



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 11, 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 Vice-Chair Thompson

2. Roll Call & Check In

Present: Vice-Chair Thompson and Commissioners Gliksohn, Jackson, Sewell-Murphy*, Wear and Willis

*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: Chair Kenney, Commissioner Lynch, 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

May 14, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1st Gliksohn, 2nd Jackson, approved 4-0-2 by a Roll Call vote with Commissioner Wear abstaining and Commissioner Sewell-Murphy absent.

4. Chair's Report

Vice-Chair Thompson reported the meeting agenda was brief, with presentations on fiscal sponsorships from representatives of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC) and Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI), along with reports from the Economic Development Commission (EDC) Standing Committees.

5. Old and/or New Business

a. Taste of Richmond

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

Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer, reported a letter had been attached to the agenda packet from the National League of Cities (NLC) regarding the City's submission for a \$20,000 NLC grant. The City of Richmond's application while strong, had not been selected. Of the twelve cities that applied for the grant, the City of Antioch had been selected.

The EDC thanked staff for their efforts to consider the grant opportunity from the NLC.

ii. Fiscal Sponsorship Renewal (Chair Kenney)

a. RMSI

Mr. de Leon reported the fiscal sponsor for the Taste of Richmond (TOR) had been through Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) but the current contract was set to expire in July 2025. He spoke with the Chair about the need to either renew the sponsor with RMSI or consider a new fiscal sponsor. The Chair indicated she had conversations with both RMSI and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC). The EDC would be provided a presentation from the two organizations at this time.

Sarah Wally, Executive Director, RMSI, reported RMSI had been the fiscal sponsor for TOR since its inception in 2017, with the exception of 2022 when there had been a change in administrators. RMSI returned as the fiscal sponsor in 2023 and 2024. The fiscal sponsor received funds, performed all budgeting, checked payments, ensured the budget stayed on track, paid all bills and conducted monthly accounting. The contract was through the City with a fee associated and based on funds received.

Of the funds received, 20 percent was to pay for all accounting (typically a year's worth of accounting) and in 2024, that amount had been \$600. In 2024, RMSI did not charge a fee and allowed the funds to pass through until the account had been drawn down. The year started with a total balance of \$18,000, with all funds expended on the cost of the 2024 TOR and then a deposit from the City of Richmond was provided in the amount of \$10,000. Currently the bank account that RMSI held had a balance of \$10,703. Quick Books information was submitted on all of the payments made in 2024 for TOR and it was noted the existing contract with RMSI would expire on July 12, 2025.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy left the meeting at this time and stated she would provide her Standing Committee report at the next meeting.

The EDC took a recess at 11:39 a.m. to allow Commissioner Willis to escort Commissioner Sewell-Murphy to her vehicle and to pick-up his children, although he was expected to return to the meeting.

Mr. de Leon advised there was not a quorum of the EDC at this time. No action could be taken on any item as a result but the meeting could continue.

The EDC meeting reconvened at 11:43 a.m. with all Commissioners present with the exception of Chair Kenney, Commissioners Lynch, Sewell-Murphy, Willis and Council Liaison Doria Robinson.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked whether RMSI had an operational role in executing TOR, and Ms. Wally explained since 2017 RMSI had been active participants through TOR but not as much in 2024. As the fiscal sponsor, RMSI had the financial obligation to adhere to the budget and had financial responsibility for all of the money, sponsors, vendors monies and revenue, and the like.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked if the operational activities were part of the contract.

Ms. Wally advised that work had been donated. She detailed the requirements of a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and stated RMSI was in good standing and contractually there were finite rules about being a fiscal sponsor. Being an active participant was something RMSI had provided on a voluntary basis for a number of years.

Commissioner Wear asked whether RMSI wanted to remain as the fiscal sponsor for TOR for this year.

Ms. Wally suggested RMSI had done it, was good at it and while RMSI had the capacity, she deferred to what was welcoming and pleasing to the EDC. If the EDC wanted to switch to RCOG that was an available option.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether RMSI intended to reinstate the fee as the fiscal sponsor for 2025, to which Ms. Wally stated RMSI could have charged 20 percent on the \$18,000 balance in the bank and on the additional \$10,000 deposit from the City, but given the budget RMSI had not done so. There was a desire to charge a fee given the amount of work involved, but there was also

reasonableness as to the funds that had been raised. She walked through the funds expended for TOR in 2024 and 2023 and commented that TOR had been very intensive for a one-day event in 2023.

Commissioner Jackson understood RMSI would like to reinstate the fee based on the comments.

Vice-Chair Thompson understood Chair Kenney had a contract with RMSI and marketing TOR. He asked for clarification.

Ms. Wally clarified the Chair's contract with the City of Richmond and stated the Chair had been fully paid.

Mr. de Leon clarified the Chair was to provide a copy of the contract to staff. He understood it was a two-year contract that would expire this year.

Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham confirmed the Chair's contract was a two-year contract that would expire this year.

Ms. Wally commented that in a perfect world all vendors would be contracted with the fiscal sponsor, which was how it should happen. Last year it had not happened like that since contracts had been engaged with the event planner and other people. She received the invoices and instantly made payment to the vendors, but for perfect fiscal responsibility according to a contract, whoever the holder was should be doing the books and the event planner was to provide a list of who to contract with and who she had negotiated with. She again detailed all the things a fiscal sponsor was responsible to do with the event planner responsible to bring and gather all those people.

Commissioner Jackson understood the fiscal sponsor's responsibility and those of the event planner. If RMSI was chosen as the fiscal sponsor for the next TOR with a new contract, she asked whether RMSI would add operational and/or administrative responsibilities.

Ms. Wally advised that everything on the fiscal side was contractable with operations based on good will, but they would not be able to contract for that given the separation of tasks and obligations, with one tied to money and the other tied to participation in economic development activities in the City of Richmond.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the EDC could ask the fiscal sponsor to own some operational and administrative tasks.

Ms. Beacham understood it would be required to be part of the contract and would require additional fees and a separate function written into the scope for the project, not within the scope of the fiscal sponsorship.

Commissioner Jackson understood based on the comments there was an avenue to allocate some funds to ensure that work happened.

Mr. de Leon commented he had been doing a little more research on TORs and Best of Richmond (BOR) events. This kind of event had grown significantly in size and in his opinion should be transferred to a private entity to handle all of the logistics, with the EDC to provide advisement but not operational oversight and decision making given the size of the event.

Ms. Beacham added that people did not have enough hours, space or capacity, and the work had become disproportionate. She suggested when doing the budget, they should plan for that and have someone accountable and responsible for that work via a contract.

Mr. de Leon further added the idea of fiscal sponsorship and operations technically tied with a consultant. A consultant would have an all-encompassing contract and either parse out and handle the fiscal responsibility, operations and marketing rather than a segregated fiscal sponsorship, which was something he would like to see considered as a future agenda item.

b. RCOC

Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC) Executive Director Vernon Whitmore detailed his executive background and advised that RCOC had done events like this in the past, but had gone through a dormant stage with a former Executive Director. In the past, RCOC had a festival event for many years with vendors lining the Richmond Marina for a very successful event and which occurred with the RCOC at its highest point. He recognized the EDC wanted to re-establish a relationship with the RCOC and emphasized the RCOC was capable of doing an event like TOR and was used to putting on large events. The RCOC had the people, the capacity and the will for such events. More information was needed to allow RCOC to review the proposal.

Mr. Whitmore added that COCs around the county were very restive but some did significant outreach. In this case, there were a lot of things that needed to be done, but no one knew about the events and more outreach was needed to make that change. They needed to be more proactive to draw businesses to Richmond, with the RCOC to be more proactive to reaching out to people in and outside the City of Richmond. He emphasized the RCOC was pro-business and events like TOR attracted the business community and residents for a win-win all around.

Commissioner Wear commented on the need to build up economic development in the downtown, keep it together and encourage growth.

Mr. Whitmore advised the goal was to have a museum in the downtown to attract people to drive to the downtown area. People needed to get back to the downtown and he recognized the need to address public safety due to the perception in the community. He described it as a team event with RMSI, RCOC and the EDC. RCOC would like to be a part of that effort either in partnership with the EDC or otherwise, to take the City of Richmond to the next level.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked whether RCOC would be able to get up to speed at this late date since TOR was planned for October 2025, and Mr. Whitmore confirmed the RCOC could do that.

Commissioner Willis rejoined the EDC at 12:18p.m.

Ms. Wally asked whether the City had sponsors for TOR 2025. As the current fiscal sponsor, she had heard from no one or seen a budget. She supported the RCOC as being the fiscal sponsor for the 2025 event and could lend her help, but currently, she had not seen the budget as the fiscal sponsor, nor contracts, money and no advertising for the 2025 event. She asked whether anything had been done in those areas.

Commissioner Jackson advised pursuant to an email from the Chair, the Chair indicated contracts for social media, event management and marketing would be complete before the end of July and before the City Council summer recess. While it was a tight timeline for an October event, she deferred to the Chair for an update.

Mr. Whitmore reported during a meeting of the Workforce Development Board, he had spoken to an individual about a desire to have sponsorships from the Oakland Airport and some of the airlines, but there was a timeline to reach out to them to get tickets. He also wanted to reach out to PG&E and the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to obtain sponsorship dollars.

Commissioner Wear commented that was why she had written a memorandum to the Chair that had been discussed at the May 14, 2025 EDC meeting, since requests for sponsorships were usually distributed during the month of January and they would usually have the money in hand by June.

Mr. de Leon explained the decision to select a fiscal sponsor and contract with marketing, needed to be an EDC decision as a whole, rather than the Chair making the decision without the EDC voting, which was the transparency that was needed. Taking TOR out of the EDC and removing the bureaucracy and allowing a non-profit to take on TOR as a whole including solicitation was preferred.

Vice-Chair Thompson concurred and suggested TOR should be a Steering Committee, setting the overall theme, objectives, performance indicators and evaluation criteria, which should be handed off to an organization with the authority and wherewithal to bring it all together.

Mr. de Leon asked the EDC to hold off on selecting a fiscal sponsor at this time and allow staff to bring back a report on transferring ownership of TOR to either RMSI or RCOC. That way they could eliminate the fiscal sponsor issue all together and let the non-profit take the lead from there.

Commissioner Gliksohn was surprised the EDC was being asked to consider that option now since he understood the EDC had been asked to select a fiscal sponsor for this year and possibly next year consider another way. He asked if RCOC was ready for that kind of change.

Mr. Whitmore expressed his confidence after listening to the comments.

Mr. de Leon suggested at the next EDC meeting, the EDC consider transferring TOR to RCOC for execution of the TOR, with the EDC serving as an advisory panel to the RCOC.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked whether Chair Kenney would continue in her role in TOR as the head of the committee putting on the event or whether those duties would be transferred to RCOC.

Mr. de Leon stated he would have to do more research but he envisioned RCOC would take the lead on everything while the EDC would serve as an advisory panel to the RCOC.

Commissioner Wear asked if that meant a TOR Standing Committee would no longer be needed since the entire EDC would vote on that, and as such, there would then be no conflict of interest with the Chair.

Mr. de Leon reiterated he would have to do more research but that was the intent.

Ms. Beacham clarified the summer recess for City Council meetings had been changed to July 2, 2025 through August 18, 2025. She understood Council Liaison Robinson planned to request funding for the EDC and if the City Council did not approve the request by July 1, 2025, it would not be considered until after August 18, 2025.

Ms. Wally commented after the new model for the TOR was determined, the proposed budget needed to get somewhere. She was also a member of the RCOC Executive Board and suggested the RCOC had great capacity and she supported them as the fiscal sponsor. She could lend her

support and suggested a partnership with RMSI, RCOC and the EDC would result in a really big package, but having a budget and looking at the dollars available would really reveal what the event could be and should happen immediately with the knowledge that the budget balance was currently at \$10,700. If the budget increased to \$40,000, as proposed a few months ago, that was a large gap to fill and a challenge for the fiscal sponsor. She emphasized that needed to be evaluated to see whether the TOR event for 2025 was achievable.

Commissioner Gliksohn commented the Chair provided an extensive presentation at a prior EDC meeting and had referenced a budget but he was uncertain it was in writing. He asked that more information be provided by the Chair.

Ms. Wally reiterated they needed to know the budget for TOR 2025, particularly at this late date.

Commissioner Wear referenced an email from the Chair which included some status information on TOR and she read portions of the email into the record.

Ms. Beacham explained that staff had just received the email as had the EDC.

Commissioner Jackson was not comfortable having the conversation on the Chair's email without her presence given that there could be a lot of speculation and nuance in the conversation. She wanted to be mindful not to focus on that but to focus on what could be done now, with the idea from staff to transform the fiscal sponsorship to something bigger, which included the possibly for operational and administrative oversight as well as fiscal sponsorship.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether items the EDC had already voted on for TOR, were in line with whatever vision moving forward. She asked whether RMSI and RCOC was in line to continue with some of the items the EDC had already voted on.

Mr. Whitmore advised that RCOC would follow whatever recommendation was made by City staff. He suggested this was something for the EDC to work out.

Commissioner Gliksohn advised the next meeting of the EDC would be July 9, 2025 plenty of time for additional discussion.

Mr. Whitmore invited the EDC to its next Board of Directors meeting on June 18, 2025. He also reported he would be speaking with the City Manager and the Mayor about more staff taking part with the RCOC Board of Directors on a regular basis, as had been done in the past to gain insight on what was being done in the City and ensure they all worked better together. RCOC would also partner with Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia for a Green Empowerment Zone meeting on July 1, 2025 and an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Forum during the month of July, with the 2023 Entrepreneur for the U.S. Department of Commerce, the schedule to provide a presentation on AI from a business perspective. More information could be provided to City staff.

Vice-Chair Thompson summarized the comments and noted with staff's research, at the next EDC meeting, the EDC would deal with the TOR fiscal sponsorship and ownership activity.

iii. Status Check (Kenney)

Vice-Chair Thompson stated the Chair was unable to attend the meeting due to work priorities but she provided the status of the TOR effort in writing which had been provided to staff and the EDC.

Commissioner Glikshon clarified with staff links to the information contained in the Chair's email regarding the completed sponsorship deck and a project management tool for the work being done on TOR would be provided.

b. Cannabis Equity Ordinance (Jesson and Junne)

Mr. de Leon reported the Economic Development Department had met with the Planning Department and was moving forward with the Cannabis Equity Ordinance, timeline still pending and with the Cannabis Subcommittee to be restarted. He clarified the grant money would be used for people affected by the war on drugs, to facilitate cannabis-related businesses.

6. **Subcommittee Reports**

a. Sustainability – Lead: Sewell-Murphy

Vice-Chair Thompson thanked Commissioner Willis for getting Commissioner Sewell-Murphy safely to her vehicle. He reported information had been provided by staff prior to the meeting and Commissioner Sewell-Murphy had provided the justification for the need for fiscal sponsors and a draft budget for the Sustainability Expo. He asked the EDC to review the information that would be discussed at the next meeting.

b. Cannabis – Lead: Lynch

There was no report.

c. Policy & GBND – Lead: Willis

Commissioner Willis reported the Policy and Green, Blue New Deal (GBND) Subcommittee held a meeting with members of City staff to discuss scheduling monthly meetings between City staff and the Subcommittee. Communications would be done mostly via email with meetings with staff when it made sense. He added the GBND Recommendations included a list of seven priority areas and was scheduled to be presented to the City Council for feedback. Of the seven priorities, the one that was recommended to be worked on immediately was electrification of Richmond buildings, which was perfect since the City of Richmond had an electrician training program and had received a large grant from the California Workforce Development Board to bolster the program. It was also recommended the Subcommittee attend the Green Empowerment Zone meetings with the next meeting scheduled in September 2025, coinciding with the next East Bay Economic Development Alliance meeting.

Commissioner Wear added there had also been discussions about being supportive around the port, with a final review of the port due at the end of June along with a recommendation the Subcommittee be in contact with the Port Director on how to work with him. The Subcommittee had been encouraged to focus on action and not passive listening.

Ms. Beacham highlighted the GBND Recommendations to be presented to the City Council at its June 17, 2025 meeting. The City Council was not expected to take action on the recommendations but receive an update, with next steps to include development of scopes and implementation within the next five years.

Commissioner Willis asked about the status of the City’s Economic Development Strategy, to which Mr. de Leon advised the Economic Development Strategy had last been published in 2020 and would expire this year. Each City renewed the document every five years. He planned to agendize a discussion item for the next EDC meeting for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 Economic Development Goals as a whole, and engage a consultant to update the current Economic Development Strategy.

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

There was no report.

8. Public Comments/Announcements

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, invited the EDC to the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference on September 4, 2025, hosted by the City of El Cerrito, \$70 per person including dinner. He reported he had attended the April Youth Council meeting and encouraged people to apply for vacancies on the EDC and asked that meeting locations be alternated given the current meeting room was too small. He suggested the Whittlesey Community Room in the Richmond Library.

Mr. Hindler also reported he had brought some economic development items to the Personnel Board and placed a request for the items to be considered at a future meeting. In addition, he referenced the workforce analysis and suggested the City needed a Marketing Manager for the port.

Commissioner Wear thanked Mr. Hindler for attending a recent City Council meeting and commenting on just about every issue. She appreciated that he read all information, thought it out and provided comments as part of civic engagement.

Kevin Guyun, a newcomer to the Richmond community, listened to all conversations and was excited about all of the possibilities. He wanted to know how to contribute in the future with EDC Commissioners individually and as a group. He was in the process of developing a fundraising service for non-profit organizations that supported economic development and was considering working with the arts community and the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission (RACC), and could provide more information at a later date.

Commissioner Gliksohn announced the Richmond Arts Center had a John Wehrle exhibit that was open for another week.

Ms. Beacham reported the RACC meeting for the month of June had been canceled. There was more information on the City website.

Mr. de Leon added he would like to agendaize the following items for the next EDC meeting: increase EDC membership with a call out to Commissioners to change the date and time for EDC meetings to make them more accessible for others, and solicitation of more EDC Commissioners since the EDC should have a total of 15 members.

Mr. Hindler understood the City Council planned to make appointments to City Commissions at a future meeting.

9. Closing Comments: None

10. Adjournment: 12:41 p.m.