



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 5th, 2024, 11:30AM – 1:00PM

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: D. Thompson, C. Jackson, D. Wear, A. Portillo-Knowles, C. Kenney

Absent: G. Sewell-Murphy, O. Willis, J. Lee, K. Lynch

Council Liaison: Cesar Zepeda

Guests: Brandon Evans, Employment & Training

Makiah Harrison, Richmond Main Street Initiative

3. Taste of Richmond Discussion

- a. Commissioner Kenney presented a proposal to transform Taste of Richmond from a one-day event into a week-long celebration titled Restaurant Week. Currently, Taste of Richmond allows small business restaurants to showcase their food and business in a single-day format. Commissioner Kenney raised a key question: "Is the event providing long-term support to the restaurants currently serving the city?" She examined whether the current format encourages post-event patronage and assessed its economic impact. Although food is free for attendees (who only need to purchase entry tickets), participating restaurants bear significant costs. Post-pandemic, food, lease, and operational costs have surged, with food costs up by 13.2% and labor costs by 15.1%. Participating small businesses do not receive compensation for the food they provide, which adds to potential financial burden from participating in the event.

The new direction involves a week-long event aimed at promoting Richmond's restaurants through events at selected restaurants, social media campaigns, a dedicated website, and local and Bay Area news coverage. A comprehensive marketing plan will spotlight local restaurants, including collaborations across the city, special events, and community engagement activities like DJs, conversations with restaurant owners (Chop it Ups), and games to foster participation. To achieve this, partnerships with organizations such as CoBiz, Richmond Main Street Initiative, YouthWorks, Richmond Chamber of Commerce, the City of Richmond, Renaissance Center, and Empower Soul Studios will be crucial to pull this event off. One example would be to engage with YouthWorks and hire students for support. A digital and hard copy *Taste of Richmond Magazine* is also planned (distribution depending on cost). This magazine will feature local eateries, "Best of Richmond" winners, advertisements (to generate revenue for the EDC), coupons, and stories of restaurant owners.

Councilmember Zepeda suggested presenting this plan to the City Council during an upcoming meeting, where the EDC can also request funds to support these events.

4. Vote on Taste of Richmond Next Steps and Direction

- a. Motion passed to change direction of Taste of Richmond from a singular event to a Taste of Richmond Week, as presented by Commissioner Kenney.
 - 1st – D. Thompson
 - 2nd – A. Portillo-Knowles
- b. Motion passed to change date from July 13th, 2024 to first and second weeks of September 2024.
 - 1st – A. Portillo-Knowles
 - 2nd – C. Kenney

The next Planning Committee Meeting will be Tuesday, June 11, 2024, 12-1 on zoom. EDC Commissioners are welcome and encouraged to join the Committee.

Next EDC Meeting: June 12^h, 2024, 11:30 AM

5. Adjournment: 12:43 PM

- 1st – Commissioner Kenney
- 2nd – Commissioner Portillo-Knowles