



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 10, 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: 11:35 a.m. by Chair Kenney

2. Roll Call & Check In

Present: Chair Kenney, Vice-Chair Thompson and Commissioner Gliksohn, Sewell-Murphy*, Wear, Willis and Council Liaison Doria Robinson*
*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: Commissioners Jackson and Lynch

Staff Present: Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer and Junne Garcia, Management Analyst

3. Approval of Minutes

a. July 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1st Gliksohn, 2nd Wear, approved by a 5-0 Roll Call vote.

4. Chair's Report

Chair Kenney reported during the July 9, 2025 Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting, the EDC discussed the role of the EDC as an advisory body to the City Council. During her remaining time as the Chair of the EDC, she would like to focus on creating a pipeline to the City Council and back to the EDC and that the EDC provide advisory recommendations as a collective for the next Chair. The first step would be to clarify and evaluate priorities and align with the mission of the EDC and re-ground that mission. She asked staff for a list of City Council priorities with respect to small business growth, workforce development, downtown revitalization and equitable investment for the EDC to review over the next 30-days and pair that with the goals the EDC set as a Commission in 2024/25. She asked that the information be evaluated in tandem, with the EDC to select three focus areas at the next meeting.

In the meantime, Chair Kenney reported she would be requesting some time with City Council members to understand their individual priorities and start to create that relationship back to the EDC. She would like to circumvent how things had been done in the past as much as possible so there would be a continuous relationship between the City Council and the EDC. She also would like to see other City Council members attend the EDC meeting in the month of October. She was uncertain if a mass email was needed to be sent between now and the next meeting but wanted to extend an invitation to the City Council to allow relationship building.

Chair Kenney added she had a step-by-step list for each meeting, essentially pre-agendas that had been sent to the team and which the EDC may review beforehand. If there were any questions, comments, concerns or additions, she asked that feedback be provided within 30-days. If she heard nothing, she would move forward accordingly.

Commissioner Gliksohn reported he would not be in attendance at the October EDC meeting and would communicate with the Chair via email.

Chair Kenney stated there would be four topics of focus with the City Council and include clarifying values and priorities, open a direct line of communication, deliver immediate wins and build a long-term pipeline.

5. Old and/or New Business

a. Taste of Richmond

- i. Status of Transfer of Responsibility to Non-Profit (Jesson)
- ii. Status Check (Kenney)

Jesson de Leon, Senior Business Assistance Officer, reported that the EDC had previously voted to transfer the hosting duties for Taste of Richmond (TOR) to a nonprofit organization, represented by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC). He had been working with the City Attorney and the City Manager's Office and they were in the process of finalizing the contract and the wording of a resolution to be presented to the City Council for consideration at its September 23, 2025 meeting.

In the meantime, City Manager Shasa Curl requested the EDC start working on TOR and she had identified October 18, 2028 as the date she would like TOR to occur. Although the Chair had identified a week of events for TOR, nothing had been finalized due to the unsettled situation with respect to the hosting duties.

Commissioner Wear reported that October 18, 2025 was a big day for protests across the country due to the continuing No Kings protest.

Chair Kenney commented that the challenge was that the City Manager had not previously been involved to be able to mandate a date for TOR.

Mr. de Leon explained the City Manager had served as the Economic Development Director in the past.

The EDC reiterated October 18, 2025 was not a good day for the event, and although there was a recommendation for the event to be held on October 19, 2025, Chair Kenney reported she would be out of town on October 19.

Mr. de Leon was open to receiving feedback as the EDC was the advisory body.

Commissioner Wear asked about the amount of lead time needed to schedule TOR, and Chair Kenney clarified that the EDC had discussed but had not chosen a date for TOR because of the transfer of responsibilities. She had been notified in August that the City Council was required to vote on the transfer of responsibilities and that the EDC was in no position to do anything.

Mr. de Leon clarified that the decision from the City Manager had been provided to staff on Monday, September 8, 2025, and he was providing the information to the EDC at this time. He acknowledged this was new information, and noted the City Manager wanted to execute TOR on October 18, 2025 for a one-day event. He again welcomed feedback that could be forwarded to the City Manager.

Chair Kenney commented on the time involved to choose a date and noted it had taken three to four months to plan TOR for one week. In previous years, it had taken anywhere from three to four months to plan for a one-day event and it would take longer than 30-days to get sponsorship turnaround, talking to restaurants and getting them committed before there was a decision on the format for a one-day event. She also would have to check with the Event Planner to see whether she was available. There was a low hanging fruit option, but again she would have to check with the Event Planner to determine her availability since she understood the Event Planner was in the process of planning a gala for the Richmond Community Foundation and she was uncertain of that event's date.

Chair Kenney suggested that the recommended date of October 18, or even October 19, was not feasible. She asked that the City Manager contact her, not as the Chair of the EDC but as the marketer on the contract for TOR. She pointed out that there were no current contracts for anyone because they were waiting for the transfer of responsibilities from the EDC to the RCOC. Additionally, a new fiscal sponsor would have to be secured since the contract had not been renewed with Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) because of the transfer of responsibilities to the RCOC.

Mr. de Leon understood the proposed contract would be a Professional Services Contract for the RCOC to actually have responsibility for the event rather than being the fiscal sponsor.

Chair Kenney commented that given this was all new information, she requested that she and Mr. de Leon, the City Manager and the Event Planner get on calendar within the next 7-days to have a conversation about the direction from the City Manager.

Vernon Whitmore, Executive Director, RCOC, reported the RCOC already had a lot of things in place for TOR and had to set up a meeting for clarification since the RCOC had a marketing person, event planner and two sponsors in place and they all needed to get on the same page. He confirmed, when asked, the City Manager had given the RCOC a directive on the date of the event for October 18, 2025.

Mr. de Leon brought Council Liaison Doria Robinson up to speed on the status of TOR and the direction from the City Manager given that she arrived after Roll Call and during the discussion in process. He acknowledged, when asked, that the new TOR date of October 18 directed by the City Manager had not been discussed with the EDC beforehand and he recognized the EDC was just learning about the directive at this time.

Chair Kenney reiterated the challenges in having TOR held on October 18 as the City Manager directed. She was in no position to force an event and if that was the case she would recuse herself from the event. She commented on the amount of time she and the Event Planner had put into the current event, which included work they were not paid for. She understood the date of October 18 was something the City Manager directed, but she was uncomfortable as someone who had served the TOR population for two years and stated that population expected a certain kind of event and there could be blowback.

In response to Council Liaison Robinson, Mr. de Leon explained that the transfer of hosting the event was not the core issue, it was presenting the contract to the City Council with a \$20,000 allotment from the budget to execute the plan. He acknowledged the initial idea was for TOR to be a one-week event for restaurant week but given the delay in approving the contract, that format may not be possible.

Council Liaison Robinson asked whether the original scope of work was still feasible, and if so, when it could be accomplished. In response, Chair Kenney reiterated that it had taken three months last year to plan a week of events, and emphasized that it would not be possible to organize either a full week of events or a one-day TOR event within the month of October. The success of the event depended heavily on contractors, as there had historically been challenges in securing sufficient volunteer participation for TOR. The use of contractors had been established prior to her tenure as EDC Chair. For the past two or three years, a marketer and an event planner had taken the lead in organizing TOR, with the EDC providing advisory support. Given there had been bureaucratic issues that had kept progress from happening on the advisory end, Mr. de Leon had recommended moving TOR under a nonprofit for this year.

Chair Kenney explained that the EDC had been under the impression by voting to take that action in July that contracts would be signed and they could move forward. She later learned the City Attorney advised the EDC did not have the power to transfer the responsibility of the event to a nonprofit, which had stopped everything since the EDC had been out of session for the past month. The City Council was now required to vote on having TOR move out of the EDC and into the RCOC, which vote would not occur until September 23, 2025 and the City Manager had recently directed TOR to be held on October 18; however, the EDC had learned that would be a national day of protest for No Kings and many people, including herself, would be out of town on October 19.

As to whether the original event, as described, could be held on a different date, Chair Kenney suggested that realistically it would have to be held prior to the Thanksgiving holiday but it would be a different version of TOR. She was open to considering an event in November but was a bit peeved because had she been aware this would be the outcome of the EDC vote she would rather have kept things the way they were until the end of the year where the timeline for TOR for this year could have been kept. What had stopped everything was the City Attorney stating the EDC did not have the authority to take the action it had. Again, while another date could be considered, she suggested the event would not be as magnanimous as the 2024 event but she did have all of the templates from last year that could be used.

Mr. Whitmore stated the RCOC had also been caught off guard with the City Manager's direction that the event be held on October 18. He explained that he had to work with the RCOC Board and they had to agree with everything that was going on and there were people already on staff and if they were to give the RCOC the event they had to have it, but it was okay to have a subcommittee work with the RCOC.

Chair Kenney commented that if transferring TOR to the RCOC, and if using current RCOC staff, she and the Event Planner would not be part of TOR for this year and the contracts for her and the Event Planner would be unnecessary.

Mr. Whitmore clarified that the RCOC was responsible for demonstrating the event's success and ensuring that everyone involved in organizing it felt comfortable and supported.

Mr. Whitmore reported that he had Amazon, Mechanic's Bank and Chevron on board and while the RCOC would get the \$20,000 allotment from the budget, it wanted to get more funds to make this a really big event.

Council Liaison Robinson asked whether there was still space for the EDC to advise, be involved and be a partner on the project, and Mr. Whitmore confirmed the RCOC still needed that partnership and that had been discussed with the City Manager.

Chair Kenney clarified that it had been stated in July that the subcommittee that had already served would now act as an advisory committee to the RCOC. She noted that the success of past events would be evaluated based on whether they had been contracted or not. She suggested having an offline conversation with Mr. Whitmore, explaining that when she initially proposed Taste of Richmond (TOR) to him, the vision was for it to be a partnership involving all businesses. However, Mr. Whitmore was now indicating that the RCOC already had designated participants and wanted to avoid additional expenses—leaving both her and the Event Planner in an awkward position.

Mr. Whitmore noted this direction was coming from the City Manager.

Chair Kenney pointed out that the City Manager had not yet engaged with the individuals who had been involved in planning the event. She reiterated her request for a meeting that includes all relevant parties, including the RCOC

Council Liaison Robinson asked that she be included in the meeting to better understand what was to be presented to the City Council.

Commissioner Gliksohn commented that when the EDC voted on this matter in July, the EDC was unaware that action could not be taken and he was uncertain how the EDC could have been made aware of that information beforehand to avoid the current situation.

Mr. de Leon suggested no one could have known until the action was brought to the attention of the City Attorney for review.

Commissioner Gliksohn recommended in the future that the City Attorney be contacted before such action was considered to avoid similar problems.

Chair Kenney reiterated the EDC had not discussed the action taken beforehand, it had been a recommendation from staff and there were a lot of processes where things just come up.

Mr. de Leon stated he hoped he had initially cautioned he would have to bring the action taken by the EDC to the City Attorney for approval, but apologized if he had not.

Commissioner Willis asked what had changed around the strategy for a week long versus a one-day event for TOR since the experience with a one-day event in the past was okay but a week-long event was better and a desire of the community.

Chair Kenney explained a one-day event was extractive for small businesses who were not making any money; they were just doing sampling in the courtyard, and along with making no money, there were operational expenses to participate, which the businesses did not recapture.

When TOR was moved to a week event, it meant “we go to them” so people could find out what and where the new businesses were and those businesses had experienced a 55 percent increase in sales for the times people were in their buildings for the event. The EDC had voted to change TOR to a restaurant week event because of the economics.

Council Liaison Robinson suggested the new format was successful and what was getting people into the businesses, which was important to convey to the City Council.

Chair Kenney explained the format change in TOR was for the businesses, not the EDC, RCOC or RMSI and the businesses wanted that format back. She reiterated she did not want to force a one-day event because of the timing issue.

Mr. Whitmore suggested the businesses be given a \$500 stipend to participate in TOR so they were not out of pocket, but Chair Kenney clarified that had been done in 2023 and that strategy had not helped the businesses at all.

Council Liaison Robinson emphasized what the businesses wanted were customers and have them go back to the restaurants after TOR if they liked what they found, which was more valuable than a one-time event, particularly if going to brick-and-mortar locations.

Chair Kenney agreed and commented that had been some of the feedback from restaurants that more people ordered from DoorDash, which involved heavy carrier fees than customers who walked through the door. The businesses preferred the customers walk through the door and the changes in the format had been based on feedback/surveys from the restaurant participants.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked whether staff was aware of the City Manager's thinking when dictating the date of October 18, 2025 for TOR as a one-day event.

Mr. de Leon understood that the event had been previously held during the month of October in 2024. There had been no advertisement for the event this year so far and due to the hosting transfer situation the event was in limbo and the City Manager selected the date of October 18, 2025, and directed staff to achieve that. He thanked the EDC for the feedback which would be shared with the City Manager.

Chair Kenney emphasized that was why she needed to meet with the City Manager. She commented there had been different iterations of a one-day event which had been held over the past six years, with the exception of the pandemic period. She reiterated the fact a one-day event had not been beneficial to the businesses, particularly due to operational costs in the food industry and advised this information had been shared with the City Council in 2024 when she had requested additional funds in the budget for TOR.

Commissioner Wear suggested a weekend (Friday through Sunday) TOR event could be considered as a compromise for this year given the challenges in planning, as discussed, and which could lead to a week-long TOR event in 2026.

Commissioner Gliksohn liked the idea and suggested on the weekend there could be lunch and dinner on Friday, breakfast, lunch and dinner or brunch on Saturday and Sunday and multiple locations could participate.

Mr. Whitmore commented the plan was to have at least one location in each district.

Chair Kenney explained that Council members had been encouraged to participate in the restaurants in their district last year for TOR but not everyone had participated and not every district had a restaurant. She highlighted the successes of the 2024 TOR, which involved a total of 500 attendees. She reiterated a one-day event would not work and the City Manager directive did not make sense as it compared to the success of TOR in 2024.

Chair Kenney also commented that if an event was held in November, as Commissioner Wear suggested, possibly a restaurant weekend could be considered and there could possibly be a one-off event between now and the next TOR. She reported some of the feedback received from restaurants about holding the event in 2025 was that restaurant operators did not know one another, and she hoped to see that happen by holding a big event for restaurants only.

Chair Kenney reiterated all of the planning that had gone into TOR for 2025, which included not only restaurant week, but teaching food classes at Richmond Renaissance, how to get food business licenses in the City of Richmond, and was to not only be restaurant week but a business development week to tie into what the EDC was all about. She hoped to incorporate pieces of that work leading into TOR for 2026. When asked by Council Liaison Robinson, she clarified those were pieces that had been discussed by the EDC and those pieces were being brought back this year, to be under the contract to be executed for TOR.

Council Liaison Robinson suggested separating out the projects, such as the goal for TOR to introduce people to restaurants in Richmond and bring people into the brick-and-mortar locations and uplift eateries in Richmond, and as a separate project, support the capacity of Richmond restaurants.

Chair Kenney reiterated the intent for the capacity projects she described to be part of TOR, particularly restaurant owners learning about each other and which had been done successfully in the City of Oakland. TOR, as originally shaped, was also about community building too and that was the other aspect of a week-long event.

The EDC discussed when to hold TOR prior to the end of the year, there was concern with holding the event just prior to the Thanksgiving holiday and there was a suggestion to hold the event the weekend of November 14, 15 and 16, 2025.

Mr. Whitmore advised the RCOC already had branding for the event after learning of the City Manager's directive for an event on October 18, 2025, and while the Chair commented that was not the branding for the event, Mr. Whitmore explained if the RCOC was to do this, the RCOC had its branding and that was what would be used.

Chair Kenney acknowledged it was possible to have a weekend event in November, but she would have to have conversations with others first given there were a lot of things changing that had not been previously discussed.

Mr. de Leon advised he would schedule a meeting with the stakeholders as soon as possible to discuss the matter further. He understood the date of October 18, 2025, was a "no-go," and a compromise could be the weekend of November 14, 15 and 16, 2025 with the modified TOR version, to hopefully incorporate the resources of community building to build up on TOR that supported the restaurants and gave them networking ability and business development, and with TOR to be held at the restaurants.

As to how the Chair could get on the docket to discuss the transfer of responsibilities for TOR to a nonprofit that would be considered at the September 23, 2025 City Council meeting, Council Liaison Robinson stated the item would likely be a Consent Calendar item unless pulled for discussion.

b. October Business Tour (Jesson)

i. Viridi Parente

Mr. de Leon reported he had learned the EDC conducted a tour of Allen Brothers during its October meeting in 2024. Viridi Parente was willing to provide a factory tour of its battery storage location, which segued into National Manufacturer's Week to be held on October 3 through 10, 2025, which offered a perfect synergy of holding the EDC meeting on October 8, 2025 at the Viridi Parente location. The meeting would be open to the public with an R.S.V.P. required to participate in the

tour. He asked if that was acceptable to the EDC and welcomed any suggestions for lunch locations.

Commissioners Gliksohn and Willis reported they would not be present for the October 8 EDC meeting.

Chair Kenney stated, when asked by staff, the closest restaurant location able to house a number of people was Golden Gate Bistro.

Sarah Wally, Executive Director, RMSI, explained Viridi Parente had been welcomed into the community and was a supporter of RMSI. She described the business as a mobile battery energy storage system as an alternative to diesel generators for a wide range of commercial and industrial purposes, with their products and machinery approved for indoor use. It was a big asset for the City of Richmond.

Mr. Whitmore suggested the EDC also consider a tour of the Amazon facility. When asked, he was unaware whether Amazon workers were unionized.

- ii. National Manufacturer's Week – October 3 through October 10, 2025 (Jesson)

Mr. de Leon reported staff was working on a celebration for National Manufacturer's Week, recognizing manufacturers in the City, which was still pending with more information to come to be communicated with the EDC when details were available.

Council Liaison Robinson suggested a short video of who and what was being manufactured in Richmond, which could be used as a media item the City could use on the City website, social media platforms, and the like.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Sustainability – Lead: Sewell-Murphy

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy reported she was familiar with the Commission on Aging since each year they held the Senior Winter Ball and a number of other activities. She explained that she had contacted their staff person who advised the Commission on Aging did not have a fiscal sponsor, but used a trust account through the Department of Finance. That staff person expressed the willingness to provide information to her but she had not yet received anything.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy stated she had left a message with the Finance Director who informed her via text she would do some research on a trust account through the Finance Department. She asked staff whether they were aware whether a trust account could be used in lieu of a fiscal sponsor.

Mr. de Leon was unfamiliar with the trust account and he would have to do more research with the Finance Department and get back to Commissioner Sewell-Murphy. He asked if the intent was to have the Sustainability Subcommittee manage a bank account for the Sustainability Expo.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy understood all of that was being done through the Finance Department for the Commission on Aging.

Mr. de Leon reiterated he would have to do some research, get back to Commissioner Sewell-Murphy and clarified the intent for a trust account was for the Sustainability Expo.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy added she was a member of the California-Nevada Task Force on Climate Justice, a faith-based organization, and it had been very interesting to learn the blue whale was no longer being observed since it was starving having to compete with humans for krill. In addition, she planned to contact a teen who lived in Mississippi who had been given a Geographic Award for her work growing over 1,000 oysters that helped to filter the ocean and protect the reefs.

Commissioner Willis reported there was also a large project in New York where a billion oysters were being planted to clean the waterways.

Chair Kenney asked that Commissioner Sewell-Murphy not take fiscal sponsorship completely off the table since the Sustainability Expo was a new event and if a fiscal sponsor was secured that partnership would help with the marketing for the event.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked about the status of contacting Marin Clean Energy (MCE) as a possible fiscal sponsor for the Sustainability Expo, to which Commissioner Sewell-Murphy explained that staff had originally stated they would contact MCE and put her in contact with someone but nothing had happened.

Mr. de Leon confirmed he had the contact information for MCE that could be provided.

Commissioner Gliksohn suggested Commissioner Sewell-Murphy start that discussion with MCE now to see whether fiscal sponsorship was possible, but Commissioner Sewell-Murphy preferred to see whether a trust account was possible first and if not, then possibly she could contact MCE.

Council Liaison Robinson asked if moving forward with a trust account, who would be responsible for all of the financial reporting, tracking and logistics planning.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy understood the EDC would still be responsible for the planning. She reiterated staff was to get back to her with more information and the Finance Director was to do more research on the possibility of a trust account. She hoped to have more information at the next meeting.

Mr. de Leon confirmed that if a trust account was possible, he would provide information on who was responsible for the trust account, the accounting, management of the finances, contracts, reporting and the logistics of the event.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy reiterated the EDC would remain responsible for the planning. If a trust account was possible, she understood it may be similar to what a fiscal sponsor would do.

Council Liaison Robinson commented it was a huge lift to plan an event, and Commissioner Sewell-Murphy reported she had already contacted some of the people interested in helping with the event.

Chair Kenney reported at the last EDC meeting Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked her whether the Event Planner for TOR was interested in being the Event Planner for the Sustainability Expo. She [Chair Kenney] had spoken with the Event Planner who was available on the date planned for the Sustainability Expo. In terms of the fiscal sponsor, she noted the fiscal sponsor was responsible for the accounting for the event, with Commissioner Sewell-Murphy to focus on the planning aspect for the event and if that was not in the trust account, she highly encouraged Commissioner Sewell-Murphy to secure a fiscal sponsor. She suggested even if the trust account had the fiscal lift with the Finance Department, she still encouraged Commissioner Sewell-Murphy to have those conversations with the fiscal sponsor and make them marketing sponsors not fiscal sponsors, which

would still give the support for the event, the first of its kind in Richmond. She encouraged getting as much outside help as possible and still talk with MCE and keep it open ended as to what was wanted, and if all of the financial support could be provided through the trust account, MCE could still be a marketing sponsor.

Vice-Chair Thompson clarified with Commissioner Sewell-Murphy, the Commission on Aging was a City Commission which used a trust account model to fund and execute activities.

b. Cannabis – Lead: Lynch

There was no report.

c. Policy & GBND – Lead: Willis

Commissioner Willis thanked Ms. Wally for making an introduction to Viridi Parente. He reiterated he would be unable to participate in the upcoming tour of the Viridi Parente factory in October but hoped to do that in the future to get to know the company given the overlap between the skills sought for workers and what was being considered around the Green Blue New Deal (GBND) in terms of electrification and electric vehicles (EVs).

Commissioner Willis otherwise reported he had attended the North and East Festival. He also had a call with the Mayor related to his reappointment to the EDC and in that conversation the Mayor wanted to focus on the GBND and have a follow-up meeting, which he hoped could be scheduled between now and the October field trip.

Commissioner Willis also referenced the five-year Economic Development Plan for the City and asked staff if there was any way for the EDC to be useful in providing feedback and recommendations. He added a monthly check-up with staff was due and he asked about the status.

Mr. de Leon reported the monthly check-up had been transferred from another staff person to himself and Management Analyst Junne Garcia who were the new liaisons and who would forward the GBND meeting quarterly updates.

Council Liaison Robinson asked that she be included in those meetings.

Commissioner Wear also reported she and the Vice-Chair had attended the open house at the Port Administration Office adjacent to Rigger’s Loft, which had been interesting, lively and a great moment where she had met a representative from Viridi Parente. She was pleased to see the vendors and groups interested in bringing commerce into the port.

Vice-Chair Thompson appreciated the opportunity to attend the open house when the Port Director had provided a briefing on port operations, current state, future plans, key operational objectives and community engagement. The open house had been well attended by businesses, educational institutions, community workforce organizations, big companies and representatives from elected officials and the City Council.

Mr. de Leon reported an email had been provided to the EDC along with a flyer about the port open house.

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

Council Liaison Robinson reported the MacDonald Avenue Task Force held a recent meeting with another meeting scheduled in the next week to define the scope of the task force and with a

facilitator to be secured to help facilitate meetings and move the process forward. The mission of the task force was to identify both a short- and long-term vision for MacDonald Avenue. The short-term vision would be things that helped immediately such as cleanup and façade improvements and low hanging fruit that could be done now or within five years. The long-term vision would include a consultant to help to understand the potential of radically changing development along MacDonald Avenue and what that vision and opportunities looked like. More news about task force membership would be provided when available.

Council Liaison Robinson clarified a consultant had not yet been chosen, there were some consultants the City had on standby that may be a good fit but a Request for Proposal (RFP) would be distributed to select the consultant for that effort.

Ms. Wally, a member of the MacDonald Avenue Task Force, reiterated the intent for a short- and long-term vision and what private and public partnerships may look like, along with engagement with properties in the downtown and a deeper dive once the scope was complete with the consultant to determine what was viable.

Council Liaison Robinson added that someone from the Arts Corridor would be invited to join with the task force to avoid duplicating efforts and with a target zone of Bissell to Barrett Avenues and 5th to 16th Streets as the target area to focus for schematics to be developed. The task force also hoped to have a City website page to provide updates on the discussions.

Mr. Whitmore emphasized the importance of bringing people to the downtown as a destination location.

Ms. Wally added the goal in the short term was to maximize the existing available square footage.

Commissioner Gliksohn commented there were two parts to MacDonald Avenue and he was uncertain how to bridge that gap, which was something he hoped the consultant would review.

Council Liaison Robinson advised this would be a multi-phased project with an initial focus on 16th Street to Harbor. She explained one of the marketing hooks was the Arts Corridor idea, and the City also offered history with a number of historic buildings and historic elements along that corridor, and bringing that into what was being marketed was important.

Commissioner Willis suggested the Commission on Aging could be engaged with the effort.

1st Kenney, 2nd Thompson, approved by a 5-0 Roll Call vote to extend the EDC meeting to 1:05 p.m.

Council Liaison Robinson also reported the City Council voted to “hold” the Chevron Settlement due to threats from the Trump Administration to withhold funds for various federal grants, with the funds in the Settlement Agreement to be held in the event of emergencies although a portion of the funds had gone to a ballot initiative for a fund for children and youth. There was around \$48 million the City was sitting on and not using and there was an idea to focus some of the funds into a radical investment in economic development because of the dependence on the General Fund from the fossil fuel industry and due to the volatility from that industry and the fact two refineries had shut down substantially impacting the General Funds of the cities where the refineries were located. The idea was there could be a focused and specific economic investment that would help reduce dependency on the General Fund revenue from the fossil fuel industry and the EDC could help provide feedback on what those investments could be and what was needed to move in that direction. She hoped that topic could be agendaized for a future discussion.

Commissioner Wear suggested that topic could be added as part of the Chair's recommended priorities discussed earlier on the agenda.

8. Public Comments/Announcements

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, reported he had spoken with the Youth Council about filling remaining vacancies on the EDC and he planned to attend their next meeting. He also reported the Spirit and Soul Festival was scheduled for September 20, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and he invited the EDC to the Contra Costa Mayors Conference on December 4, 2025 at the City of Pinole Senior Center, \$70 per person, R.S.V.P. required.

The EDC was also invited to the Richmond Rotary Club weekly meeting at the Country Club on September 19, 2025 when the guest speaker would be City of Richmond Port Director Charles Gerard, who would provide a report on the port. Additionally, a new member of the EDC had been scheduled for appointment pending City Council approval at a meeting in September.

Ms. Wally highlighted the activities planned for the Spirit and Soul Festival including an inaugural health and resources hub, with the event scheduled for September 20, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Hindler also asked that the EDC consider hosting a venue at the SS Red Oak Victory Ship.

Mr. Whitmore reported the RCOC had recently partnered with the Mayor's Office where community input was provided on ideas for potential leases at Hilltop Plaza.

9. Closing Comments:

Chair Kenney reported that Jabari Muhammad, the previous owner of Snapper's Seafood, had recently passed away from cancer. She encouraged everyone to patronize the business, which had been a Richmond small business and staple for years.

10. Adjournment: 1:05 p.m.