



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 14, 2025 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Richmond Room, 450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, California

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to order: 11:30 a.m. by Chair Kenney

2. Roll Call & Check In

Present: Chair Kenney, Vice-Chair Thompson and Commissioners Gliksohn, Sewell-Murphy and Willis

Absent: Commissioners Jackson, Lynch, Wear and Council Liaison Doria Robinson

Staff Present: Nannette Beacham, Economic Development Director; Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer and Junne Garcia, Management Analyst

3. Approval of Minutes

April 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1st - Kenney, 2nd – Willis, approved 5-0 by a Roll Call vote.

4. Chair's Report

Chair Kenney reported the Taste of Richmond (TOR) was in full swing, there had been a lot of development in the past 30-days, and the bulk of the agenda to focus on TOR given those developments including comments from Commissioner Wear, in which she would provide a response.

5. Old and/or New Business

a. Taste of Richmond

i. National League of Cities (NLC) Grant Application (Jesson)

Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer, reported the National League of Cities (NLC) Grant Application had been attached to the agenda packet. In April 2025, the Deputy Director of Community Services made staff aware of a \$20,000 grant opportunity and Junne Garcia, Management Analyst had the idea to make application and use the funds for TOR to supplement City funds. Staff had submitted the grant application on time and should get a response in June.

Junne Garcia, Management Analyst, provided the background of the NCL and the Advancing Economic Mobility Rapid Grant, as outlined in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Willis commented on his experience applying for grant funding and suggested even if the City was unsuccessful with this grant application, the information could be recycled and pitched towards a foundation and other possible funders.

Chair Kenney thanked staff for putting the grant opportunity on the radar.

ii. Fiscal Sponsorship Renewal (Jesson)

Mr. de Leon reported the fiscal sponsorship for TOR would expire on July 12, 2025. The fiscal sponsor agreement was attached to the staff report. The EDC would be asked to vote on who it wanted to be the fiscal sponsor for TOR.

Chair Kenney explained the EDC had discussed reestablishing a relationship with the Richmond Chamber of Commerce (COC), which was under new leadership. She was having conversations with COC Executive Director Vernon Whitmore to be the fiscal sponsor for TOR for this year versus the Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI), whose vision and mission was more specific to the downtown while the COC focused on the entire City. While RMSI had been a great fiscal sponsor, she wanted to make an effort to bring the COC back into the fold of the EDC. She requested the EDC push back a vote on the fiscal sponsor until she was able to finalize conversations with the COC, learn more about its new mission and vision and invite Executive Director Whitmore to speak before the EDC. A vote would be required at the July EDC meeting since the City Council and City Boards/Commissions had summer recess during the month of August.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked about the purpose of the fiscal sponsor, and Mr. de Leon and Chair Kenney advised the fiscal sponsor contracted with the City, handled the fiscal responsibilities, insurance and the like for TOR, and was basically a bank. The fiscal sponsor agreement would be approved and signed off by the City Manager's Office and would not require City Council approval.

Mr. de Leon understood the current fiscal sponsor, RMSI collected 20 percent for administration costs, although he understood it had not been collected last year which would have to be clarified.

Chair Kenney commented on average the percentage for administration for fiscal sponsorship was 10 percent. She wanted to consider another fiscal sponsor and would speak with the COC to see what it could do for the EDC. The COC was also responsible for the Best of Richmond, which had been implemented under a different EDC and she understood the event was undergoing an internal rebranding. She suggested it would be a good opportunity to pair the event with TOR since it had occurred in the past but died off and she planned to discuss that further with the COC.

Vice-Chair Thompson reported he met with the Mayor as part of an interview to reinvest in his role on the EDC, with the Mayor interested in the Best of Richmond and how the EDC could play a role in highlighting those organizations.

Chair Kenney reiterated she would have to check into that and see what the COC planned.

Mr. de Leon suggested a presentation from the COC could be agendaized for the June EDC meeting, and if RMSI wanted to renew its fiscal sponsorship it could be invited to make a presentation as well. The EDC could vote on the fiscal sponsor at the June meeting.

- iii. Approval Process for Activities (Jesson)
- iv. Status Check (Kenney)

Chair Kenney acknowledged that traditionally there had been a Standing Committee with TOR and that meetings had been planned in May. She otherwise reported Commissioner Wear had submitted a letter to her two days ago expressing concern with the approval processes and things that had taken place for TOR. At this time, she read into the record Commissioner Wear's written comments, summarized as follows:

- Asked whether there was a conflict of interest given the Chair was the Chair of the EDC, Chair of the TOR Standing Committee and on-contract with TOR and receiving a stipend;
- Noted there had been no sponsors in 2024. The Standing Committee agreed that getting fiscal sponsorships for TOR was important and had been the tradition since the beginning of TOR,

and while it was fine to discontinue the practice, there needed to be a discussion and discernment;

- The Chair presented a complete TOR plan to the EDC on April 9, 2025, although the Standing Committee had not met and there had been no input on the decisions. The Standing Committee had instructed that those shortcomings be corrected last year through weekly meetings to ensure greater inclusion;
- The agenda for this year's TOR represented mainly Districts 2 and 5, which did not represent the City at-large economically, racially or geographically;
- Perfusion Vineyard had been mentioned as a venue again for this year but this option fell through last year since it had been too costly for most people and the site was not accessible, and questioned its inclusion in TOR;
- The EDC had not been able to hire young people through YouthWORKS, as initially planned last year, given the lack of sponsorships or lead time due to the departure of the former TOR Chair, and asked whether this idea had been scrapped; and
- Found the current plans for this year's TOR to not be inclusive of more voices and decision making from the EDC, and asked that these questions be addressed before decisions were finalized.

Commissioner Gliksohn appreciated Commissioner Wear had raised the concerns and he shared some of them including the fact the Chair wears three hats and the Standing Committee had not met to provide feedback; however; that could be remedied by having those meetings.

Chair Kenney explained she had provided detailed responses in writing to Commissioner Wear, which she read into the record at this time and which were also summarized, as follows:

- She [Chair Kenney] had been hired in 2024 and was the Chair of TOR and no one had raised a concern at that time;
- She mitigated her responsibilities that were TOR Chair and marketing specific and on the contract she was only responsible for the marketing of the event in and of itself. Everything else she did as the TOR Chair included responsibilities like sponsorships, writing decks and sitting in City Council meetings, which did not involve billable time. This issue had not come up last year, particularly when volunteers were sought for all of the positions she held and no one said a word. At that time, she ended up very reluctantly taking those seats. She was on contract for two years and the EDC agreed it was okay. She was contracted with RMSI through this year and technically she would be off contract in July 2025, and if there was a new fiscal sponsor she would require a new contract;
- She presented two contract options at the April 9, 2025 EDC meeting for the Event Planner, and clarified the Event Planner would not increase her price for restaurant week and would keep the same price as last year, but the festival was separate and would involve a secondary price;

- Around 90 percent of the work done for TOR was voluntary and 10 percent involved payment, she was not being paid the rate she should be paid and her contract with RMSI and the contract for the Event Planner were two separate entities.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy stated when she became a member of the EDC, City staff had been more involved in TOR.

Chair Kenney confirmed staff had initially been involved in TOR, which was a conversation she wanted to have at the end of the year about making TOR a City initiative in some way with EDC support, versus an EDC event since most restaurant weeks were held by an entertainment division and not Commissions, and she provided examples. She wanted to make a move toward the end of the year to facilitate a conversation that TOR be a City held or agency held event with the EDC as a whole operating as a Steering Committee for the event versus how it was being done now. That way staff involvement would be more apparent.

Continuing the responses to Commissioner Wear, Chair Kenney added the following:

- She had taken the position since no one else volunteered to Chair TOR and the room at that time had been silent for volunteers. This was not a conflict and if she were to step down as Chair but remain on contract, she asked who would fill her position with her contract for marketing the event itself. The bonus of having her as the Chair of the EDC and TOR was that she was able to lend her expertise from her day job;
- Last year, the EDC and Standing Committee had not risen to the occasion to fill the gaps in the Chair and how they mitigated conflict as her contractual duties were explicitly separate from Chair duties, and had been itemized and accounted for publicly as everything she did contractually was forward facing;
- Clarified there had not been a raise, as suggested by Commissioner Wear, but a different rate had been included for labor for a festival at the end of restaurant week;
- The Event Planner was currently negotiating a new contract and depending on the work required, the Event Planner had provided two separate quotes and the scope of work involved was detailed;
- The Event Planner had not requested a rate increase in 2024, when the format of the event had been changed, which she was not contractually obligated to do, since her two-year contract was for a one-day event; and
- During the April 9 EDC meeting, there had been a discussion that sponsors would be pursued for this year and she was unsure where the idea of eliminating the process had originated.

Chair Kenney stated she was sorry Commissioner Wear was not feeling included. She had been asked to submit language regarding the TOR's sustainability to the City Council, with a decision to be made in April but she later learned a decision would not be made until June. In the interim, the Economic Development Department was pursuing a grant for the event but had to pivot with a quick turnaround time to submit information and staff would provide an update when available. Again, Standing Committee meetings would begin in May and she had created letters and decks to facilitate partnerships and build interest in TOR over the past month, which her predecessors also did to have things presented to the Standing Committee to get started.

Chair Kenney added they wanted to see the feasibility of pursuing a restaurant in every district and it had been determined and presented at meetings in 2024 and 2025. That was not viable for a two-man hired team to execute and as the Standing Committee had not fulfilled any event planning duties in previous years, the contractor highlighted the difficulties and made adjustments. All restaurants in every District would be included in a list directory on the TOR website; however, only a few select restaurants would house events based on a schedule the Event Planner created as she also had in 2024, as presented to the EDC at the April 9 meeting for feedback and which schedule had been co-signed by the EDC Commissioners present at that time.

Chair Kenney further commented the restaurants chosen had been a representation of the City of Richmond racially and demographically as a portion were Brown-owned. She also noted that Perfusion Vineyard remained in the conversation but asked if replacing its date with another venue, it have the same kind of energy, and she pointed out Rigger's Loft had been discussed by the EDC and it was off the table. In addition, she clarified that YouthWORKS was not off the table.

In terms of the status check, Chair Kenney reiterated Standing Committee meetings would be held in May and she apologized for the delay and advised nothing that had been said was set in stone, they were just presenting an "idea" for TOR for 2025.

Chair Kenney further commented that since she could only be the Chair of the EDC for one year, she would write down the tasks in a playbook for the succession process, which had never been in place for TOR. While she loved doing TOR and would not mind continuing to do it in upcoming years, if it became a City event, she was aware a Request for Proposal (RFP) process must be followed. She was glad to have cleared the air, but was aware there were a lot of issues in Richmond that happened through emails and side conversations. She wanted to be accountable to the EDC since it trusted her to be in leadership.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked about the role of the Event Planner, and Chair Kenney clarified the Event Planner executed the collaborations with all of the restaurants, organized the restaurants to ensure they were able to handle the influx of those who came in, gathered their marketing materials together, was the direct contact point with the restaurants, orchestrated all of the buyouts for food items, ran the shows for all venue spaces and did all the purchasing for the event, among other things.

Chair Kenney confirmed, when asked by Vice-Chair Thompson, that the implication task of hiring an Event Planner was within the work scope of the fiscal sponsor.

Commissioner Gliksohn also clarified with the Chair that if a new fiscal sponsor was chosen, they could be asked to accept existing contracts that could be transferred to them. He also asked how the Chair interacted with the Event Planner as the Chair of TOR.

Chair Kenney described the different parts she and the Event Planner executed for the TOR event and when items were brought before the EDC for feedback.

Commissioner Gliksohn recommended the Event Planner be invited to attend the September EDC meeting prior to the October TOR event, and Chair Kenney suggested that could be done.

Commissioner Willis thanked the Chair for her transparency. He found some of Commissioner Wear's concerns to be valid, but the Chair had done a great job clearing the air, responding to the concerns and providing transparency. He was confident in the Chair's continued ability to lead the EDC and TOR. He was also interested in how the EDC could support the Chair in a conversation around the possibility of the City taking over TOR.

Chair Kenney hoped to have a conversation to make TOR a City-sanctioned event after the completion of the October TOR.

b. Cannabis Equity Ordinance (Jesson and Junne)

Mr. de Leon advised no update was available at this time. The City still had the grant funds available and planned to use them for the applicants, but they were on-hold until the Planning Division presented the amendments to the ordinance to the City Council.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Sustainability – Lead: Sewell-Murphy

Vice-Chair Thompson reported he and Commissioner Sewell-Murphy met a couple of weeks ago to get her view of the landscape for the Sustainable Expo origins and construct the bare bones of a business plan to guide the activities of the expo; one compelling enough to obtain investment and using some of the documentation Commissioner Sewell-Murphy provided on the theme of the expo.

Vice-Chair Thompson also included information submitted by Council member Robinson along with his own thoughts, in preparing a Draft Business Plan, which he submitted to Commissioner Sewell-Murphy for review. He suggested more time was needed to finalize the business plan and come up with a compelling and provocative theme, and identify perspective organizations, speakers and exhibits that could participate in the expo and provide a good cost estimate.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy stated she had not yet had the opportunity to review the Draft Business Plan but would look it over and get back to the EDC. She had prepared a statement that had been provided to staff and was to be disseminated via email to the EDC, and while that had not been done the information could be provided. At this time, she read into the record a written statement about the plans to consider a Sustainability Expo to be scheduled on Saturday, April 18, 2026, in celebration of Earth Day, with the theme Richmond Through its Sustainable Lens, organized by the Sustainability Subcommittee of the EDC.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy added that Council Liaison Robinson previously mentioned the possibility of the COC and Marin Clean Energy (MCE) being fiscal sponsors for the event. She had also spoken with a former Council member to inquire about fiscal sponsors who recommended MCE as the fiscal sponsor since it had more of a track record with respect to sustainability.

Chair Kenney suggested as a first step an invitation should be extended to MCE to have a conversation at a future EDC meeting. Creating that relationship would be key for the Sustainability Expo. She had some contacts she could provide via email and possibly Commissioner Sewell-Murphy could have a discussion with MCE via Zoom.

Mr. de Leon added that the City’s Environmental and Health Initiatives staff had a direct line to MCE and he could make direct introductions to MCE on Commissioner Sewell-Murphy’s behalf.

Vice-Chair Thompson suggested Commissioner Sewell-Murphy’s statement was an excellent portrayal of the theme that would complete the business plan.

b. Cannabis – Lead: Lynch

There was no report.

c. Policy & GBND – Lead: Willis

Commissioner Willis suggested the event planning for the Sustainability Expo dovetailed nicely with the Green, Blue New Deal (GBND) Policy Subcommittee that could provide support in engaging industry and sponsors.

Vice-Chair Thompson reported that while working to gather information on sustainability awards and constructing the Business Plan for the Sustainability Expo, he had learned on April 30, 2025 that the City of Richmond had issued an RFP for offshore wind terminal conversion, and that the City was interested in converting the port to accommodate that work.

Commissioner Willis was excited with the possibilities of the RFP and the feasibility of the Richmond Port having a place in the logistics of an offshore wind economy, what parts of the port made sense and potential funding the City may explore.

Commissioner Willis understood the project had an 18-month timeline for a renovated port. He noted one of the recommendations from the GBND was that the Richmond Port play a role in the offshore wind economy and the EDC, as a group, consistently ranked it in the top seven priorities. To see it moving forward was exciting and promising.

Commissioner Willis commented that some overlap may be possible with the Sustainability Expo. He also looked forward to providing feedback on the Draft Implementation Strategy on the GBND when provided by the City. In addition, he reported a new burger restaurant was opening on San Pablo Avenue in his neighborhood and it was good to see new options.

7. **Council Liaison Robinson News or Report**

There was no report.

8. **Public Comments/Announcements**

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, reported he attended the Youth Council meeting and encouraged people to apply for vacancies on the EDC. He hoped the City Council would consider filling vacancies at a future meeting in June. He also asked that meeting locations be alternated given the current meeting room was too small and suggested the Whittlesey Community Room in the Richmond Library had more room. He invited the EDC to the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference on June 5, 2025, hosted by the City of San Ramon and stated an RSVP was required by May 27, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.; tickets were \$70 per person. He had provided ideas for economic development to the Personnel Board and hoped it would be included on a future agenda. He hoped all vacancies on the EDC would be filled prior to the August recess.

Kevin Guyun, stated he had attended the April EDC meeting representing Destination Neighborhoods but due to budget cuts, the Americorps program had been cut. As part of working on outreach in the community of Richmond, he had fallen in love with the City and saw the potential, which was why he came back to this meeting because he wanted to be part of what the EDC was doing. He was in the process of developing a fundraising service for non-profit organizations that supported economic development and it was important to have an understanding of the needs of the EDC. He was ready to begin his startup and get feedback and would like to share and get some understanding of how to improve and make a difference in the community. He had visited CoBiz and hoped to work with the EDC in the future. When asked, he expressed a willingness to become a member of the EDC but was unsure of the process and was informed the Mayor's Office and the City website included information on how to apply for City Boards/Commissions.

Chair Kenney advised she would reach out to those Commissioners who had been on the Standing Committee last year and would inquire whether they wanted to remain on the Committee. If any Commissioners wanted to be on the Standing Committee, they were asked to contact her. She understood there were challenges due to the Brown Act in terms of the number of members who may participate and she was trying to find a way around the Brown Act so that meetings could be held.

Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham reported she had not been present for the first part of the meeting since she had been in a leadership meeting, but announced the City Council had agreed to a different schedule for the summer recess this year, which would be July 2 to August 19, 2025. Staff was already prepping for items on future City Council agendas and staff planned to provide an update on the Economic Development Plan on the GBND at a future City Council meeting, with the date to be shared once solidified. Also, staff was working on the Juneteenth celebrations, the City had a successful Cinco de Mayo, National Small Business Week and Mother's Day celebrations, and some grants had been approved for small businesses. The cannabis program was being reinvigorated and staff looked forward to getting things on the calendar for approval to allow work this summer.

In response to the Chair as to the status of the budget approval of TOR, Ms. Beacham advised the first City Council budget hearing would be June 3, 2025, with final adoption on June 24, 2025. She encouraged everyone to attend whether virtually or in-person. The EDC should learn on June 3 whether TOR had been listed in the budget but staff was confident there would not be a problem.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked about the status of the Sunday's Farmer's Market at the Marina, and Ms. Beacham explained that was the same vendor for the Mobile Vendor Program at 14th and MacDonald Avenue. A hard launch, revamping and name change of the Mobile Vendor Program was being pursued and the Mayor's Office would be rebranding that event with a celebration on June 7, 2025.

Mr. de Leon added that KTVU would hold a Zip Trip 90-minute segment this summer, to focus on destinations around the San Francisco Bay Area, with an event to be held on June 6, 2025 when KTVU newscasters would be staged in front of the Richmond Library for the Farmer's Market.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked whether the Mobile Vendor Program had expanded into the Sunday Farmer's Market, to which Ms. Beacham explained they were separate events although some vendors participated in all events. There was a separate process for the Mobile Vendor Program lot, which had been very successful, and as an aside, all employees at the Social Security Department were back 100 percent, which added to the success of the program. She further reported that a Task Force had been created by Council members Brown and Robinson for the MacDonald Corridor, from 23rd all the way to 5th Streets, with the task force meeting monthly and interested participants were asked to contact staff. She also clarified, when asked, that the Mobile Vendor Program operated Thursdays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Chair Kenney commented that the hours for the Mobile Vendor Program impacted the small businesses in the area already impacted by the pandemic, and she wanted a conversation about the hours of operation since concerns had been raised.

Ms. Beacham commented that staff was also discussing parking opportunities and how any expansion may impact the area. She confirmed that a lot located at 12th Street and Nevin Avenue was being discussed as a possible mobile vending space, although some issues needed to be resolved prior to the use of that parking lot. As to the status of a proposed residential development

at 12th Street and MacDonald Avenue, Ms. Beacham reported the agreement had been terminated and in the next six to eight months an RFP for the surplus property may be considered for other opportunities outside of affordable housing.

Ms. Beacham also highlighted the various divisions of the Economic Development Department which included the Arts & Culture Division. The Arts & Culture Division was holding a virtual Technical Assistance Workshop this date from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on how to participate in City of Richmond projects, do business with the City of Richmond and how to get a contract for an NPA Mini Grant.

Commissioner Gliksohn reported he had received an email from BK Williams about City events and community input on the Arts Corridor, with an upcoming session scheduled in the next week at CoBiz.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy clarified with staff that the Economic Development Department did not include the Rosie the Riveter National Historic Park. She explained that her father was the first African-American welding instructor, had trained some of the women and she hoped to have him recognized as part of the Rosie the Riveter Memorial.

Ms. Beacham expressed the willingness to figure out who to contact to address the request from Commissioner Sewell-Murphy.

9. **Closing Comments:** None
10. **Adjournment:** 12:59 p.m.