



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 8th, 2024, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Richmond Room, 450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, California

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order: 11:36 AM by Chair Wear

2. Roll Call & Check In

A quorum was present with the following commission members:

Present: G. Sewell-Murphy, D. Thompson, C. Jackson, D. Wear, O. Willis, K. Lynch, J. Lee, A. Portillo-Knowles, C. Kenney

Absent: A. Huie

Council Liaison: Cesar Zepeda

3. Approval of Minutes

April Meeting Minutes

1st – C. Kenney, 2nd – D. Thompson

4. Old and/or New Business

- a. Update from the Mayor's Office (Deputy Chief of Staff, Tony Tamayo, and YouthWorks, Cinthia Hernandez)

Deputy Chief of Staff for the Mayor, Tony Tamayo, Policy Director for the Mayor, BK White, and YouthWorks Workforce Specialist, Cinthia Hernandez, presented on the Mayor's vision for Economic Development, the Economic Development Commission (EDC), YouthWorks, and potential actions.

The Mayor introduced his vision for the City of Richmond during the EDC meeting in January, with a particular interest in the port and creating job opportunities for Richmond residents. The aim is to provide high-paying union jobs with benefits, reducing the need for residents to seek employment outside the city and balancing work-life dynamics. Infrastructure upgrades, such as electrification and dredging at the port, are also part of the plan. Additionally, the Mayor seeks to diversify the economy, transitioning away from the petroleum industry towards greener industries while ensuring residents benefit from this progress. The City has been on the Bloomberg track for the past 6 months, focusing on the revitalization of the port.

The Mayor is deeply committed to increasing staffing levels in critical city departments, particularly those with identified opportunities for improvement. This includes the Planning Department to expedite the permitting process, code enforcement to tackle quality-of-life issues affecting businesses and residents, and public works. Over the past nine months, there have been 79 new hires and 45 promotions.

Another of the Mayor's goals includes increasing housing availability in the city, particularly in the inner city, with a focus on affordable housing. Projects in the pipeline include Metro Walk Phase 2, Downtown, and Central Ave Housing.

The Mayor envisions the EDC presenting to City Council, either in person or through written reports. He also aims to explore how the EDC and other commissions can contribute to existing initiatives, such as YouthWorks. During the December council meeting, over a million dollars was allocated towards YouthWorks, facilitating the participation of an additional 400+ individuals.

Cynthia Hernandez presented on YouthWorks, an organization with a long-standing presence, serving Richmond residents aged 16 to 24. They offer two main programs: Year-Around Programs, including Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), Work Experience (WEX), Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), On-the-Job Trainings, and Participation-Based Services, such as one-on-one career counseling, apprenticeship training, life skills, work readiness workshops, and more.

Applications for the work experience program for the year 2024-2025 are open to residents aged 16 to 25. YouthWorks partners with local businesses, community organizations, and City departments to provide youth with valuable experience to bolster their resumes. They emphasize on-the-job and occupational skill training. With ARPA funds, they can support young adults with up to \$8,000. Support services of up to \$800 are also offered for essentials like clothing, books, and transportation. Businesses participating in on-the-job training can receive a 50% reimbursement of the hourly wage, capping at \$8,000.

YouthWorks currently aims to foster connections between businesses and young adults in Richmond, establishing and nurturing relationships to provide skilled workers to local businesses.

A career fair is scheduled for June 24th, targeting employers seeking summer or long-term hires.

b. 2024 Project Reports

i. Best of Richmond Nominations Report

Commissioner Lee provided a brief report on Best of Richmond, launched by the Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Mayor's Office. Within 30 days of its inception, Best of Richmond garnered 12,000 nominations. The categories encompass not only businesses but also include areas such as the best place to ride a bike. Chamber of Commerce staff will sift through the nominations and categories, narrowing them down for the voting process, which will commence afterward. The voting phase will last for one month, during which the top 5 contenders for each category will be selected. Once winners are determined, they will be announced, and a celebration will be held at the Marriott Hotel. Winners will receive an award and a sticker for their front door. In addition, a Best of Richmond magazine will be released and published annually, spotlighting the nominated and winning businesses.

ii. Taste of Richmond

The first planning meeting is scheduled for this Friday via Zoom, with Commissioner Portillo-Knowles extending an invitation to all commissioners. Commissioner Portillo-Knowles emphasized the significance of Taste of Richmond as the EDC's flagship event, marking its

return last year following the Covid hiatus. Feedback on the event and its venue at the Civic Center, was overwhelmingly positive, with establishments like Factor Bar and Perfusion Vineyard expressing eagerness to participate again. In addition to 364 ticket sales, there were also walk-in attendees.

Commissioner Portillo-Knowles provided a summary of the event's financials and projections, noting Richmond Main Street Initiative as its fiscal sponsor. An event manager is currently under contract, along with Commissioner Christina Kenney, contracted for two years as the event's marketer.

Action items include EDC approval of the budget, contract, and support for the subcommittee. Given the limited time before the July event, Commissioner Kenney suggested the possibility of postponing to 2025 or later to assess the event's economic impact on local businesses. Additionally, she proposed reevaluating and reimagining the event.

iii. Sustainability/Business/Hemp Expo

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy provided a report on the expo's primary mission, which aims to explore how the City of Richmond's current sustainability network can be further integrated into two segments: our businesses, communities, and urban farmers. The expo is also viewed as a platform to provide benefits for businesses, offering increased exposure to innovation, industry experts, and contributing to Richmond's future image rebranding.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy inquired if any of the commissioners had reviewed the suggested proposal. One proposal in her report suggested hosting the expo at the Civic Center and online, with potential dates set for mid-September 2025. She also highlighted the city's certification as a sustainable city, with staff tasked to determine the specific certification.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy shared a graphic detailing hemp and its various uses and benefits. She requested the EDC to review and provide input on her report and proposals for the subcommittee.

c. New Business

i. 2024 Goal Setting Review

Item was not discussed.

5. Subcommittee Reports

a. Policy Green/Blue New Deal

Commissioner Willis had no report for the subcommittee. He discussed that Justine Burt will be presenting at an upcoming meeting on the Richmond Green Blue New Deal.

b. Cannabis

They are currently in touch with Economic Development Director and working on the analysis of the comments of the November 2023 town hall of the cannabis ordinance amendments.

Report from City Council:

Councilmember Zepeda was not present due to a family emergency.

Public Comments/Announcements/Handouts

City staff, Lizeht Zepeda, discussed being reached out by the Arts and Culture Manager Winifred Day, about a potential partnership with the Economic Development Commission with Taste of Richmond.

Next Meeting: June 12th, 2024, 11:30 AM

6. Adjournment: 12:58 PM