

## ESSEX

### Economic Development Commission (EDC)

#### Meeting Minutes (**draft**)

Date	April 15, 2021
Location	Online via Microsoft Teams
Members	Annie Cooper, Chair, Brian Shelden, Vice-Chair, Jeff Benjamin, Ta-Tanisha Reddita
Staff	Evan Teich, Greg Duggan, Owiso Makuku, Robin Pierce, Darren Schibler
Partners	Sam Andersen (GBIC)
Public	Irene Wrenner, Ken Signorello, Mariah Sanderson, Raj Chawla,

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

There was no changes to agenda. The minutes were not available for approval due to time challenges.

#### Public to Be Heard

- Gabrielle Smith from the Essex Housing Commission introduced herself and said she was joining the meeting to learn how other commissions are doing.

#### Cannabis Discussion

- Mariah Sanderson, Coalition Director of Burlington Partnership for Healthy Community made a presentation entitled, "Preventing Substance Misuse & Supporting Healthy Communities" in which she discussed considerations for retail sales of cannabis and other commercial substances in Essex. The Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community is a coalition of Burlington residents, businesses, educators, parents, medical professionals, youth law enforcement officials and more who recognize that the damages of drugs, alcohol abuse and tobacco use affect us all and we work together to address the causes and consequences of substance abuse to create a healthier environment in Burlington (<http://www.burlingtonpartnership.org/>).
- Ms Sanderson mentioned that she's also a member in other substance abuse prevention organizations, resident of Essex Junction and a mother of two teenagers, so has a vested interest in the community. She covered definitions, Act 164, factors, data and resources relevant to cannabis sales. Raj Chawla, one of the Essex Village Trustees asked if Ms Sanderson could talk a little about how this issue may relate to other problems youth are facing.
- Ms Makuku commented that California has done a lot of work regarding the ban of advertising of cannabis products to children. Chair Cooper spoke about committee to further study this topic and such conversations should take place around the community to help us decided what to do next. Mr Shelden asked to clarify about the permitted density of cannabis retailers per town and Ms Sanderson responded that confusion may be stemming from phases of rollout in 2022.
- Brian Armstrong, former Essex resident raised his concern about the community not opting in to have cannabis retail and encouraged looking into benefits of legalization which may raise more funds for effective prevention efforts. He advised against foolishly banning cannabis retail. Participants had a very lively discussion and debate throughout the meeting. Chair Cooper nominated Ms Reddita to be EDC representative in cannabis study commission and members approved her unanimously.

Chair Cooper asked for a motion to adjourn at approximately 9:22 am, moved by Vice-Chair Shelden and seconded by Mr Benjamin, passed 4-0.

Prepared by Botur Kosimi

05/05/21