



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 11, 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: 11:39 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, K. Lynch, C. Kenney, J. Lee

Absent: O. Willis (traveling for work)

Council Liaison: Cesar Zepeda

3. Approval of Minutes

July 10th, 2024

1st – D. Thompson, 2nd – J. Lee

4. Chair Report

No report given. Chair Wear introduce Michael Gliksohn, who is interested in becoming a commissioner of the Economic Development Commission.

5. Old and/or New Business

a. 2024 Taste of Richmond

Chair Kenney reported a summary of the progress on the Taste of Richmond event planning. The planning team has finalized the marketing materials, run of show, and website, all scheduled to launch by Friday, with final touches underway. A community flyer was shared with meeting attendees. Emphasis was placed on the importance of everyone's involvement in the event. Next steps include sending out public relations packages, which will contain all branding materials, messaging, and the designated hashtag, #FoodandPurpose. Limited-edition Taste of Richmond merchandise has been designed, with the third and final version expected by Friday. The planning committee requested the Economic Development Commission (EDC) help distribute flyers and materials across the city.

Commissioner Kenney provided background for newcomers, explaining that in previous years, Taste of Richmond was a one-day festival where local restaurants gathered in one space for the community to sample offerings. However, it became evident that attendees did not often visit these restaurants afterward. This year's approach has changed to a restaurant week format, the first of its kind in Richmond. Unlike other Bay Area restaurant weeks, which typically feature a fixed-price menu for participating restaurants, Richmond's event will include a seven-day digital campaign spotlighting local eateries and their stories, along with five in-person events. From Wednesday to Sunday, a different restaurant in each district will host events with support from around three to four community partners per event. This format aims to not only promote local restaurants but also

foster connections between the community, their council representatives, and the EDC, making the event an intentional showcase of Richmond's culinary and community landscape.

The events include a Wednesday gathering at Assemble Pickleball, a lunch at Johnny Boys, a new burger spot in Point Richmond, on Thursday; a happy hour at Factory Bar with Tacos Al Tucan on Friday; and a ticketed Saturday event at Perfusion Vineyard which has limited capacity. The Sunday closing will be a block party hosted by Backyard. Kenney shared that Richmond Community Foundation is a probable partner for the winery event, while the Entrepreneurship Center might partner for Thursday or Friday. Additionally, Kenney described how they plan to have Richmond-themed imagery on the flyer, such as the Richmond sign, used as a plate with food on it, as a way to pay homage to the city's identity. Kenney invited EDC commissioners to attend the events, share their networks, and distribute the branding deck that will be provided to help drive traffic to the campaign. Kenney also plans to speak to the Rotary Club to encourage more participation and encouraged engagement with the Richmond Police Department and Richmond Fire.

Commissioner Jackson volunteered to handle distribution in North Richmond, Vice Chair Kenney will assist with North Richmond as well as other areas. Chair Wear will help with the distribution of materials in the Marina and Point Richmond Areas. Commissioner Lee is also preparing content for a "Best of Richmond" initiative. Christina is responsible for coordinating email requests for distribution help. Commissioners were urged to respond promptly to any email deadlines to ensure efficient collaboration. Additionally, Vice-chair Kenney will be connecting with, Tony Tamayo, from the Mayor's Office, about videography and media inquiries for the event.

Commissioner Jackson commended the format change and shared her commitment to attending multiple events throughout the week, helping with marketing, branding, and networking. She inquired about the potential for a "Visit Richmond" campaign similar to "Visit Oakland." Vice-chair Kenney responded that while preliminary efforts exist, there are no concrete plans yet. The EDC will take notes on the campaign's impact to gauge its effectiveness.

Richmond Main Street's Interim Executive Director, Sarah Wally, reported that the fiscal sponsor for Taste of Richmond has over \$14,000 in funds ready for the event. Payment systems, including PayPal and credit card processing, are set up.

Vice-chair Kenney also shared that they are reaching out to regional and local media outlets such as Richmond Standard, Richmond Pulse, Richmond Confidential, and "Live in the Bay." Connections with larger publications and channels like the San Francisco Chronicle, ABC7, and Telemundo are also being pursued to maximize exposure. Flyers and marketing materials will be translated to reach diverse audiences. Wally noted that the heavy workload this year will be streamlined next year, as the processes established this time will form a replicable template, reducing the burden on future planning teams.

A review process will be conducted post-event, with metrics in place to assess impact and accountability. Vice-chair Kenney has been working on metrics to gauge whether the event leads to increased foot traffic at restaurants. This year's campaign will also include support for restaurants using City funds to offset participation costs, though this may not be sustainable for future years. Within 30 days post-event, a preliminary report will be compiled, including data on attendance, spending, and any increase in restaurant foot traffic. Longer-term engagement will be tracked over a three-month period. High-profile food influencers will be invited to attend events, leveraging their networks to reach younger audiences who are often influenced by social media in their purchasing decisions.

Commissioners discussed capturing participant data as a future marketing asset. Contact details for restaurant representatives are already on file, and QR codes will be placed at the only ticketed event at Perfusion Vineyard for easy check-in. These codes will capture participant names and emails, which can then be used for raffles, giveaways, and further engagement, such as offering restaurant gift cards as prizes. A tracker system is in place to record digital engagement. This system will enable data collection on visits and actions taken by participants. Kenney acknowledged that feedback from prior EDC meetings was incorporated to enhance this year's plans, underscoring the committee's responsiveness to input from its members.

b. Green Blue New Deal

Commissioner Thompson provided an update on the Richmond Green-Blue New Deal project documentation, noting its completion with the final implementation plan submitted to the City in late June. Consultant Justine Burt led the project development of the Green-Blue New Deal and its associated projects. During the plan's development, the subcommittee reviewed documents including the opportunity report, the Workforce Development Plan, and the draft implementation plan. They concluded that these projects could significantly contribute to Richmond's prosperity. Commissioner Thompson has prepared a letter from the Green-Blue New Deal Standing Committee endorsing the plan and encouraging the City to prioritize capacity-building resources to initiate these projects. He asked fellow commissioners to review the documentation and form their own positions to share with the City Council. Thompson mentioned some uncertainty regarding the specific repository for the project information and asked for guidance on access.

Justine Burt's contract with Appracel ended in June, leaving staff to review and prepare the report for City Council presentation. Details on the process and timeline remain uncertain.

Commissioner Lynch raised questions regarding the recent Chevron settlement, specifically inquiring about the commission's role in discussions about the allocation of these funds. Lynch requested clarification on whether there would be a briefing and if the commission would have input in guiding fund allocation.

Tony Tamayo, representing the Mayor's office, provided an update: at the upcoming September 24th meeting, some Councilmembers—not including the Mayor—will discuss the Chevron funds allocation. The funds are directed to the general fund and will maintain the previous annual contribution from Chevron plus a 3% increase, with allocations partially designated to Measure Z and Measure K.

Commissioner Lynch emphasized the importance of involving the commission in ongoing discussions regarding the operationalization of Green-Blue New Deal projects. Given the commission's ongoing support for the New Deal, Lynch argued that they should participate in allocation discussions concerning the Chevron funds, especially if there is potential to fund New Deal initiatives.

Chair Wear agreed to keep the Green-Blue New Deal on future agendas, noting that next steps will involve a feasibility assessment of project proposals by City staff. Following the staff report and Council review, the EDC will prioritize which projects to support, contingent on budget availability. Wear encouraged advocacy for reallocating Chevron funds to support feasible New Deal projects.

Commissioner Jackson inquired about the availability of the report outlining goals, deliverables, and accountability measures for Green-Blue New Deal implementation. Staff clarified that the current documentation is under staff review and won't be publicly accessible until its presentation to the Council. Chair Wear shared that in the meantime, commissioners can participate in public comment or submit a letter to City Council in support of the Green-Blue New Deal, reinforcing the commission's commitment to the initiative.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Cannabis – Lead, K. Lynch

Commissioner Lynch provided an update on the social equity verification process for the City of Richmond's cannabis program. Lynch noted that the process has been complex, involving collaboration with the consulting team Make Green Go, led by LaWanda Knox. Due to initial delays in launching the social equity program, the City had to return grant funds previously received from the state of California. In June, discussions began to formally initiate the program and communicate to the state that an active program is now in place.

To reapply for the grant, the application period for verifying equity applicants was opened from July 1 to September 15, allowing interested residents to register as social equity applicants. This group will serve as a pilot cohort, which the City can reference when reapplying for state funding. Commissioner Lynch has worked with community members, hosting informational sessions on social equity and the cannabis industry at CoBiz, with strong attendance at each event. The City of Richmond supported these sessions by sponsoring the venue rental and food. Lynch noted that over 30 individuals attended, and they have personally supported applicants with the process.

The current application for social equity applicants, designed by the consulting team, is short and intended to facilitate easy access to the program. The aim is to gather an understanding of community interest by the September 15 deadline, which is not a hard cutoff for the program but will aid the City in approaching the state for funding.

Commissioner Lynch also mentioned a need for clarification on the verification timeline, as some community members have not yet received responses from the City of Richmond regarding their application status. Lynch expressed a desire for a clear communication strategy to address applicants' concerns. Additionally, Lynch highlighted challenges applicants face in meeting documentation requirements, particularly for those working with the Richmond Housing Authority or obtaining records from local agencies. Lynch emphasized the importance of creative solutions to overcome these barriers.

b. Sustainability – Lead, G. Sewell-Murphy

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy provided an update on the sustainability subcommittee. She clarified that the meeting minutes states that she presented the official theme for the expo as “Richmond Through Its Sustainable Lens,” however this was a proposal because the EDC had not vote on it. Sewell-Murphy mentioned that the EDC would be having a work session in November following the Taste of Richmond event to continue refining ideas.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy has continued to doing research and putting down ideas for the workshop. One idea Commissioner Sewell-Murphy discussed involved engaging schools in sustainability education, potentially through science fair projects on topics such as environmental preservation. The goal would be to foster awareness of sustainability at a young age, and also showcasing the expo and the work the EDC and subcommittee has been doing. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy emphasized the value of incorporating youth involvement in the expo, proposing that selected student projects could be displayed.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy also discussed other ideas for the sustainability expo, including potential speakers, influencers, and other invitees. Education emerged as a significant focus in the previous survey results, as many people expressed limited understanding of sustainability and related certifications. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy has also been in communication with a city council member who provided a link to relevant resources on information in how one can be certified in sustainability.

Report from City Council:

Councilmember Zepeda shared an update on several initiatives. He distributed a flyer detailing the foodware ordinance, which consolidates key information and recognizes the Economic Development Commission as a partner in implementation. Councilmember Zepeda encouraged the Commission's involvement, suggesting that members introduce themselves to local businesses, provide details about the ordinance, and offer support to ensure compliance. He mentioned these

flyers are the final versions, and welcomed any feedback or additional questions about the ordinance and its implementation.

Regarding updates to the plastic bag ordinance, Councilmember Zepeda noted that, while the City of Richmond initially sought to strengthen the ban on plastic bags, recent changes at the state level now restrict further bans by local governments. The State of California is considering an update to its own plastic bag ban, which could eventually impact cities statewide. Currently, while the state prohibits single-use plastic bags, some retailers have responded by introducing thicker plastic bags, which ultimately contribute more waste. Councilmember Zepeda emphasized that, despite these regulatory limitations, he remains focused on improving local environmental standards.

Councilmember Zepeda also addressed the smoke shop moratorium, which went into effect before the recent council break. He highlighted ongoing compliance checks, noting that local, state, and federal agencies are actively visiting smoke shops to ensure adherence to regulations, particularly regarding the prohibition of illegal products. He underscored that non-compliant businesses face enforcement actions, including the seizure of illicit goods, and reiterated Richmond's commitment to regulatory compliance.

Additionally, Councilmember Zepeda provided an update on the recently enacted street vendor ordinance. This regulation requires vendors to maintain adequate space around their booths to comply with ADA accessibility standards on sidewalks. Vendors must ensure their setup allows sufficient sidewalk clearance for public access; if not, they may be ineligible to operate in those locations. Vendors are also required to obtain a city business permit to operate legally.

Councilmember Zepeda expressed that the City's long-term goal is to create a designated space where multiple street vendors can operate together, possibly in a public parking lot or nearby area, to foster a vibrant vendor community.

Update on Vendor

Lizeht Zepeda, Senior Business Assistance Officer provided an update on the Mobile Vendor Program. The sidewalk vending ordinance includes specific guidelines for outreach and sensitivity around fines. Before any actual fines are enforced, there's an educational phase underway. Since sidewalk regulation falls under the purview of Public Works, they've contracted 4Leaf to assist with compliance. Currently, 4Leaf is focused on education—distributing informational materials, addressing concerns, and documenting complaints to prepare vendors for compliance.

At the same time, Economic Development Department has been organizing the Mobile Vendor Program (MVP Lot), designed specifically for vendors. The goal is to transition street vendors into this dedicated space to avoid potential fines associated with unauthorized vending. We are emphasizing to vendors that operating on the street without proper permits, particularly county health permits for food vendors, will lead to fines.

We've already held outreach meetings at the council chambers, with county and city staff present to provide guidance. These sessions also included work sessions to refine the application process for vendors. This initiative is not only about compliance but also about fostering entrepreneurship and providing education. The city is offering a designated space for vending as a supportive opportunity for vendors to operate within the regulatory framework.

The location we've designated is the public lot at Marina Way and Macdonald Avenue, which will be set up in a booth-style format to accommodate approximately 20 vendors. The City is covering the costs for materials, and we've partnered with the Farmers Market Association to manage the site. The association will handle booth setup, security, lighting, and site cleanup. Collaborations with Richmond Main Street and neighboring businesses like CoBiz and BART are in place to support the initiative.

Each vendor will operate under a comprehensive application packet, submitted to the County as a whole for permitting. This umbrella approach streamlines the approval process, allowing us to launch the vendor park on Saturday, the 21st.

While the vendor park provides a supportive space, Public Works is enforcing sidewalk vending regulations. Vendors are prohibited from selling on sidewalks without proper permits from both the City and the County. Through this program, we aim to guide vendors in setting up correctly, both within the designated vendor park and, if they choose, later on the streets with appropriate permitting. Vendors participating in this program will sign an agreement to comply with all regulations and avoid vending outside permitted areas until they meet all requirements.

This initiative ultimately serves as both a compliance and an educational opportunity, helping vendors navigate the permitting process and gain experience in a structured environment.

Vice-chair Kenney highlighted a significant concern regarding parking availability in downtown Richmond, particularly with CoBiz as one of the few entities currently open in the area. The limited street parking means that many of CoBiz's members rely on the public lot at Marina Way and Macdonald Avenue. Given recent construction activities, there has been even greater strain on parking availability, especially since notice of construction was not communicated to the CoBiz team in advance.

With plans for the vendor park in the same parking lot, Vice-chair Kenney expressed concern about potential overlap with regular events hosted by CoBiz and other local businesses. These events can attract between 50 to 300 people, all of whom require parking. Additionally, Left Side Printing, which has an event space nearby, frequently holds weekend events, further increasing demand for parking on Saturdays.

Vice-chair Kenney also mentioned that nearby BART users face logistical challenges because the pay station is located within the BART station itself. This setup requires patrons to walk down to the

station, pay for parking, and return to the lot, which may deter customers from visiting local businesses in the area.

To balance the needs of local businesses and the vendor park, Vice-chair Kenney suggested exploring options for improved communication regarding construction schedules, as well as potentially establishing a middle ground to accommodate both the vendor park and the parking needs of established businesses and events. This would help support the vendor initiative while ensuring minimal disruption to local businesses and ongoing events in the downtown area.

Councilmember Zepeda asked how two days was decided. City staff, Lizeht discussed that the two-day commitment was a deal point negotiated during discussions led by Councilmember Jimenez, Community Development Director, and the City Manager, with the Farmers' Market Association. This arrangement falls under the umbrella of the four-day Farmers Market, which may trigger certain health department permits. Future tasks include clarifying these permit requirements and exploring the possibility of a second location for vendors.

Another potential opportunity discussed was the introduction of night markets, which have become increasingly popular, especially in certain cultural contexts. There is growing state-level support for night markets, recognizing their cultural significance. This could be a valuable avenue for expanding the vendor program.

Additionally, the idea of supporting vendors with peddler carts was proposed. While the cost of acquiring and maintaining such carts—estimated at around \$20,000 each—presents challenges, it remains a possibility if funding is available. However, logistical considerations, such as where these carts would be stored and how vendors would meet health and safety requirements (e.g., commissary kitchens and equipment storage), need to be addressed before such a program could be implemented.

These ideas, while still in the early stages, are aligned with the Economic Development Commission's goals and could be explored further through future phases of the program. The Commission could play a key role in reviewing these opportunities and ensuring that they are implemented in a way that supports both local entrepreneurs and the broader community.

Public Comments/Announcements/Handouts

Councilmember Zepeda announced that Fiestas Patrias will take place on Saturday, September 14th.

Cordell Hindler introduced himself to the commission and provided several updates. He shared that Michael Gliksohn will be on the City Council's Consent Calendar for the September 24th meeting, where he will be considered as a candidate to join the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Additionally, Cordell mentioned his plans to engage with the Youth Council to encourage their involvement with the EDC, noting that other cities, such as El Cerrito, include youth members on their advisory boards.

He also provided details about upcoming events:

- The Contra Costa Mayor's Conference will be hosted by the City of Richmond on October 3rd. The venue has been selected, and more information will be announced on September 17th.
- On October 4th, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce will host a gala at Riggers Loft.
- On October 5th, the annual Rosie the Riveter Gala will be held.

Finally, Cordell mentioned that he will propose at the November meeting that Rafeltis present on the workforce analysis and its connection to the Green-Blue New Deal

7. Next Meeting: October 9th, 2024, 11:30 AM

8. Adjournment: 1:00 PM