CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 18, 2026
APPROVED JULY 16, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Alden, Chair; Luke Brockmeier; Dylan Zwicky.
ADMINISTRATION: Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.
OTHERS PRESENT: Scott Homsted.

1. Additions or Amendments to Agenda
John Alden called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

2. Public to be Heard
None.

3. Approval of Minutes
a. June 3, 2026

MOTION by Board Member Brockmeier, SECOND by Board Member Zwicky, to approve the minutes from June 3, 2026 as presented. The motion passed 3-0.

4. Public Hearing
a. Preliminary Plan review for a seven-lot subdivision for future residential development at 11 Meadow Terrace in the R1 District by Center for Technology Essex, owners.

Board Member Alden swore in all members of the public and applicants who will give testimony at tonight's meeting.

Scott Homsted of Krebs and Lansing spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He began by noting that this is a continuation of a project that has come before the Development Review Board (DRB) previously, and is a continuation of the Center for Technology's Essex project, which creates lots so that they can continue their building trades program. He noted that they permitted the road extension of Meadow Terrace several years prior, which connected the existing Meadow Terrace to Taft Street, which allowed them to construct the initial lot (for which construction is currently underway). He said that in tandem, they are now seeking to complete the project's design and permitting phase for the remaining lots. He noted that they presented their sketch plan several months ago to the DRB, at which time they discussed several minor items related to a waiver request for the length ratio on several of the lots, and that they are before the DRB now to present further details than were shown during Sketch Plan review. He said these further details include potential house layouts, building connections, water and sewer, and conceptual grading, based on setback requirements and utility connections that could serve the lots. He noted that there are some short sections of easements that could be used to ensure that utilities are connected to each lot. He noted a 15-foot strip of land in the southeast portion of the development behind existing Lots 1A and 2A, and that it's currently shown as part of Lot 8A, and that they intend to pursue boundary line adjustments with the owner of those lots in the coming months. He noted that this had previously been a trail but will no longer be a viable trail when this land is developed.

Board Member Alden noted a comment in the staff report about wetlands and the Governor's executive order on wetlands, and Mr. Homsted replied that they reached out to their wetland consultant to obtain additional clarity, but that they are unsure what the status of the Wetland Division's rule will be and whether further legislative action is necessary to further clarify requirements. He said that their goal is to obtain approval for as many lots as possible, and that if a lot is forfeited due to wetland buffer requirements, they believe that the plan would still be viable. He said that they are hoping to proceed with the preliminary plan as presented, but that they will revise prior to final plan approval if there is further clarity on State requirements. Community Development Director Yuen added that wetland requirements are under state jurisdiction regardless of Essex Junction's Land Development Code requirements. Board Member Alden asked about access to the lots, and Mr. Homsted replied that there's a driveway from the existing CTE building that was reoriented to create a 90-degree intersection. Mr. Alden asked if the lot that could potentially have two units would be subdivided or if it is able to have two principal structures, and Mr. Homsted replied that recent infill-promoting regulations allow for two principal structures on a lot such as this, and that they could have a common holding as the legal mechanism. Board Member Brockmeier asked about the comment regarding Lot 9A and whether the stormwater practice was deeded to the City, and Mr. Homsted replied that there is an easement as part of a previous approval and that the renderings show a building envelope around this infrastructure. Director Yuen noted that there will need to be an access easement to the City for maintenance purposes and that they would like more information on how the water is intended to flow from Lot 7A to Lot 9A. Mr. Homsted replied that the front of the lot is elevated so that drainage will occur back toward the road into the stormwater collection system and to the gravel wetland via catch basins and piping, and that the back of the lot will utilize a disconnection method of stormwater management where the water is dispersed through a vegetated strip. He spoke about the drainage in the gravel wetland and the vegetation that would surround it. He noted that the developer will manage the gravel wetland through development and then will turn it over to the City for ongoing maintenance.

Board Members agreed that there were no further concerns with the preliminary plans as presented, and that they were amenable to Mr. Homsted's proposed approach for proposed condition #3 of working out boundary line adjustments with the owners of the lots.

MOTION by Board Member Zwicky, SECOND by Board Member Brockmeier, to approve the preliminary plat for the proposed 7-lot subdivision at 11 Meadow Terrace in the R1 District by the Center for Technology Essex, owners, with conditions as presented. The motion passed 3-0.

5. Other Development Review Board Items

a. Preview of proposed Form-Based Code to implement Connect the Junction Transit Oriented Development Master Plan

Director Yuen began by noting that Connect the Junction is the Transit Oriented Development Master Plan that the City Council adopted on December 17, 2025, and that consultants from Framework Cultural Placemaking have been working with the City to develop the plan and assist with public engagement for the project. He spoke about the LDC amendments necessary to implement the Connection the Junction plan, and began by speaking about changes to building height limits, and noted that the Planning Commission recommended and the City Council approved changes to allow for up to 9 stories plus one affordable housing bonus story in the Pearl Street corridor and portions of the City Center. He said that their goal is to combine and consolidate three zoning districts (the Transit-Oriented Development District, the Highway Arterial District, and the Multi-Family Mixed Use 1 District). He noted that these zones are similar enough that this is feasible, and would allow for them to be developed densely. He noted that this doesn't apply to the more historic portions of the Village Center District, in order to maintain its historic character. He said that while they wanted to combine these districts, they are only proposing to focus this round of LDC amendments on the Village Center and Transit-Oriented Development Districts, due to wastewater capacity constraints at the West Street Pump Station and current work to revise the City's future land use maps through its Comprehensive Plan updates. He noted that the State's explicit housing targets were part of the impetus for this change. Board Member Alden asked how much of this is the City's own initiative and whether the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has issued recommendations or guidance. Director Yuen noted that the municipalized housing targets come from the CCRPC based on the state's housing needs assessment, which is updated periodically and broken down by region, and that they are driven by what is most feasible and which areas have access to more mass transit.

Director Yuen then noted that the most significant LDC amendments are to implement form-based code, which focuses on the physical form of buildings and how they shape the public realm, rather than conventional zoning, which regulates the activity allowable on a property. He said that the implications of this for the DRB is that they will now be reviewing projects against clear, measurable objective standards, which are more predictable, easier to apply consistently, and are more defensible if a decision is challenged. He said that this narrows the DRB's discretion to what does or does not meet the standards, but that discretion remains where the code calls for it (e.g., through waivers, exemptions, site plan judgment, and areas where the standards intentionally leave some flexibility).

Director Yuen then briefly described what the form-based code standards cover. These include building height and how it relates to street width, residential adjacency, how buildings sit on lots and meet the setback, façade composition, articulation, and materials, parking placement and screening, and landscaping (through a points-based system). He noted that this does not change approvals for permitted and conditional use (which are still governed by the use chart), historic resources (which fall under HRO District rules), site plan review (which will still apply), and that the existing Design Review overlay district will remain but will have the VC and TOD Districts carved out. He spoke in further detail about and provided examples for each of the standards included in the form-based code.

Director Yuen then spoke about next steps. He noted that amendments are in draft and under Planning Commission review, with public hearings anticipated this summer and potential adoption in the fall, and that they are soliciting questions and feedback now to ensure that the standards are feasible and implementable for the City. Board Member Brockmeier noted that if some districts have form-based code and some don't, permitting processes could vary across the City. Director Yuen replied that this proposed form-based code is broad and that it doesn't get into the level of detail that the use table (for example) does, and that the use table allows for a relatively generous degree of flexibility compared to the use tables of other municipalities.

6. Adjournment

MOTION by Board Member Brockmeier, SECOND by Board Member Zwicky, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 8:54 P.M.

RScty: AACoonradt