

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 20, 2025
DRAFT**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Alden, Chair; Luke Brockmeier; Cristin Gildea; Dylan Zwicky

ADMINISTRATION: Michael Giguere, City Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Greg Dixon, Adam Slocum, Eva Slocum

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Alden called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mr. Giguere requested adding Item 6a, “Consideration of Rescheduling June’s Meeting.”

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 April 17th, 2025. All votes that are not unanimous will be done via roll call. A roll call attendance of all remote members was held.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None.

4. MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting – February 20, 2025

LUKE BROCKMEIER made a motion, seconded by CRISTIN GILDEA, to approve the minutes of February 20, 2025. Motion passed 4-0.

5. PUBLIC MEETING

6. PUBLIC HEARING

All participants were sworn in.

a. Variance application for the conversion of an existing duplex into a fourplex located three feet within the front 15-foot setback at 177 West Street by Eva and Adam Slocum, owners.

Mr. Giguere said that new application materials were presented to staff today which nullify the staff report. The newly submitted plans show a proposed expansion that is slightly larger than the current garage. Mr. Giguere said that he recommends denying the application and requesting that the applicant reapply. Mr. Alden suggested that the Board decide based on the previously submitted material. Ms. Slocum said that she submitted architectural drawings of the property today, as this is when she received them. The property is still on the same footprint as with the previous plans, except for the roof overhang and stairs which extend to the setback. Mr. Alden said that nonconformities cannot become more in noncompliance, and thus the footprint is very important. Mr. Alden said that the roof overhang would be allowable, however the stairs would need to be moved as they are within the setback. The applicants are amenable

to this change. Mr. Brockmeier asked for clarification on the encroachment. Mr. Giguere said that stairs can encroach up to 18 inches, but that the property is already nonconforming. The existing driveway and parking will be used for all the proposed units. The DRB suggested moving the stairs to the back of the building, which the applicant was amenable to.

JOHN ALDEN made a motion, seconded by CRISTIN GILDEA that the DRB find that the application meets the non-complying structures definition and exceptions of 802.B 1&2 a, b, and c as originally presented and that no additional impact or change to the existing setback infraction is allowed. Motion passed 4-0.

b. Site plan amendment for three additional (3) dwelling units and opening of the fifth floor at an existing multi-family building at 197 Pearl Street by JIDDU/SITTU Trust c/o Gabe Handy

Mr. Dixon, of Krebs & Lansing, said that he is the civil engineer on this project. Mr. Alden said that he wanted to note that the Planning Commission and Development Review Board had no knowledge of the fifth story on this building and that it was constructed after the plan was approved. It does not break the height limit, but the extra story was not allowed at the time it was built. Vermont state law has changed since this time. Mr. Dixon said that the fifth story is on the southwestern side of the building and is currently unused space. There are no exterior changes with this project. Mr. Alden said that he is amenable to this application but would like to not see this happen again. All units are leased.

To be able to use the fifth floor, fourteen units in this project need to be deeded as affordable for at least 15 years, at 80% of the average medium income. This will be a proposed condition for approval. If the applicant is not interested in this, they are not able to use the fifth story. There are no parking issues at the property currently, and it is close to being fully rented. The property currently has half the required parking as a waiver was previously issued due to its proximity to the bus line. Shared parking arrangements between the surrounding apartment buildings could be examined if needed. The parking waiver is now 74 spaces for a demand of, on paper, of 85 spaces. Mr. Giguere pointed out that one of the units was incorrectly labeled as a two-bedroom, when it should have been a one-bedroom. This will be changed on the application materials.

CRISTIN GILDEA made a motion, seconded by LUKE BROCKMEIER, that the DRB approve the site plan amendment for three (3) additional dwelling units and opening of the fifth floor at the existing multi-family building at 197 Pearl Street with conditions as presented and amended. Motion passed 4-0.

6. OTHER DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD ITEMS

a. Consideration of Rescheduling June's Meeting

The DRB's regularly scheduled meeting in June is on Juneteenth. The DRB rescheduled this meeting to June 9th.

7. ADJOURNMENT

LUKE BROCKMEIER made a motion, seconded by CRISTIN GILDEA, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville