



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 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, Jackson, Sewell-Murphy, Wear, Willis and Council Liaison Doria Robinson

Absent: Commissioner Lynch

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

3. Approval of Minutes

June 11, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1st Gliksohn, 2nd Thompson, approved by a 7-0 Roll Call vote.

Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer responded to a question as to whether Vernon Whitmore, Executive Director, Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC) had been appointed as a member to the Economic Development Commission (EDC). He had not seen an application submitted to the City Clerk's Office and suggested the application be resubmitted. He confirmed an application was pending for Kevin Guyun and he would follow-up with the City Clerk on the status of appointments.

Commissioner Gliksohn stated he had resubmitted his application and received confirmation of receipt but was unaware of his status on the EDC.

4. Chair's Report

Chair Kenney suggested the consideration of a meeting time change for EDC meetings since people wanted to participate on the EDC, but were unable given the current meeting time. She had faced challenges with the meeting time since she was about to break ground on a real estate development project in which she was involved and she was in charge of the project planning. She was also challenged with whether she could retain her seat on the EDC given her job responsibilities. She asked the EDC to take into consideration a change to the meeting time to be more equitable and transparent and move the meeting time to later in the day. She understood Commissioner Lynch would be stepping down from the EDC for that very reason since she had a new job that could not accommodate the current meeting time.

Chair Kenney confirmed, when asked, that changing the meeting time, would require a vote of the EDC. She clarified that most City meetings occurred after 5:00 p.m.

Mr. de Leon clarified there were other City of Richmond meetings that currently meet in the afternoon. He expressed the willingness to agendize a discussion to change the EDC meeting time for the September EDC meeting. In the meantime, he would do some ground work and conduct a poll of everyone's preferred time of availability and the top three could be considered. As to whether a hybrid format could be considered, he understood that was possible but that format would

have to be agendized to ensure the public was notified ahead of time and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Brown Act.

Council Liaison Robinson clarified pursuant to the state requirements for a hybrid meeting, a quorum of Commissioners in-person would be required. A Commissioner could participate on-line but that individual could not be part of the quorum.

5. Old and/or New Business

a. August Recess

Mr. de Leon welcomed any questions or comments on the upcoming August Recess.

There were no comments.

b. Taste of Richmond

i. FY 2025-26 Budget (Jesson)

Mr. de Leon reported the City Council had adopted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 budget but he understood the Taste of Richmond (TOR) had not been delineated as a line-item.

Council Liaison Robinson clarified TOR had, in fact, been delineated in the FY 2025/26 budget as a \$20,000 line-item from Economic Development Funds, with \$10,000 separately for the Sustainability Expo. Given some confusion with staff as to what exactly had been budgeted, the budget information should be verified with the City Clerk's Office. If there were issues with funding from the Economic Development Fund budget, she asked staff to inform her since she had been assured "the money was there and was available."

Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham confirmed the funds were in the approved FY 2025/26 budget and the funds had been identified specifically for TOR and the Sustainability Expo.

ii. Transfer of Ownership to Non-Profit (Jesson)

Chair Kenney reported she had reviewed the meeting minutes for the June 11, 2025 EDC meeting and she was aware of the discussion about the transfer of ownership of TOR to a non-profit. She clarified that Mr. de Leon had brought forward an idea she had raised with him in January 2025, about the possibility of moving TOR out of the EDC and to a non-profit for efficiency purposes and since there had been circular conversations about people participating. She apologized for any confusion in that staff was being proactive to get that conversation started.

Chair Kenney stated one of the reasons the transfer of ownership was being considered now was because everyone's contract was on the table including her own contract; the contract for the Event Planner and fiscal sponsor. If TOR was moved to a non-profit, the EDC would serve as an advisory board and the bulk of the work could be done without the necessity of the management of subcommittee meetings. She had spoken with RCOC Executive Director Whitmore about housing TOR and Mr. Whitmore was enthusiastic about that possibility since RCOC oversaw all of the City of Richmond. That arrangement would allow the EDC to focus its efforts on legislative things, which was what the EDC was supposed to do and serve as an advisory body to the City Council. The EDC had not been able to do that fully, particularly when TOR had come about since everyone's attention was on the event.

If the EDC voted to transfer ownership of TOR to a non-profit, Chair Kenney would like to focus the remainder of her time as the Chair on strategic planning with the EDC as an advisory body to the City Council. Transfer of TOR to RCOC would give the fiscal and administrative responsibilities of TOR to the RCOC. If such action was taken, she stated for the record and to

ensure transparency that she would renew her contract, which would likely make everyone more comfortable and allow the EDC to focus on what it was meant to do.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked if contracts were still involved if RCOC took over TOR.

Chair Kenney advised that if RCOC took over TOR, RCOC would decide who it wanted to hire and it would not require a voting process. Similar outside events had outside contracts, such as for event planners, brand developers and content creators, as examples. Even if the RCOC takes over TOR, she would like the EDC to remain involved as a Steering Committee to the RCOC. She did not want the EDC to lose its thumbprint because TOR was originally an EDC event and she did not want that history to be washed away.

Vice-Chair Thompson agreed with the notion of moving the operation of the actual TOR event to a non-profit. He suggested the RCOC should set goals and objectives, monitor expectations and provide an evaluation criteria for success. If the operation of TOR was moved to a non-profit, he asked whether the marketing of the TOR tour and execution of the plan would be handed off to the non-profit or whether another group, such as a fiscal sponsor, would be involved in channeling funds to the non-profit to execute the TOR tour.

Chair Kenney clarified there did not need to be two separate entities because it was a non-profit. The reason why the EDC needed a fiscal sponsor for TOR in the first place was that the EDC did not serve as a non-profit. If TOR was moved to a non-profit, it would not need a non-profit and a fiscal sponsor since it would all be housed under one place including all contracting, which would be directly through the non-profit and not the EDC. An evaluation process and goals could be handled by a Steering Committee.

Mr. de Leon confirmed that the transfer of ownership of TOR to a non-profit would require a vote of the EDC. Once that action had been taken, staff could officially formalize an agreement and work with the City Attorney's Office to sign-off.

Chair Kenney added the work of TOR would not be affected by the August Recess since the work could just happen, but the transfer needed to happen to allow the preliminary work to be done.

Council Liaison Robinson reported one of the things that was happening with event funding was a new process around accountability, which would affect the availability of funds. She would have to check into when that process would begin.

Chair Kenney thanked Council Liaison Robinson for the support of funds for TOR and the Sustainability Expo and recognized there were fundraising opportunities as well.

Commissioner Gliksohn commented that a fiscal sponsorship agreement had been included in the EDC agenda packet and he asked if that would be negotiated.

Mr. de Leon explained in the likelihood the conversation about transfer of ownership had not worked, he would have brought up the fiscal sponsorship and the information had been included to cover all bases.

1st Kenney, 2nd Thompson, to transfer ownership of the Taste of Richmond responsibilities from the Richmond Economic Development Commission to the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, approved by a 6-0-1 Roll Call vote, with Commissioner Sewell-Murphy abstaining.

iii. Fiscal Sponsorship Renewal (Chair Kenney and Jesson)

iv. Status Check (Chair Kenney)

No discussion was required for Items 5.b(iii) and (iv) due to the above action.

Vernon Whitmore, Executive Director, RCOC, reported the RCOC Board of Directors was excited about the opportunity and would work with the City and the EDC on TOR. RCOC was ready and willing to move forward along with Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) a member of the RCOC, which was also ready to work in partnership.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked when the public would be notified of the date of TOR.

Chair Kenney advised as soon as contracts had been executed the date could be announced and she could then provide a complete run through.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Sustainability – Lead: Sewell-Murphy

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy understood staff was going to contact Marin Clean Energy (MCE) about the possibility of serving as a fiscal sponsor for the Sustainability Expo and she was unaware of the status. She also understood the Chair had possible leads she could put her into contact with as possible fiscal sponsors for the event.

Mr. de Leon did not recall that conversation but he understood Commissioner Sewell-Murphy now needed a contact through MCE for a possible fiscal sponsor staff could look into.

Council Liaison Robinson reported she had a couple of conversations with people about gaging interest and she could rekindle those conversations and pass info back to staff.

Commissioner Willis was curious of the amount of overlap between the work on the Sustainability Expo and the Policy and Green, Blue New Deal (GBND) Subcommittee and helping Commissioner Sewell-Murphy obtain partners and sponsors.

Commissioner Jackson recalled a discussion about leveraging consulting or someone to make the Sustainability Expo what it needed to be, similar to what was being done for TOR. She recalled a conversation about someone to do the operational and administrative duties around participation and capacity, and who was doing what She asked if that was something Commissioner Sewell-Murphy was leaning towards.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy explained she was thinking about coordinating with committees on the EDC and throughout the City in terms of what they may contribute to the Sustainability Expo. She referenced Amazon's Helios Project, which she understood had to do with nuclear energy and discussions around harnessing nuclear energy to take the place of PG&E.

Commissioner Willis commented that companies like Google, Amazon and others had been investing in nuclear fusion, which was one of the cleaner forms of energy and was something that was still under development.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy welcomed any additional questions or suggestions on her proposal. She looked forward to contact with MCE on a possible fiscal sponsorship.

Commissioner Gliksohn referenced the funding sources for the Sustainability Expo as provided in the information packet from Commissioner Sewell-Murphy, and suggested the information provided should be revised to reflect the City had approved \$10,000 in the FY 2025/26 budget for the event.

Vice-Chair Thompson commented he had read the information provided by Commissioner Sewell-Murphy, which was a good way to capture potential fiscal sponsors' interest and possible funding. He asked how and who would execute the Sustainability Expo, and asked if Commissioner Sewell-Murphy had envisioned the EDC doing the work, or handing it off similar to TOR or some other entity like a non-profit.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy wanted the EDC be the sponsors/responsible party for the first Sustainability Expo and then the EDC could decide whether to hand it off to someone else. In terms of planning events, she asked about the role for that person.

Chair Kenney explained for TOR, as an example, the Event Planner handled the logistics including permitting, coordination, back and forth emails between vendors and the like, and marketing materials and all organization for the event in and of itself. She [Chair Kenney] handled the brand and website development, digital marketing, public relation releases and the marketing and advertising side. She also coordinated with the Event Planner for the plan for TOR and described the process followed with the Event Planner on a two-year contract at that time.

While Commissioner Sewell-Murphy sought a similar process for the Sustainability Expo, it was noted the budget for the event may not accommodate an Event Planner position.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy stated she had spoken with Parks and Recreation Division staff who included the Sustainability Expo on its Events Calendar for April 2026, and clarified the event had been planned for both in and outside.

Chair Kenney cautioned about an indoor/outdoor event given the event would be held during the month of April.

Commissioner Willis suggested between now and September, the EDC needed to determine the budget for an Event Planner for the Sustainability Expo and the sequence of events that needed to take place to get an Event Planner on contract, with the knowledge a fiscal sponsor should be identified first. If that could be worked out by the September EDC meeting that would be helpful.

Chair Kenney highlighted the costs for the Event Planner for TOR but emphasized a fiscal sponsor needed to be secured first. Speaking to the budget provided for the Sustainability Expo, she suggested around 60 percent of the items listed could be done by an Event Planner. She again walked through the process followed for TOR, how the fiscal sponsor for the event had been secured in the past and her work with the Event Planner. For the Sustainability Expo, having someone from the Subcommittee to facilitate sponsorships and partnerships was important. She also reiterated a prior commitment to help Commissioner Sewell-Murphy when she reached that point, and where she could help her write her sponsorship decks and letters for the event. Depending on capacity, early January 2026 was when those conversations should happen with sponsorships usually a 60-day runway, and those sponsorships should be secured 60-days or more in advance of the event.

Council Liaison Robinson suggested this could be an easy ask for fiscal sponsors from the types of corporations like MCE which did this type of work. Once the fiscal sponsor was secured, Commissioner Sewell-Murphy could then talk to them about a pathway for additional funds and possibly hiring an Event Planner. She did not see securing a fiscal sponsorship would be difficult in this case since it would be a tax write-off for an event that was not that costly.

In response to the Chair as to whether additional support was needed for conversations with MCE, Commissioner Sewell-Murphy understood staff was the main support to make those connections.

Mr. de Leon confirmed staff could provide that support to make connections with MCE and then it could be brought back to the EDC to consider MCE or someone else as the fiscal sponsor, hopefully at the September EDC meeting.

b. Cannabis – Lead: Lynch

There was no report.

c. Policy & GBND – Lead: Willis

Commissioner Willis reported the Policy and GBND Subcommittee received an email from City staff which reported five GBND priorities had been approved by the City Council and which he highlighted at this time. Those priorities included Brown Field research and innovation, destination downtown, transition to zero emissions vehicles, building electrification and retrofits and port upgrades. He also had a call from the California Workforce Development Board which had commented that of the five priorities, the one that overlapped with Workforce Development was building electrification since it had pre-apprenticeship programs in the trades and was also considering grant proposals related to electric vehicles (EVs).

In terms of the five-year plan, Commissioner Willis suggested the Subcommittee would welcome any input if there was anything the EDC could do to be useful around integrating some of the GBND elements into the plan.

Commissioner Wear added there had been interest from others to join the GBND Standing Committee and she hoped in working with the City Clerk an expansion could be possible. She otherwise reported the Standing Committee had focused efforts on port upgrades, with a letter having been written to the Port Director to ask how the Standing Committee could fit in, and with a suggestion that the yearly manufacturing visits in the City of Richmond included the port, with a tour of the facility and with members of the Standing Committee to be brought up to speed on a survey that had been done.

In terms of building electrification, Commissioner Wear reported the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) was offering a pilot project that would look at the entire City of Richmond and what it would take for the City's different infrastructure to transform to electrification. The pilot program would not cost the City and had a deadline of July 31, 2025. Staff had been provided information on the program that would be considered in terms of feasibility with the GBND. In addition, the Standing Committee was participating with the Contra Costa County Green Empowerment Zone; she had attended the first meeting and the next meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 11, 2025.

Mr. de Leon reported the GBND Project was being transitioned to him and Management Analyst Junne Garcia by other members of City staff, and they would serve as the lead and coordinators for the subcommittee. As members of staff, they had attended Green Empowerment Zone meetings.

Council Liaison Robinson was excited to learn City apprenticeships would include EVs, with future programs to help car repair shops incorporate that technology.

Commissioner Willis added that the proposal included Contra Costa Community College as a training provider and the program would not only upscale City employees, it included an offering at the college for mechanics across the City.

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

Council Liaison Robinson acknowledged she had missed a couple of EDC meetings. Her father had passed away and she had inherited the care of her step-mother, and it had been a rough couple of months. She was not normally absent from meetings but emphasized as a member of the City Council she had been able to advocate for the EDC for items in the City budget. If there was anything that could be done to help she would do what she could.

Chair Kenney offered her condolences to Council Liaison Robinson.

8. Public Comments/Announcements

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, understood the Mayor's Office would be making appointments to the EDC sometime during the month of September, dates yet to be determined. He reported on his attendance at the Youth Council meeting and encouraged candidates to fill EDC vacancies. He also invited the EDC to the City of Hercules Business Round Table, August 7, 2025 at Leila by the Bay, with the Guest Speaker to be Hercules City Manager Dante Hall.

In addition, the City of Crockett, Chamber of Commerce Mega-Mixer was scheduled for August 25, 2025 at The Old Homestead in the City of Crockett, \$15 for non-members, and the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference would be held on September 4, 2025, hosted by the City of El Cerrito, \$70 per person including dinner. Additionally, the EDC was asked to consider meeting in a larger meeting space, such as the Whittlesey Community Room in the Richmond Library or at CoBiz Richmond.

Chair Kenney wished everyone a pleasant summer and commented that she could be reach via email between now and the next meeting in September.

9. Closing Comments: None

10. Adjournment: 12:41 p.m.