



Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 6:00pm

Location: Essex Centre Sports Complex, Barnette Room, 60 Fairview Ave W, Essex, ON

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request. Please contact the Clerk's Office at

clerks@essex.ca or 519-776-7336 extension 1100 or 1101.

Present: Stephanie Winger, Chair
Kim Dennison, Vice Chair
Josh Girard, BIA Board Member
Gregg Laframboise, BIA Board Member
Mesba Qasim, BIA Board Treasurer
Andrea Schinkel, BIA Board Member
Katie McGuire-Blais, Ward 1 Councillor
Kelly Baillargeon, Coordinator

Also Present: RaeAnn Schroeder, Economic Development, Town of Essex

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples), and of the Huron-Wendat Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Adoption of Published Agenda

4.1. Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Agenda for August 13, 2025

BIA25-08-001

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the published agenda for the August 13, 2025 Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1. Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Minutes for July 9, 2025

BIA25-08-002

Moved by K. Dennison

Seconded by M. Qasim

That the minutes of the Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting held July 9, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Correspondence

6.1. Treasurer's Report

The committee reviewed the monthly expenses. No formal report was presented.

6.2. Report from Council Representative

RaeAnn Schroeder shared information about the newly launched Rural Ontario Development Program, which provides cost-share funding to support small rural businesses. The program offers up to 35% of eligible costs (to a maximum of \$10,000) for initiatives such as market diversification, cybersecurity, succession planning, and accessibility improvements. Application intake dates are scheduled between 2025 and 2027.

In addition, Sarah Baldassare from Durrell Communications introduced the Town of Essex's Industrial Community Improvement Plan (CIP) project. Durrell Communications has been selected to conduct stakeholder outreach to better understand the industrial landscape, identify challenges and opportunities, and shape recommendations that will attract investment, support industrial development, and strengthen long-term economic resilience in Essex.

BIA25-08-003

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the Correspondence listed in Agenda Item 6 be received.

Carried

7. Members

7.1. Member Requests

Mr. Shepley, owner of Ice Cool Treats, requested that the BIA discuss parking regulations along the entirety of Talbot Street at the next meeting. Currently, parking between Arthur Avenue and Centre Street is limited to two hours. He inquired whether the BIA would support a motion to extend this two-hour parking restriction from Maidstone Avenue to County Road 23.

BIA25-08-004

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That Councillor McGuire-Blais request that Town Council commission an on-street parking report. The study will gather feedback from both residential and commercial properties within the Essex Centre downtown core to inform future planning.

Carried

Complaints have been received from surrounding business owners regarding weeds and overgrown vegetation in the municipal parking lot off Laird Street, located behind Beauty Boss. A formal Online Service Request has been submitted to the Town of Essex. The Town has confirmed receipt of the request and will provide a final update once the action has been completed.

Members were asked to share information about an upcoming community event at the Essex Legion on August 19, aimed at honouring veterans through stories and reflections.

7.2. New Businesses/Closing/Change of location

- Essence of Eden Esthetics opened at 41 Talbot St. N. in Essex.
- Dom & Aliyah's Pjs have moved to 48 Talbot St. N. in Essex.
- Mama's Place Italian Restaurant located at 14 Talbot St. N., Essex, is for sale.
- Peter J. Bucciachio Counselling has opened at 180 Talbot St. S. in Essex.
- Your Local Optical has opened at 10 Talbot St. N and will be hosting a ribbon cutting on August 15 at 12pm.

BIA25-08-005

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the Member updates listed in Agenda Item 7 be received.

Carried

8. Events

8.1. Road Closure Updates

Members were advised of several upcoming downtown events that will involve temporary road closures, including StreetFest (Aug. 16 & Oct. 11), Soapbox Derby (Sept. 27), Tiny Tot Parade (Oct. 31), and the Santa Claus Parade (Dec. 13). Other events include the Walkathon (Oct. 4) and the Jingle Bell Run (November, date TBC). Members are encouraged to help patrons plan ahead, noting that free municipal parking is available throughout the downtown core.

8.2. Essex Centre Streetfest Review

- August 16, 5pm-9pm
- October 11, 12pm-4pm

8.3. Essex Soapbox Derby

Email invitation sent to BIA members for the 2025 Year-End Soapbox Derby & Community Picnic on September 27. Members encouraged to participate as vendors with no fees and priority placement.

BIA25-08-006

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by A. Schinkel

That the Events updates listed in Agenda Item 8 be received.

Carried

9. Marketing, Promotions & Social Media

9.1. Proudly Local: Proudly Essex promotion

The *Proudly Local: Proudly Essex* social media promotion featured every Friday has been successful in increasing reach, promoting our YouTube channel, and featuring local businesses. Each Facebook reel has received between 2,000 and 5,000 views, making it an effective way to repurpose existing video content.

9.2. Essex Free Press Business Profiler

Each month, a BIA member is randomly selected from a provided list to be featured with a half-page ad in the Essex Free Press (valued at \$500), sponsored by the Essex Centre BIA.

9.3. Essex Neighbours Magazine Monthly Advertisement

Little House of Cupcakes was selected for the monthly feature.

9.4. Website Updates

It was suggested that an email be sent to all members asking them to review their current business listing in the Essex BIA directory. Members will be requested to provide any corrections or updated information to ensure the directory remains accurate and up to date.

BIA25-08-007

Moved by A. Schinkel

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the Marketing, Promotions and Social Media updates listed in Agenda Item 9 be received.

Carried

10. Beautification

10.1. Downtown Parkette

- Member Laframboise and Member Winger met with the property owner to discuss the proposed parkette project.
- It was suggested that the BIA prepare a list of all items that will be owned by the BIA in the event that the property use changes and the BIA is asked to remove its assets.
- The agreement should be reviewed by the Clerk's Office prior to signing.

- Potential grant opportunities may be available to help fund the project.

BIA25-08-008

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the Beautification updates listed in Agenda Item 10 be received.

Carried

11. New Business

- The BIA received notice that Town Council has approved an amendment to the banner program, including funding for installation costs. Payment for aftermarket banner arms is to be made to the Rotary Club of Essex, which will handle the bulk purchase and donate the order to the Town for installation in September. The BIA will arrange to send the required funds to the Rotary Club.
- New cigarette disposal has been attached to downtown garbage bins
- The Kingsville BIA will host the regional BIA luncheon on **August 20, 12:00–3:00 pm**. The event will bring together Windsor-Essex BIAs to exchange best practices, discuss shared challenges, and strengthen collaboration across the regional BIA network.

12. Adjournment

BIA25-08-009

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:11pm.

Carried.

Stephanie Winger – Chair

Kelly Baillargeon –Recording Secretary