlier and questioned staff as to where they would like to have these files eventually reside. Mr Schibler suggested keeping them on shared drive to which Mr Pierce confirmed having access to. Mr Teich asked if the work plan has item dedicated to discussion of cannabis strictly from a business perspective, not social or otherwise. Mr Kosimi verified that work plan does mention cannabis discussion and proceeded to describe the contents and design of those documents.
- Mr Kosimi shared his screen to provide visuals of those documents going through important elements in each. Mr Kosimi also set up Doodle poll to arrange best time of meeting on local options tax and said he will update it with more dates for people to sign up, so in the next few weeks we can have the meeting to finalize our action plan on this subject.

Ms Cooper made a motion to adjourn at approximately 8:57 am, moved by Mr Shelden and seconded by Mr Kosimi, passed 3-0.

Prepared by

Botur Kosimi

02/11/21

Approved 02/18/2021