CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JULY 16, 2026
DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maggie Massey, Chair; Luke Brockmeier, Vice Chair; Cristin Gildea, Amanda Svensson; Susan Swogger (alternate member).
ADMINISTRATION: Ashley Snellenberger, Communication & Strategic Initiatives Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.
OTHERS PRESENT: Alistair Parker, Miriam Sheehey, Ed Stone.

1. Call to Order
Community Development Director Yuen called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

2. Reorganization
a. Election of Chair and Vice Chair
Director Yuen called for nominations for Development Review Board Chair.

Board Member Gildea nominated Maggie Massey to be the Development Review Board Chair, seconded by Board Member Brockmeier. The motion passed 5-0.

Director Yuen passed the gavel to Chair Massey to preside over the remainder of the meeting.

Chair Massey called for nominations for Development Review Board Vice Chair.

Board Member Gildea nominated Luke Brockmeier to be the Development Review Board Vice Chair, seconded by Board Member Svensson. The motion passed 5-0.

3. Agenda Additions/Changes
None.

4. Public to be Heard
None.

5. Approval of Minutes
a. June 18, 2026

MOTION by Board Member Gildea, SECOND by Board Member Brockmeier, to approve the minutes from June 18, 2026 as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Public Hearing
a. Application to remove deck on side covered porch and replace with pavers; replace existing windows on first floor of house; and replace exterior stairs on carriage house at 26-28 Pearl Street in the RO & R2 District with Historic Preservation Overlay, by Hannah and Alistair Parker, owners

Chair Massey swore in all individuals who intended to give testimony on the Application.

Alistair Parker, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He said that there is a porch located on the side of the house along the driveway in need of repair, and that the application proposes to remove the flooring of the porch and convert it into a patio space by replacing the porch floor with pavers. He said that on the opposite side of the house, they would like to replace a set of windows with shorter windows to accommodate interior renovation. He noted that the window material (white vinyl) and aesthetic would remain the same. He said that at the back of the property, they would like to replace the exterior stairs that provide access to tenants living on the second floor of the carriage house. He said that they are not proposing to modify the footprint of the exterior stairs, and will replace them with unpainted pressure-treated wood (similar to the current configuration).

Director Yuen noted that after conducting a review of requirements, staff determined that the Design Review Overlay District regulations do not apply, because exterior alternations are exempt, but that Historic Preservation Overlay District regulations do apply to this application. He noted that the site is residential and will remain residential in this proposal, and that the proposed renovations retain and preserve the historic character of the structures. He said the only major change in this application is to convert the porch to a patio, noting that there was a porch in place when a historic inventory of this property was taken in the 1970s. Mr. Parker noted that they are proposing to retain the roof over the porch and only replacing the decking with pavers.

Board Member Brockmeier asked if the porch would still be slightly elevated from ground level, and Mr. Parker replied that they are intending to remove the decking and that the pavers would be at ground level to make the space more open and usable. Board Member Brockmeier asked about the columns on the porch, and Mr. Parker replied that he plans to mimic the front porch columns' aesthetics, with chamfered edges and detail.

Chair Massey closed the public hearing.

Board Member Gildea made a motion, seconded by Board Member Swogger, that the Development Review Board approves the replacement of the two first floor windows, replacement of the existing side porch with patio pavers, and replacement of the carriage house exteriors stairs as proposed. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Other Development Review Board Items

a. Committee Orientation

Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director Snellenberger presented on this agenda item, which provides detail on Open Meeting Law and the City's Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy. She also noted that new committee members are required to go through the State's ethics training course.

Director Snellenberger began by providing an overview of the City's Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan, including its six pillars and 18 associated action items. She provided a summary of the City's strategic planning process, which aligns with and helps inform the City's budgeting process. She spoke about the City's boards and committees, noting that they can be advisory committees or non-advisory (decision-making) committees. She noted that the Development Review Board is a non-advisory committee, with additional requirements as a quasi-judicial body. She outlined the responsibilities of board and committee members, committee chairs, and staff representatives of those committees.

Director Snellenberger then provided an overview of Open Meeting Law (1 V.S.A. §§310-314), noting that the intent of the law is to create transparency in government by requiring advance public notice of meetings and opportunities for public participation in governmental decisions. She noted that Open Meeting Law is required when there is a quorum of board members at the meeting, involves a discussion or taking action, and the subject matter of the discussion is one over which the board has authority or responsibility. She spoke about when Open Meeting Law applies or does not apply. She provided more details on requirements of the Open Meeting Law, including the provision of advanced notice of meetings, creation and posting of an agenda for all regular and special meetings, conducting all business in open meeting (unless an exemption applies), allowing public comment at meetings, recording and posting minutes of the meeting, and recording the meeting and posting it for a certain period of time. She spoke about exemptions of these requirements related to deliberative and executive sessions. Director Yuen noted that the Development Review Board is able to enter into deliberative sessions after public hearings to further deliberate on applications, but that they are not required to do so and can also discuss applications during public session. She provided detail on requirements for agendas for each meeting. She noted that because the Development Review Board is non-advisory, they cannot meet fully remotely but they can have a hybrid option with at least one board member and one staff person in attendance at the designated physical location for the meeting. She provided detail about requirements for minutes of meetings, including contents and posting deadlines. She noted that board members can only use evidence that the public has access to or that has been presented during a hearing to inform decisions, and she noted that direct or indirect communication between a board and any party, representative, or counsel (*ex parte* communications) about proceedings before the board are prohibited, in order to ensure due process during proceedings. She provided details on the City's Open Meeting Law Complaint Process.

Director Snellenberger then provided an overview of the statewide municipal Code of Ethics, noting that State statute requires municipalities to investigate and record ethics complaints, appoint an Ethics Liaison to receive complaints and serve as a point of contact for the state's Ethics Commission, and for municipal staff and committees to complete ethics trainings. She provided detail on what qualifies as a conflict of interest and when board members should disclose potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from decision-making due to conflicts of interest. She noted that board members who have recused themselves on a matter cannot sit with, deliberate, or participate in discussions with the board on that matter, but that they may participate as a member of the public or private party, if applicable. She provided more detail on conduct that is prohibited by the Ethics Policy, as well as the process for investigation and enforcement of ethical violations.

8. Adjournment

MOTION by Board Member Svensson, SECOND by Board Member Swogger, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 7:31 P.M.

RScty: AACoonradt