

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JULY 17, 2025
FINAL – APPROVED AUGUST 21, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Alden, Chair; Maggie Massey, Vice-Chair; Luke Brockmeier; Cristin Gildea

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF: Michael Giguere, City Planner; Jim Kellogg, Fire Chief

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Blondin, Michael Bush, Diane Clemens, Hillary Holmes, Tim Miller, Michelle Prudenzeno, Missy Thurston

1. CALL TO ORDER

As Mr. Alden was present remotely, Ms. Massey called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

2. ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Mr. Giguere noted that this is a hybrid meeting, and that staff are present at 6 Lincoln Street to ensure public participation. While efforts will be made to accommodate remote public participants, in-person participation is the only legally mandated form of public participation. If there are technical difficulties the meeting may be paused and resumed on August 21st, 2025. All votes that are not unanimous will be done via roll call.

4. MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting – June 9, 2025

JOHN ALDEN made a motion, seconded by CRISTIN GILDEA, to approve the minutes of June 9, 2025, as issued. Motion passed 4-0.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Site plan and conditional use review for the addition of a temporary training center at the Champlain Valley Expo at 105 Pearl Street by the Essex Junction Fire Department

Mr. Giguere swore in all in attendance. Ms. Massey opened the public hearing.

Mr. Kellogg said that the Champlain Valley Expo (CVE) has offered to donate land to be used as a training facility for the Fire Department. The site will have three metal storage containers to simulate a two-story home with a garage. Live fires will be conducted in the boxes. The Fire Department will be allowed to use the land for at least five years. Trainings will not be conducted during CVE events but will generally be held twice a week. Classes may be held for new members of other local fire departments and larger events will be publicized on social media. No smoke will be visible outside of the property. In public comment, Ms. Clemens asked for clarification on site security, which was given.

JOHN ALDEN made a motion, seconded by LUKE BROCKMEIER, that the DRB approve the conditional use application as verbatim for the recommended Motion #1 [the addition of a training

center at the Champlain Valley Expo at 105 Pearl Street by the Essex Junction Fire Department]. Motion passed 4-0.

JOHN ALDEN made a motion, seconded by LUKE BROCKMEIER, that the DRB approve the site plan application as recommended in Motion #2 [for the addition of a training center at the Champlain Valley Expo at 105 Pearl Street by the Essex Junction Fire Department]. Motion passed 4-0.

b. Design review for the construction of a new single-family home at 40 Maple Street by Ron Bushey, owner

Mr. Blondin, contractor, presented on behalf of the applicant. A run-down home will be torn down and replaced with a new colonial-style home. Mr. Alden said that the document provided is not to scale and that additional information is needed. Mr. Giguere said that the applicant was told this by staff, however, chose to proceed with the materials as presented. Mr. Alden said that this property is also in the design control overlay district and recommended that this application be treated as a preliminary. He said that landscaping needs to be addressed and that the home needed to face Maple Street or Kings Court. In public comment, Ms. Clemens, speaking as herself not as a Planning Commissioner, suggested that the building be pushed back 5-10 feet so that street trees can be planted. Mr. Giguere said that the Tree Advisory Committee made a similar recommendation and recommended side and backyard tree improvements. Mr. Alden said that the existing setback along King's Court must be shown and that the non-compliance cannot be made worse. He also said that it cannot be misrepresented in the graphics. Ms. Clemens said that she believes that there is additional landscaping that is not included in the graphic provided. She also encouraged the applicant to allow the Fire Department to train on the existing building.

Ms. Massey closed the public hearing.

Mr. Brockmeier said that landscaping and facing the front of the property on Maple Street is essential. Mr. Alden encouraged additional landscaping and the applicant to provide a document that is drawn to scale with elevations that match the site plan.

MAGGIE MASSEY made a motion, seconded by LUKE BROCKMEIER, to continue this hearing at a later date. Motion passed 4-0.

6. OTHER DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD ITEMS

Mr. Giguere said that the Connect the Junction TOD Master Plan is available for public comment. The Planning Commission will be hearing a presentation on August 7th on alternatives for Pearl Street between West Street and Susie Wilson Road. The Train Station project is likely to be discussed by the Planning Commission on September 4th. The Spark Hotel had a soft opening yesterday. Staff has ensured that the property owner has met all conditions of the site plan.

7. ADJOURNMENT

CRISTIN GILDEA made a motion, seconded by LUKE BROCKMEIER, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville