



# Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 6:00pm

Location: Essex Centre Sports Complex, Shaheen 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](mailto:clerks@essex.ca) or 519-776-7336 extension 1100 or 1101.

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

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

Regrets: Andrea Schinkel, BIA Board Member

## 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 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

There were no conflicts of interest noted at this time.

## 4. Adoption of Published Agenda

### 4.1. Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Agenda for September 17, 2025

**BIA25-09-001**

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

**That** the published agenda for the September 17, 2025 Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting be adopted as presented.

**Carried.**

## 5. Adoption of Minutes

### 5.1. Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting Minutes for August 13, 2025

**BIA25-09-002**

Moved by

Seconded by M. Qasim

That the minutes of the Essex Centre BIA Board Meeting held August 13, 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. 2026 Budget

- 2024 audited financial statements are still pending and required before preparing the 2026 BIA budget. Once available, the budget process can move forward
- Levy review needed for new large commercial properties (previously vacant in 2024)
- Suggestion to schedule a meeting with the finance department.

### 6.3. Report from Council Representative

Councillor McGuire-Blais reported on a motion passed at Town Council directing Administration to initiate a Zoning By-Law Amendment process to consider parking exceptions and exemptions for new commercial construction in Parking Exception Areas in downtown Essex and Harrow.

#### BIA25-09-003

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 and Updates

- Updates and information were shared with members, including:
  - An invitation to the upcoming Small Business Summit, providing networking and professional development opportunities for local entrepreneurs.
  - A notice that Canadian shipments to the U.S. are now subject to duties, with potential impacts on cross-border trade for local businesses.
  - Biz X Awards nomination forms, encouraging members to recognize and celebrate outstanding businesses in the community.
  - Details on Rural Business Supports funding opportunities, outlining available programs designed to assist small and rural businesses with growth and recovery.
  - Counterfeit product alerts, reminding members to stay vigilant in order to protect customers and safeguard their businesses.

### 7.2. New Businesses/Closing/Change of location

Mama's Place was purchased by Hometown Cookhouse.

**BIA25-09-004**

Moved by G. Laframboise

Seconded by M. Qasim

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

**Carried.**

## **8. Events**

### **8.1. Essex Centre Streetfest-October 11, 2025**

No updates were given.

### **8.2. Essex Soapbox Derby- September 27, 2025**

- Organizers received Essex BIA banners and collected donations from local businesses for door prizes
- \$100 in Downtown Dollars were purchased as prizes, providing effective cross-promotion for future events

### **8.3. Movie in Heritage Park- September, 2025**

- Community movie night scheduled for Saturday, September 20, featuring *How to Train Your Dragon*

### **8.4. Member Mix & Mingle**

It was suggested that the Member Mix & Mingle event be incorporated into the upcoming Annual General Meeting in November to encourage stronger networking and engagement among members.

### **8.5. Halloween Tiny Tot Parade- October 31, 2025**

Event planning has begun. Volunteers will be contacted, candy will be ordered, and promotions will be posted on social media and shared with members. The Essex Food Bank will be contacted to request a truck to collect donations during the parade.

### **8.6. Santa's Village & Market-December 13, 2025**

No updates were given.

### **8.7. Essex BIA Santa Claus Parade- December 13, 2025**

No updates were given.

**BIA25-09-005**

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

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

**Carried.**

## **9. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025.

## 10. Marketing, Promotions & Social Media

### 10.1. *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.

### 10.2. Essex Free Press Business Profiler

An email was sent to the Essex Free Press thanking them for their partnership and ongoing support while raising concerns about the ribbon cutting ad initiative not being utilized. The message requested clarity on how initiatives are communicated and asked for better recognition of the BIA's role in future coverage.

### 10.3. Essex Neighbours Magazine Monthly Advertisement

The monthly business spotlight in the magazine was Coldwell Banker Tailored Realty. The feature is attached for reference.

### 10.4. Website Directory Updates

Members were asked to provide corrections or updated information for the directory, and updates are currently being made

**BIA25-09-006**

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

**That** the Marketing, Promotions and Social Media updates listed in Agenda Item 10 be received.

**Carried.**

## 11. Beautification

### 11.1. Fall & Winter décor

Fall mums have been ordered, and leftover winter décor will be dropped off ahead of this year's order to determine what can be salvaged and help reduce costs.

### 11.2. Downtown Parkette

The property owners mentioned that the Essex BIA should be responsible for lawn care and maintaining the grass for the entire lot, including the lawn behind the fence.

### 11.3. Fall Refresh Grant

The Fall Refresh Grant was introduced to support Essex Centre businesses with small curb appeal improvement projects ahead of the holiday season. Applications open October 1 and close November 15, with up to \$500 available per project. Ten grants are available on a first come first served basis.

**BIA25-09-007**

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

**That** the Fall Refresh Grant program be approved as presented.

Carried.

## 12. New Business

The 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Night will be held on Friday, November 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Essex Centre Sports Complex, with invitations sent out in October.

The ACT Committee is restoring the original mural artwork and transforming it into a 3D installation behind Dollar Tree.

Colenutt Signs will remove and dispose of the Essex community welcome sign by October 2025.

Details were shared about the upcoming Small Business Resource Event hosted in partnership with Essex Centre BIA on October 23 and October 30, 2025. The sessions will provide local businesses with tools to improve online presence, access supports, and strengthen networking. Attendance incentives and a resource toolkit will also be offered.

## 13. Adjournment

**BIA25-09-008**

Moved by M. Qasim

Seconded by G. Laframboise

**That** the meeting be adjourned at 7:30pm.

Carried.

## 14. Future Meetings

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 (AGM)