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TOWN OF ESSEX
COMMUNITY DEV. OFFICE

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Essex, VT 05452

May 17, 2025

Planning Commission
Town of Essex
81 Main Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

Dear Chair Knox and Planning Commission Members:

The purpose of this letter is to request changes to Section 4.9 of the Essex Zoning Regulations, which documents the regulations for permitting Home Occupations and Businesses. I am requesting amendments that would require the type of proposed home business and impacts described in subsection C be considered before a permit is granted. The need for these changes is highlighted by a recent home business application.

Per Section 4.9, a home business application is judged on the criteria outlined in subsections A and B. If the criteria are met, a permit is granted. The problem with this procedure is that the criteria used are a small subset of the issues that should be considered before permitting some kinds of home businesses. Section 4.9 should be updated so that all applications require reviewing the following before permitting:

- 1) the type of proposed business (Table 2.1 Use Chart by Zone)
- 2) criteria listed in subsection C, which includes impacts to the neighbors and the environment

I first became aware of the home business zoning regulations, when a neighbor submitted an application for a part-time car detailing home business. This application met the criteria in Section 4.9 A & B, and was granted a permit. (Later the permit was withdrawn for a different reason, which does not affect using this application as an example of the permitting process.) The concerns are that the type of business and the list of impacts in subsection C were not reviewed. If they had been, the application may have been sent to the Design Review Board.

- 1) Type of proposed business – in this case, a car washing business is not permitted or conditionally permitted for the AR zone district, neither are service stations or auto repair shops (Table 2.1)

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- 2) Criteria listed in subsection C – the application specifies that car detailing generates water that must be filtered before it can be disposed of as ground water – in the AR where residences are on wells, septic systems, and have no storm sewers, a review would be warranted under subsection C 5

It is important to balance private use with impacts to the community by making sure that zoning regulations are clear and do not over favor one or the other. As technology advances, the types of businesses that could be performed at a home residence are increasing, and so are the ways that they can impact their neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Leah Pastel

of course