



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 10th, 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: 11:40 AM by Chair Wear

2. Roll Call & Check In

A quorum was present with the following commission members:

Present: G. Sewell-Murphy, D. Thompson, C. Jackson, D. Wear, C. Kenney, J. Lee, O. Willis

Absent: K. Lynch

Council Liaison: Cesar Zepeda

3. Approval of Minutes

June 12th, 2024 Meeting Minutes with corrections from Commissioner Thompson

1st – D. Thompson, 2nd – O. Willis

4. Old and/or New Business

a. Vice Chair Nomination and Election

Vice-Chair Portillo-Knowles stepped down from the Economic Development Commission (EDC), prompting a nomination process for the Vice-Chair position. Christina Kenney self-nominated for the role. There were no other nominations. Following a voting process, Commissioner Kenney was unanimously elected. Her term will last until the end of the calendar year, mirroring the Chair position.

b. Food Ware Ordinance

The Environmental and Health Initiative staff, including Environmental Manager Samantha Carr and Civic Spark Fellows Valerie Li and Mary-Kathryn Rueff, presented on the Food Ware Ordinance. They provided information about the single-use bag ordinance, noting that these two ordinances are separate. Draft food ware ordinance guides were shared in both English and Spanish and are currently awaiting legal review. Recycling guides were also distributed by the solid waste provider, Republic Services, along with the "I Heart Richmond" clean and green booklet, a resource guide for residents.

Civic Spark Fellows Li and Rueff discussed the Food Ware Ordinance. They explained that recyclable materials are defined as those that can be sorted, cleaned, and reconstituted using Richmond's available recycling collection programs for the purpose of manufacturing new products. This does not include burning, incinerating, converting, or destroying solid waste. The definition of compostable is that which is labeled in accordance with California law or meets the timeline and specifications of the American Society of Testing Materials International standards D6400 and D6868 for compostable plastics, regardless of material.

The term "food provider" encompasses any organization, entity, group, individual, catering service, eating and drinking establishment, or brewery located or operating within the City of Richmond

that provides prepared food or beverages to the public for consumption on or off the premises. An "eating and drinking establishment" and "brewery" refer to businesses primarily engaged in serving prepared food and/or beverages and facilities that produce beer and similar beverages onsite, respectively, as defined in Section 15.04.104 of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations of the Richmond Municipal Code.

Municipal Code 9.17, adopted in July 2010, required all food providers to use disposable food ware for prepared food that is recyclable or compostable. It also allowed providers to charge a take-out fee. This ordinance was expanded in July 2013 by Ordinance No. 12-13 N.S., which prohibited the use of polystyrene foam products (styrofoam), and further expanded in December 2018 by Ordinance No. 11-18 N.S., which prohibited plastic straws and stirrers.

Policy strategies include state laws CA AB 1884, 1276, and 45, the Climate Action Plan Objective 4: Zero Waste, and Zero Waste Framework Strategies SW1-5. Related ordinances include the single-use bag ordinance of July 2013.

The ordinance overview prohibits the sale, rental, or use of products made entirely or mostly of polystyrene foam (styrofoam), plastic stirrers, and plastic straws. Food providers are required to use recyclable, compostable, or reusable food ware and may charge a "take-out fee" to customers. Businesses that do not comply with the food ware ordinance are subject to administrative citations.

The best options for food ware include reusable items (metal, glass, ceramic), paper or plant fiber products (sugarcane, bamboo, rice), and recyclable or compostable plastics (except for straws and stirrers). Industrial hemp products and hemp bioplastics must not contain polypropylene, and some hemp products and blends are not biodegradable. Composting hemp residuals requires industrial composting capacity; cellulose-based plastics allow hemp products to be compostable.

The single-use bag ordinance prohibits retail establishments from providing single-use carryout bags to customers at the check stand, cash register, point of sale, or other departure points for transporting food or merchandise, except as outlined in RMC 9.14.020. This does not apply to produce or product bags.

For Restaurant Week, the "Taste of Richmond" event should adhere to the food ware ordinance by using only reusable, recyclable, or compostable food ware and excluding plastic straws, plastic stirrers, or styrofoam. California Assembly Bill 1276 mandates that single-use convenience items be provided only upon customer request. Additionally, Assembly Bill 45 establishes a framework for regulating industrial hemp products. For events with over 2,000 attendees per day, admission-charging, or operated by a local agency, the maximum amount of edible food that would otherwise be disposed of must be recovered.

In the Q&A segment, it was noted that when the ordinance was adopted in 2010 and 2013, staff from the City Manager's office was designated to enforce it. Due to staff capacity issues and COVID-

19, enforcement was not fully implemented. Now, with more staff available, efforts are being made to work with smaller markets to provide timelines for selling out non-compliant products and transitioning to compliant materials. Enforcement is currently focused on this scope, though staffing remains a challenge.

It was discussed that petroleum products are cheaper, which is why businesses may charge fees to accommodate higher costs for sustainable materials. There is a new state law regarding prohibiting hidden fees, and it was suggested that this needs to be reviewed to ensure it works effectively.

Councilmember Zepeda mentioned that stores selling non-compliant products, such as styrofoam from Costco, need reminders that they cannot sell or provide such items. Incentives may help address this issue.

It was noted that some businesses are circumventing the ordinance by making bags thicker, which technically changes their classification but does not address their single-use nature. There should be a reminder to use reusable bags.

Partnering with small businesses to inform them about the ordinance and implementing educational programs for the community were discussed. Many recyclables are not properly recycled due to contamination, and educating people on proper recycling practices is crucial. Additionally, there are concerns that Asian countries are rejecting our recyclables due to contamination.

Commissioner Kenney inquired about the ordinance's impact on non-food businesses, such as offices serving coffee and tea, which are not covered under the ordinance but are concerned about pricing. Environmental Manager Samantha Carr confirmed that non-food businesses are not included. Commissioner Kenney also suggested identifying suppliers or establishing brand partnerships to provide discounts for compliant materials.

Commissioner Jackson discussed encouraging compliance with the ordinance in a supportive and financially feasible manner, rather than focusing solely on punitive measures.

Commissioner Wear emphasized that education should be the first step, rather than immediate enforcement.

Commissioner Willis proposed using Commissioner Sewell-Murphy's idea for a hemp and sustainability expo as a platform for collaboration and promotion of the initiative and sustainable building practices in Richmond.

c. Taste of Richmond

Commissioner Portillo-Knowles has resigned from both the Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI), which serves as the fiscal sponsor, and from the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Sarah

Wally has now been appointed as the interim director of Richmond Main Street and has committed RMSI to continue being the fiscal sponsor for 2024.

On July 2nd, 2024, the City Council awarded \$10,000 from the general fund to support the Taste of Richmond event, bringing the total launch money to around \$24,000-\$26,000. The event will be moved to mid-October. There was discussion regarding the Chamber of Commerce hosting a gala in October as well. Commissioner Lee was asked to assist with collecting sponsorships for the event, and the idea of using RMSI as a pass-through for youth workers was also discussed.

The team has been looking at restaurants by district, aligning with council members, and there is an open invitation for commissioners to join the subcommittee. Richmond Main Street Initiative has been handling the accounting and financing for the event. Commissioner Kenney mentioned the week of October 7th-14th as a possible timeframe for the event. There was also discussion about folding the event with the Chamber's "Best of Richmond" winners. This will be the first iteration of the event, and it will involve working through any logistical challenges. Commissioner Kenney has also been studying other restaurant weeks and has been contracted to manage the Taste of Bay View as well.

Commissioner Wear emphasized that the residents will be thrilled about this event, and while it may not be a major income producer, it will undoubtedly uplift the restaurants, residents, and the greater community. Commissioner Kenney added that this event will start a long-term conversation about its impact on restaurants, specifically whether it is a one-off event or something that provides long-term support to local businesses.

Commissioner Zepeda asked how restaurants will know if customers are attending because of the Taste of Richmond event, suggesting the possibility of using punch cards or offering discounts to encourage repeat visits. Commissioner Kenney mentioned that marketing and digital campaigns are being developed and agreed that incentives for return visits are a great idea.

Regarding wineries, Commissioner Zepeda inquired if they could participate. Commissioner Kenney responded that Perfusion Winery has been identified but noted that it is in county territory. Options in that district, including local restaurants, were being explored for inclusion in the magazine and event materials. Perfusion Winery could serve as a venue for supporting restaurants and vendors that do not have physical storefronts, such as pop-ups.

Commissioner Lee discussed the Chamber's production of a "Best of Richmond" magazine and suggested potential cross-collaboration with the Taste of Richmond magazine. The subcommittee meets on Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m., and commissioners are encouraged to volunteer for specific tasks to support the event.

5. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Cannabis – Lead, K. Lynch

N/A

- b. Sustainability – Lead, G. Sewell-Murphy

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy suggested that the theme for the upcoming expo should highlight the sustainability efforts mentioned during today's meeting. She emphasized that the expo will showcase Richmond's pioneering, current, and future efforts in sustainability. She also clarified that the official branding and theme is "Richmond Through its Sustainable Lenses," not "Links."

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy brought up a discussion from the previous meeting regarding holding a work session for the expo, similar to the workstations planned for the Taste of Richmond event. With Taste of Richmond being moved to October, she inquired about the current status and decision regarding the work session. She mentioned that she will continue working on the expo in the meantime.

Commissioner Wear suggested that the commission could plan the working session for the Expo during the November meeting, after the Taste of Richmond activities have concluded.

- c. Policy/Green Blue New Deal

Chair Wear discussed a potential action or agenda item in September, as Appracel/Justine Burt will be providing the final report of the Green Blue New Deal to City Council.

Report from City Council:

Councilmember Zepeda provided a brief update. The Council is currently on break, but the funding of \$10,000 for the Taste of Richmond was approved at the last council meeting. One of the agenda items recently was the City of Richmond's natural gas ban on new developments and restaurants. The courts invalidated this ordinance, stating that it cannot prohibit natural gas. As a result, a new ordinance will be created. This new ordinance will not ban gas in new developments but will incentivize developers to avoid using gas. After consulting with developers, there is a preference for electric options. Possible incentives could include faster permitting or fee reductions. Councilmember Zepeda will also be reviewing other ordinances and bringing updates to the EDC.

Commissioner Wear mentioned that one of the EDC's action items will be to attend the City Council open forum to support and speak on agenda items.

Public Comments/Announcements/Handouts

Cordell Hindler submitted written comments to City staff.

1. 1. The Economic Development Commission Is Invited to the Contra Costa Mayors Conference on October 3rd at 6:30 PM hosted by the City of Richmond Location TBD
2. Richmond Chamber of Commerce Gala October 4th from 5:00 to 9:00 PM Riggers Loft \$100.00 per person
3. And the Mayor has mentioned the Economic Development Commission at a Previous Council Meeting to fill the vacancies

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy inquired about participation in the Arts, directing her question to Councilmember Zepeda, whom she believed was responsible. Councilmember Zepeda clarified that he oversees the arts for the council chamber, while there is also an Arts and Culture Division under Economic Development. Zepeda began the chamber art project, with the first installation taking place in January. Installations occur every quarter. The individual assisting with the project was only able to handle the second installation, necessitating a search for a new partner. The Richmond Art Center has been selected as the new partner for the third quarter. Councilmember Zepeda is currently working out the details of this partnership. A budget is in place for the next year. For the fourth quarter, there have been discussions about focusing on youth-related art. However, the fourth quarter installation will only last for two months, as the December installation will feature an exhibit from Richmond's sister city, Regla, Cuba.

Next Meeting: July 10th, 2024, 11:30 AM

6. Adjournment: 1:00 PM