



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 10th, 2024, 11:30AM – 1:00PM**  
**Richmond Room, 450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, California**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Call to Order: 11:40 AM by Chair Wear

**2. Roll Call & Check In**

A quorum was present with the following commission members:

**Present:** G. Sewell-Murphy, D. Thompson, A. Huie, C. Jackson, C. Kenney, D. Wear, O. Willis, R. Yazdi

**Absent:** A. Portillo-Knowles, K. Lynch, J. Lee

**Council Liaison:** Cesar Zepeda

**3. Approval of Minutes**

December Meeting Minutes

1st – C. Kenney, 2nd – R. Yazdi

**4. Report from EDC Chair and Vice Chair**

Chair Wear provided a report on behalf of herself and the Vice Chair. Chair Wear reported on the collaborative efforts with Vice Chair Portillo-Knowles to propose a plan for the upcoming year, aiming to enhance the leadership and structure of the commission. The goal is to create a more unified vision, establish goals, and develop a timeline for deliverables. While Vice Chair Portillo-Knowles could not co-present, the initiative is a joint effort.

Both the Chair and Vice-chair have been on the EDC for a while and acknowledged the need to streamline meetings, increase productivity, and move away from passive listening. The focus is on engaging in concrete actions. For example, there have been requests about city wide economic development projects such as Prologis on Hilltop, Pickleball at the Craneway Building, affordable housing projects, new warehouses, and more. The goal is to have someone from Prologis and Michelle McGuoy on Pickleball at the Craneway to present in the upcoming meetings and for the EDC commissions to engage with these presentations. Another suggestion is to attend City Council meetings to introduce the Commission and to put out a message to the Mayor and Councilmembers with messages the EDC wants to convey. The EDC will also rely more on the Council Liaison, Councilmember Zepeda, to communicate issues both ways to the Council about the work of the EDC as well as having him relay to us what the EDC should be informed on.

Chair Wear and Vice Chair Portillo-Knowles also have discussion on other ideas for the EDC and would like to open the conversation to the entire commission with an interactive exercise.

## 5. Old and/or New Business

### a. Exercise Part 1:

The first exercise was a lightning round session to gather ideas from the EDC commissioners. The exercise involved asking two questions sequentially, with participants providing brief responses to be written on the board. The question asked was:

- (1) First, what industry or business would you like to see come to Richmond?
- (2) Second, what economic development do you think is needed in our community.

Sustainable/Plant-based industries	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy
High Tech	Commissioner Yazdi
Institutions of Higher Learning	Commissioner Thompson
Green/Blue Industries; Environmental Cutting-edge	Commissioner Willis
Health and Wellness	Commissioner Kenney, Commissioner Jackson, CivicSpark Fellow, Councilmember Zepeda
Restaurants	Commissioner Wear
Retail	Commissioner Wear, Commissioner Kenney
Hotels/Conference	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy
Entertainment Options/Night Life	Director Nannette Beacham
Local/Small Business	Commissioner Jackson
Student Housing	CivicSpark Fellow
Hospital	Councilmember Zepeda
More presence of UC Berkeley	Commissioner Yazdi
Youth Development/Activity Centers	Commissioner Kenney, Commissioner Sewell-Murphy
Expanded Public Sector Jobs/Grow City Departments	Commissioner Willis
Services for the Unhoused	Commissioner Jackson

**b. Exercise Part 2:**

The second exercise was a session to develop a workplan for the coming year. Using the list that was created, the commission was asked if any of the ideas interest them to learn more about or work on in the Richmond community. Follow-up questions that were asked were:

(1) How might you envision supporting Richmond's businesses?

Establishing relationships with businesses	Commissioner Kenney, Commissioner Wear
Working better together. Relationship building amongst commissioners	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy
Identifying obstacles impacting businesses	Commissioner Thompson
Incentives/attracting businesses to come and stay in Richmond	Commissioner Yazdi
CRM Software to support businesses (examples include Salesforce)	Councilmember Zepeda
Rebranding the City/Re-imaging. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy attended a workshop on how to spend a grant and how Richmond might help businesses grow, and the main point she heard was people and businesses not coming to Richmond due to its image and brand.	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy

(2) Where do you see yourself contributing to the success of the EDC?

Establishing a social media presence/brand-building. Building a digital thumbprint and trust with the community	Commissioner Kenney
Attached to a project	Commissioner Thompson

(3) Can you think of any tangible goals you'd like to see for these efforts?

Evaluate Green/Blue New Deal and provide guidance on its implementation and prepare/endorse packet for Council acceptance	Commissioner Thompson
Provide City with Report Card on Economic Development	Commissioner Thompson
Create long-term sustainability plan for businesses to check in on milestones	Commissioner Jackson

Survey businesses + community/canvassing	Commissioner Jackson
Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked about brochures to handout to businesses t(print/online). Currently, there is a toolkit on the city website.	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy
Digitize EDC presence. Create a platform and tightening social media presence	Commissioner Kenney
Relationship building amongst EDC, businesses, and community. Introducing and getting to know each commissioner.	Commissioner Kenney
Financial business study (Return on investments, workforce, etc.) This will serve as profile for City of Richmond and what it has to offer.	Councilmember Zepeda
Owning the narrative (examples: editing Wikipedia page and online information)	Commissioner Yazdi, Commissioner Kenney
Placing more emphasis on Richmond's history (ship building, Port)	Commissioner Sewell-Murphy mentioned that her father was the first African-American welder in Shipyard 3 and would really support building ships again. Mayor discussed opportunities in viable options for the port, including the offshore wind industry, maritime trading, shipbuilding, and more.
Diversifying economy and building international relationships	Commissioner Yazdi mentioned being a sister city to one in China. Mayor discussed an opportunity for an education exchange program between Contra Costa College and a Maritime University in China. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy mentioned being sister cities with

	<p>Shimada in Japan. Her family was in the commission and hosted several times. She accompanied them and took them around various cultural sites.</p>
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**c. Email/Business Cards**

The commissioners received city emails from Henry Lei. City staff will be working to get access to these emails for the commissioners. Once the emails are confirmed, City staff will also work with the commissions to print business cards with those emails.

**d. Mentorship**

Chair Wear formally welcomed Commissioner Jackson to the commission. Chair Wear discussed installing a mentoring component to the commission when somebody new joins. Role can include meeting someone to have coffee, sitting down, finding out what their interests are, and formally welcoming the new commissioner. She discussed how she helped Commissioner Thompson when he first joined. The Chair opened the opportunity to the Commission and would be happy to do it if there is no one.

**6. Standing Committee Reports**

Currently there are 5 standing committees. Chair Wear and Vice Chair Portillo-Knowles proposed the committees for this year, aligning with the vision of what the broader group has chosen and each committee will choose one goal to accomplish. When the committee leads reports at our monthly meetings, the information will directly relate to our current set vision and goals stimulating better engagement with our commissioners and in alliance with what the Commission has decided to do.

Commissioner Kenney agreed with the idea and mentioned reintroducing the idea of a small business committee that was brought on by the Mayor’s Office. The commission asked what a small business committee would look like, the expectations, how it would look different from other places that exists such as the Chamber of Commerece, Renaissance, CO-Biz, Main Street, etc; and how to create cohesion. Chair Wear will connect with Shiva Mishek of the Mayor’s office to talk more.

**Report from City Council:**

Councilmember Zepeda provided a brief report. He is super excited for the new chair for the EDC, the

leadership, and overall new direction of the Economic Development Commission. Councilmember Zepeda is here to support eh commission. Once the commission is ready, he would like them to present to City Council; maybe quarterly, and in collaboration with the Mayor’s Office. Councilmember Zepeda is also committed to recruiting more commissioners and keeping the commission full.

During the last meeting, the City Council appropriated approximately 2 million dollars of ARPA funds (one-time funding) for small businesses. Director Nannette Beacham discussed that the funds have to be allocated/committed by December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year and staff is working on it. Ideas on usage include façade improvements, beautification, community engagement to support small businesses.

Mayor staff also discussed there is also ARPA allocations of 1.2 million dollars for youth works, which will be additional 400 youth to assist small businesses. The mayor added another idea to develop relationship between school district and businesses so students can apprentice at businesses, such as work study, so they can get jobs.

A quarterly art exhibit was approved for the Council Chambers. The theme is Elevate Richmond. It will be available for public viewing starting the first council meeting of the 2024 year. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked who can offer their art. Councilmember Zepeda answered that anyone can submit their art.

Commissioner Kenney also discussed Co-Biz’s art walk which partners and features black artists. Co-Biz has connections with Richmond based and Bay Area based artists and would share those contacts.

### **Staff Reports**

An RFP for a consultant for an Arts District was issued on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Information is on PlanetBids and on the city website.

Vendor Workshop is on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Council Chambers. City staff can provide more information and registrations information for those who are interested.

### **7. Public Comments/Announcements/Handouts**

Chair Wear thanked the commission for their participation and shared her optimism for the new year. She closed the meeting with a quote from Dr. King’s, Nobel Peace Prize address, 1964 “The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled, and feed the unfed. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. No individual or nation can be great if it does not have a concern for ‘the least of these.’”

**8. Next Meeting:** February 14th, 2024; 11:30 AM

**9. Adjournment:** 12:49PM