

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 2025 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Richmond Room, 1st Floor, 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, Wear, Willis Sewell-Murphy* and Council Liaison Doria Robinson
*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: Chair Kenney, Commissioners Jackson and Lynch

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

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. September 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Item 3 (a) was moved to later on the agenda to allow for a quorum to be present since Commissioner Wear had to step out of the meeting to take a telephone call.

Commissioner Gliksohn commented that a lot had happened during the September 10, 2025 meeting. He appreciated the extensive meeting minutes.

Vice-Chair Thompson recognized the meeting minutes were very comprehensive and was thankful for that.

4. Chair's Report

Vice-Chair Thompson recognized the meeting agenda was full. He welcomed David Robinson as a new member of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and reported on his reappointment along with Commissioners Gliksohn, Wear, and Willis. He added that the EDC would receive an update on the Taste of Richmond (TOR) along with updates for the Green, Blue New Deal (GBND) projects, a presentation on a Small Business Beautification Pilot Program, subcommittee reports and conclude with public comment.

5. Old and/or New Business

- a. Introduction of Commissioner David Robinson (09/16/25)

Senior Business Assistance Officer Jesson de Leon introduced new EDC Commissioner David Robinson.

Commissioner Robinson identified himself as a long-time Richmond resident, born and raised in the City of Richmond, a small business owner of a real estate development company, athletic director for the high school and passionate about home ownership in the community, and youth. He wanted to take his expertise into those spaces to see how it could help the EDC.

Commissioner Wear returned to the meeting.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy arrived.

With a quorum present the EDC returned to Item 3 (a).

a. September 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1st - Gliksohn, 2nd – Thompson, approved by a Roll Call vote, with Commissioner Robinson abstaining.

b. Reappointment of Commissioners Willis (09/23/25) and Gliksohn, Thompson and Wear (10/28/25)

Mr. de Leon reported that Commissioner Willis had been reappointed to the EDC by the City Council on September 23, 2025 and Commissioners Gliksohn, Wear and Vice-Chair Thompson on October 28, 2025.

Commissioner Willis was happy to be back. He reported he had a short telephone call with the Mayor, a discussion he hoped to continue on how the EDC could be more valuable to the Mayor's team, particularly related to the GBND.

Commissioner Wear was also happy to be back and work on the GBND and TOR. She looked forward to new leadership on TOR, a new plan and getting on board.

Vice-Chair Thompson was also glad to be reappointed to the EDC to follow through on GBND projects, the Sustainability Expo and TOR.

Commissioner Gliksohn was pleased to be re-appointed to the EDC, expressed interest in TOR, and hoped to be on the subcommittee to support the work of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce (RCOC).

c. (Recap) October Business Tour at Viridi Parente (Staff)

Mr. de Leon reported the October Business Tour at Viridi Parente had been announced in the City Manager Weekley and was held on October 8, 2025 in-lieu of the regular EDC meeting for the month of October. The EDC was provided with a fact sheet from Viridi Parente and information that had been submitted for the manufacturing tour.

Commissioner Wear commented she had worked with Viridi Parente as part of the GBND, and was impressed with increasing electrification in the City. The business owner had ambitious plans and good worker justice policies, such as reemploying people who lost their jobs at Moxion Power. She understood Moxion Power had expanded too quickly and Viridi Parente had been in business for a very long time.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy was also impressed with Viridi Parente's hiring practices, particularly hiring the formerly incarcerated and the details shared about the company's history and plans. She hoped Viridi Parente would be part of the upcoming Sustainability Expo.

Council Liaison Robinson found it clear this was a nascent industry with not a high number of actual jobs and the industry was inspirational. She wanted that to be clear. She stated there were things the City and the EDC could do to help promote the business in that the more business the company got, the more jobs in the City. It was possible to promote Buy Richmond at this scale, which was important, in that in order to be more than a handful of employees, the company needed more business. The EDC and the City could consider a Buy Richmond campaign at that scale, and reach out to other businesses in the City and promote the business and its sales pitch. She referenced Urban Tilth, where she served as the Executive Director, which had plans to solarize and a major battery bank planned. In that case, where they bought that product was their choice, and they could choose to purchase from Viridi Parente, which would involve a major purchase. She wanted to consider how to identify the potential clients who were Richmond businesses, organizations and school districts, as examples, to know there was a choice to be made, and if it was competitive, consider helping to build the economy, that industry and that workforce pathway the business had described. Without the demand, that would not happen.

Commissioner Willis asked whether the batteries manufactured by Viridi Parente were for commercial purposes only or whether residential was included.

Council Liaison Robinson understood based on information the company provided that Viridi Parente manufactured for commercial uses and had a unique ability to put them inside of a home.

Sarah Wally, Executive Director, Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) understood Viridi Parente was currently working on a project on the East Coast related to the installation of an indoor battery for an apartment building. While a commercial market, it could be possible for the company to manufacture items for design-build or replacement rather than the use of a diesel generator. She reported some RCOC members were speaking with Viridi Parente about changing out their diesel generators to a battery generator. It was a multi-layered opportunity and Viridi Parente had very skilled design engineers for design-build.

Council Liaison Robinson suggested there could be a partner/email or partner collateral piece that could be considered, whereby a business could be asked if it was considering replacement of a diesel generator. She again highlighted the work of Urban Tilth to construct a building with a massive battery backup. While they had not decided where they would purchase, they had some estimates. Viridi Parente was not included in the estimates, likely because the people getting the estimates did not know about the business. She hoped to get the word out so that when a business was in the position to procure, they could consider Viridi Parente.

Commissioner Willis suggested there was a public safety angle that could be included in that collateral.

Commissioner Gliksohn suggested a Consider Richmond First campaign. It was possible many people were unaware what some Richmond businesses had to offer.

d. Taste of Richmond

i. Status (Staff)

Mr. de Leon reported he had recently sent out a press/information release on behalf of the EDC and the RCOC to report that TOR had been postponed to early next year, which had been discussed internally and in support from Council Liaison Robinson, rather than rush to complete an event by November 2025. The intent was to make TOR a full-fledged event sometime in early 2026.

ii. Fiscal Sponsorship (Staff)

Management Analyst Junne Garcia, reported a post-agreement had been sent to the RCOC and was currently under review. Staff had also requested the RCOC provide information on their insurance and business license to make the process easier when the contract was signed.

Mr. de Leon clarified, when asked by Commissioner Gliksohn, that TOR was a City-led event with the RCOC acting as the fiscal sponsor to receive and solicit sponsorships on the event's behalf. The EDC would continue to have an advisory role, which was why the formal selection of a subcommittee had been agendized, who would meet with the operators of TOR, the RCOC, and the EDC to create the agenda and logistics for the event.

Council Liaison Robinson stated she had not seen the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the fiscal sponsorship agreement. She inquired how much control the EDC TOR Subcommittee would have on the content, execution and design of TOR in 2026.

Mr. de Leon advised the fiscal sponsorship outlined that RCOC would take the lead. The EDC had the advisory role and would provide input, with the execution the responsibility of the RCOC. He clarified, when asked by Council Liaison Robinson, that if the EDC in its advisory role disagreed with the direction of the fiscal sponsor, it would fall upon the RCOC taking the lead as to what they could execute.

Council Liaison Robinson wanted that to be clear in that TOR was no longer in the hands of the EDC, with TOR to be designed and driven by what the RCOC wanted. She made clear that TOR may not look like it had in the past.

Commissioner Wear reported that in 2024, there had been a TOR Subcommittee and TOR at that time involved two event planners; however, feedback from the TOR Subcommittee was almost never heard and there had been no measure of accountability of things promised that had not come through.

Council Liaison Robinson clarified that the agreement made clear that the way TOR worked in 2024, would be the official and appropriate way it worked with no official control from the EDC.

Commissioner Wear noted there were many years that the EDC was not involved in TOR anyway.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy noted that staff primarily carried the TOR through in the past. She found the reference to a fiscal sponsor to be confusing because that was what it had been called when the event was the EDC's. She asked why the event still required a fiscal sponsor if the RCOC was now owning the event.

Mr. de Leon clarified that the reference to fiscal sponsor was the type and title of the contract that was involved. Fiscal sponsorship was with a non-profit, allowing the non-profit to act on behalf of the City to solicit donors and pay out contractors and the like.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy stated she previously submitted an email which indicated she was not in agreement with that arrangement. For those who did not get the email, she wanted TOR to still be part of the EDC.

Mr. de Leon advised the mandate of the EDC was to provide guidance and advice but not actually have authority over certain programming. That was the issue with TOR, where it was somehow changed to where the EDC felt it had the responsibility and control over the event when it was really in the hands of City staff.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy pointed out TOR was founded by the EDC.

Commissioner Wear was excited about the experience and the RCOC's expertise. She suggested there would be fewer questions and tension since the RCOC had the experience to produce such events.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy commented that the TOR event the year before last had been beautiful.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked what organization in the City monitored the contract for TOR, and Mr. de Leon advised it would be the Economic Development Director.

Commissioner Willis understood the TOR Subcommittee would serve in an advisory role to the RCOC. He was confident the EDC would still be able to provide input for the event.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy expressed concern input would not be able to be provided.

iii. Formal selection of Subcommittee

Mr. de Leon asked the EDC to select up to three members to serve on the TOR Subcommittee. Once the fiscal sponsorship was executed, the Subcommittee could hit the ground running for TOR.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked about the duties and responsibilities of the TOR Subcommittee, the meeting dates and who the Subcommittee would meet with and whether staff or the RCOC would run Subcommittee meetings.

Mr. de Leon advised staff would coordinate the TOR Subcommittee meetings. Meetings would be between the RCOC and the EDC requesting the presence of the TOR Subcommittee, with information brought back to the TOR Subcommittee if time afforded.

Commissioners Gliksohn and Wear expressed the desire to serve on the TOR Subcommittee.

Vice-Chair Thompson recognized that Chair Kenney was currently the TOR Subcommittee Chair, and asked if Chair Kenney would remain the Chair.

Mr. de Leon stated he had not received any formal clarification whether Chair Kenney would remain as the Chair of the TOR Subcommittee.

Vice-Chair Thompson expressed the willingness to also serve on the TOR Subcommittee.

Mr. de Leon explained if there were any questions about replacing Chair Kenney as the Chair of the TOR Subcommittee, he would provide that clarification to the EDC at the next meeting.

Mr. de Leon clarified the self-nominations for Commissioners Gliksohn, Wear and Vice-Chair Thompson to be formal members of the Subcommittee for the TOR, and a vote of the EDC carried unanimously.

Mr. de Leon stated that action formalized the TOR Subcommittee for the upcoming TOR.

e. Presentation: Small Business Beautification Pilot Program (Staff)

Mr. de Leon provided an overview of the Façade Building Beautification Program that had been created by the Economic Development Department and a pilot program approved by the City Council in January 2025. The project involved \$340,000 in funds; \$40,000 would come from the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Grant and the remaining \$300,000 from the City of Richmond. The purpose of the program was to provide up to \$15,000 in grant funds to businesses in the three TCC areas, to beautify their storefronts which could include new awnings, signage, paint, doors and the like.

Mr. de Leon reported that he, along with the Business License Department and the TCC group, had canvassed businesses in the Iron Triangle, Santa Fe and Coronado areas to solicit feedback on the idea. He read into the record the actual presentation from the Economic Development Department in conjunction with Renaissance Center (clarified Richmond Rising, comprised of the City of Richmond and a number of other non-profits was the formal name of the TCC group), which would work on the program for small business façade improvements. He detailed the benefits of the program for small businesses, the eligible and ineligible improvements to be permitted and criteria for application. The focus would be on those businesses in good standing that would be most assisted by the grant funds including street facing retail or non-profit storefronts open to the public, property owners who had leasable space but not necessarily open, businesses with revenue less than \$2 million, and businesses holding down a business license.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked how a business would be verified as being in good standing.

Mr. de Leon explained that the Renaissance Center, which administered the City of Richmond's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant, would ensure a business was in good standing with the state, taxes, licenses and insurance.

Commissioner Wear asked if the project would work in concert with the Arts Corridor. As an example, if there was a planned mural outside of a market that could serve a dual purpose.

Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham explained the City was waiting to complete the Strategic Plan development for the Arts Corridor, and that idea could be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. An update from the consultant was anticipated soon.

Mr. de Leon commented that when reaching out to some of the businesses, one market had a nice painting, and they had discussed the possibility of a mural and working with the Arts Corridor or through application for a Neighborhood Public Art (NPA) Mini Grant.

Mr. de Leon also reported staff had attended a Richmond Rising meeting on October 5, 2025 as part of outreach efforts and had presented the project to the group to solicit feedback. Once the program details were locked in, staff would send out emails to all businesses in the Iron Triangle, Santa Fe and Coronado areas and he would copy the EDC. The EDC may want to reach out to local businesses as well. He further clarified, when asked, the intent for the project was to start 90-days after approval. As an example, if a business wanted to paint a façade, once approval was given the 90-day clock would start and the business had to have permits and contractors in place prior to issuance of funds. That level of detail remained to be finalized.

Commissioner Gliksohn hoped that businesses would have a contractor in place prior to making application to be able to facilitate the process.

Mr. de Leon explained that contingency was in place as part of the program.

Commissioner Wear asked whether the program could be expanded beyond the three areas identified, and Mr. de Leon clarified the TCC Grant was only for the Iron Triangle, Santa Fe and Coronado areas; however, if the pilot program went well the City Council may be asked to approve funds everywhere in Richmond.

Commissioner Willis understood the program would pay for up to 20 businesses, to which Mr. de Leon confirmed if the businesses did projects up to \$15,000. If smaller scaled projects, there could be more businesses able to participate.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Sustainability – Lead: Sewell-Murphy

***i.* Trust Account (Staff)**

Mr. de Leon reported staff had reached out to get clarification on the possibility of a trust account for the Sustainability Subcommittee, as requested by Commissioner Sewell-Murphy. It was not advisable for the EDC to receive a trust account since it was not within its mandate and powers, as written, in the Richmond Municipal Code (RMC). The RMC allowed the Commission on Aging to solicit funds, which was why it had its own trust account. With that clarification, he asked the EDC to consider moving forward with a fiscal sponsorship model for the Sustainability Expo since it would be smoother to select a non-profit to act on the EDC's behalf to receive funds and sponsorships.

Mr. de Leon also asked that the Sustainability Subcommittee be re-formalized to allow the solicitation of businesses for the Sustainability Expo. The EDC also needed to define the expo in terms of whether there would be a focus on green energy, renewable energy and the like.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy commented she would likely resubmit the documentation she had previously submitted. The Sustainability Expo would focus on plant-based and green energy types of businesses, and not be limited to the sustainable community or businesses. She referenced comments made by Council Liaison Robinson who hoped the Sustainability Subcommittee could focus on the types of ventures that were not fossil fuel focused. She also referenced a recent local article which addressed the Chevron payment to the City, which was nearly 24 percent of Richmond's General Fund. If the refinery ever left Richmond, the importance of building other kinds of industry, other than Chevron was emphasized. She suggested the Sustainability Expo would be very important to encourage those kinds of businesses to come to Richmond.

Mr. de Leon understood the focus of the Sustainability Expo was to highlight green businesses already in Richmond and also encourage more to locate in Richmond.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy confirmed the intent, as well as a rebranding of Richmond in terms of what it could offer.

Mr. de Leon clarified with Commissioner Sewell-Murphy that there were no formal members of the Sustainability Subcommittee other than herself as the lead, and it had primarily involved input from the entire EDC.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy explained the goal of the Sustainability Expo was to highlight sustainable or green businesses, with many services that could also be introduced from industrial hemp, for instance, which industry she was interested in. She referenced the number of fires across California and stated it was important to consider building with industrial hemp, which was a fire retardant, and encouraging the use of bamboo, industrial hemp and other kinds of materials and fabrics other than petroleum-based projects.

Mr. de Leon stated a subcommittee would be required to meet on a more regular basis in order to discuss the project. He asked that the Sustainability Subcommittee be formalized at this time.

Commissioner Willis expressed interest in participating in the Sustainability Subcommittee.

Vice-Chair Thompson recognized that Commissioner Sewell-Murphy had been the sole member working on the Sustainability Expo and he acknowledged the request for participation from more EDC members. He expressed the willingness to also participate in the Sustainability Subcommittee.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy also commented on a desire for strong support for youth and education. She had prepared a draft that could be shared with teachers, and she asked her niece who supervised teachers if they still had science fairs and sustainable activities in schools. It was possible students could participate in the Sustainability Expo with exhibits the community could see. She was also looking into sustainability for pioneers in exhibition and giving tribute and recognition to sustainable pioneers in the City of Richmond. It had been suggested that an exhibition showing these pioneers could be coordinated with the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission (RACC) or working in conjunction with other City Departments and existing subcommittees.

Commissioner Gliksohn suggested getting children involved in science fairs and projects related to sustainability would be a great tie-in.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy understood the City of Richmond was a Certified Sustainability City. She wanted to encourage as many businesses as possible to become sustainable and certified. In the latter part of October, she had worked with a California-Nevada Task Force on climate justice. The task force included information on the upcoming expo on their agenda and they planned to have representation at the expo.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy further clarified the Sustainability Expo was planned for Saturday, April 18, 2026, and she understood a fee waiver request would have to be made. She commented that Chair Kenney had indicated a person she worked with could help with the planning for the expo but she was uncertain of the status of that situation.

Ms. Beacham stated she would have to check to see whether the City of Richmond was, in fact, a Certified Sustainability City.

Mr. de Leon explained that any kind of formalization of a contract with a vendor would have to go through the fiscal sponsor. The first step would be to formalize the Sustainability Subcommittee. The Sustainability Subcommittee would meet and then prepare a list of potential fiscal sponsors they would like solicited, and once that was established they could start finding the expo leaders and identify the event theme.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy advised the event theme for the Sustainability Expo had previously been established as *Richmond as Seen Through its Sustainable Lens*.

Vice-Chair Thompson understood the first task of the Sustainability Subcommittee would be to finalize the goals and objectives of the expo, look at a roster of fiscal sponsors and determine the most suitable candidate to implement the expo.

Mr. de Leon confirmed the Vice-Chair's understanding. After that work, a formal agreement would need to be put into place between the fiscal sponsor and the City of Richmond, which would take some time. He acknowledged Marin Clean Energy (MCE) was one of the sponsors Commissioner Sewell-Murphy wanted to reach out to. He was uncertain whether Council Liaison Robinson had already reached out to MCE, but he had a couple of contacts. If the Sustainability Subcommittee directed that he formally reach out to MCE, that could be done.

Commissioner Willis suggested that along with MCE, Richmond Rising and RCOC could be potential fiscal sponsors.

Mr. de Leon advised that staff would reach out to MCE to see whether they would like to formalize a fiscal sponsorship for the Sustainability Expo.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy expressed the willingness to resend all of the reports she had prepared over the years to the EDC.

It was clarified that the Sustainability Subcommittee would now be comprised of Commissioners Willis, Sewell-Murphy and Vice-Chair Thompson, with Commissioner Sewell-Murphy as the lead, and which was formally approved by a unanimous vote of the EDC.

b. Cannabis – Lead: Lynch

There was no report.

c. Policy & GBND – Lead: Willis

i. Quarterly Update (Staff)

As a member of the Policy & GBND Subcommittee, Commissioner Willis reported that the other members were Commissioner Wear and Vice-Chair Thompson, and the Subcommittee had met with Mr. de Leon on November 10 to review updates on the GBND. The project areas based on a community survey and approved by the City Council were identified as port upgrades, brownfields cleaning, electrification of the grid, green Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), transition to electric vehicles for the City's fleet and downtown revitalization. Funding needs had also been identified for implementation. Some of the projects were further along than others in terms of identified funds or committed funds.

There was a \$700,000 commitment to train people for electrification and a grant for an analysis of what it would take to upgrade the port. Staff would present the updates to the City Council on November 18, 2025. The Policy & GBND Subcommittee emphasized to City staff the willingness to be helpful to identify grants, review grant proposals and hold regular meetings between the Subcommittee and staff. There was a lot of overlap between some of the project areas and the Sustainability Expo, and the need to attract certain types of businesses, which was where some of the marketing for the expo could come in. The members of the Policy & GBND Subcommittee were now part of the Sustainability Subcommittee and could support that effort.

Commissioner Wear asked if Commissioner Lynch was still a member of the EDC since she had not been present for a while.

Mr. de Leon explained that technically after three unexcused absences, a Commissioner could be removed from the Commission, which required staff to notify the City Clerk's Office.

Ms. Beacham commented that sometimes there was an opportunity for a Commissioner to reactivate an application. She understood there had been no outreach to Commissioner Lynch in that regard.

Mr. de Leon reported he had spoken with Commissioner Lynch on a different topic but understood she had difficulty attending EDC meetings due to her work and the time of the meeting since she now worked as a professor in the City of Sacramento. He clarified a Zoom meeting option was not available for the EDC and attendance must be in-person.

Vice-Chair Thompson asked who would make the decision to remove a Commissioner from the EDC due to absences, and Mr. de Leon advised the City Clerk's Office would make that decision.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked of Commissioner Wear's status since her time on the EDC had run out but she was back on.

Commissioner Wear explained that she had been reappointed and she did not have to stay off the EDC for a year since the Mayor had asked her to continue on the EDC.

Commissioner Wear had asked the question about Commissioner Lynch's status since no one was working on cannabis and the EDC should decide whether or not that should remain a standing committee or whether it would even remain a focus of the EDC. Her inquiry was not personal but she noticed that Commissioner Lynch had not been engaged in a long time.

Ms. Beacham confirmed Commissioner Lynch had participated in an EDC meeting via telephone in the past, but she could only listen and ask questions, and could not be an active participant or vote on any item.

Commissioner Willis asked about the status of changing the EDC meeting time since he recalled a vote had been taken to change the meeting time, although Ms. Beacham did not recall that a decision had been made.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy recalled that decision was not finalized.

Mr. de Leon commented on the possibility of removing the Cannabis Subcommittee which had not been agendized, and whether it should be continued or not since there was no lead could be discussed.

Commissioner Gliksohn understood the City had a policy on cannabis for previously affected communities. He asked if that work was continuing and whether or not the EDC subcommittee had moved forward.

Ms. Beacham confirmed that issue was moving forward with plans for the Planning Department to change the City's ordinance and engage with applicants, which was a staff effort.

Mr. de Leon confirmed an update on those efforts could be agenized for the next EDC meeting.

Commissioner Wear recognized the enormous amount of work Commissioner Lynch had done, which she would hate to lose. She suggested something should be documented or a liaison found that could more conveniently connect with the cannabis businesses. She would hate to lose that huge trove of effort, and suggested a thank you from the EDC was warranted for the effort.

Mr. de Leon also confirmed, when asked by Commissioner Gliksohn, that Commissioner Lynch had been involved with the City's efforts with cannabis businesses. She had provided input, but nothing formal, and she had asked questions about the program and provided updates as a regular citizen but was no longer doing that work.

The EDC discussed the background of the Cannabis Subcommittee, which had been in place for some time.

Vice-Chair Thompson suggested Commissioner Lynch be asked whether she was still capable of doing the work of monitoring and providing stewardship over the program. If she was unable to do that, rather than doing cannabis oversight at-large, the EDC should consider a new Cannabis Subcommittee lead and new subcommittee members.

Commissioner Willis was uncertain how they could fill Commissioner Lynch's knowledge on this topic. If Commissioner Lynch was unable to continue, the EDC could possibly roll some of the policies into the Policy & GBND Subcommittee and possibly liaise with Commissioner Lynch when her wisdom was needed.

Commissioner Wear suggested that would be off the mission of the Policy & GBND Subcommittee since their agenda was already full with the project areas identified.

Mr. de Leon summarized the comments for staff to reach out to Commissioner Lynch to see whether her participation was still within her ability and at the same time make sure there was a steward for the program since cannabis was part of economic development. If Commissioner Lynch was unable to continue and potentially resigned or left the EDC, the EDC would then bring as an item a new Cannabis Subcommittee. If not, program updates would just be provided to the EDC as a whole.

7. Council Liaison Robinson News or Report

Council Liaison Robinson provided a status report of the Macdonald Avenue Task Force and reported there had been a lot of movement, with a lot of people desirous to tour and offer support. She highlighted a presentation from the Task Force to Assemblymembers on recommendations for exemptions from some of the conditions of the Surplus Land Act, when the City in certain situations had low-income housing covered. This would allow the City to act in the benefit of the City towards supporting projects that were more economic development, such as the 12th Street and Macdonald Avenue project. A new Request for Proposal (RFP) was being created for the project to include new retail opportunities and more market rate mixed housing, and which property in particular was being considered as an anchor of change. The RFP also included consideration to expand the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which needed more space.

Ms. Wally also provided an update on a meeting with a real estate expert with Assemblymember Buffy Wicks Office, to discuss surplus land and the ability of the task force to focus on the downtown from 8th to 19th Streets as an economic engine and which needed businesses and other support services that engaged people. It was hoped the main RFP would drive both the economic engine and set the marker for the downtown, while the task force worked on true master planning for the 12th Street and Macdonald Avenue area that would have a significant number of housing units in combination with transit-oriented development, and the City would not be handicapped by only four stories, but could seek a lot of development and would cement what could be done to drive the downtown and anchor in. A true economic engine of a downtown was discussed at length.

Council Liaison Robinson explained the task force needed to set goals on a concerted direction and creation of a long-term vision and a short-term vision using programs already in place with a focus on Macdonald Avenue to make an impact. The task force would also discuss increasing its membership, who were not staff or City Council members, in the hopes of completing the vision in the next year.

Council Liaison Robinson also reported she had visited Kalamazoo, Michigan to attend the PromiseNet, Conference, a national gathering of the tuition-free college movement. She highlighted her attendance at one of the more powerful sessions, how promise programs were connecting and expanding services to directly connect to workforce development, which session had been powerful and transformative. She wanted to think of those types of things in the realm of economic development.

Commissioner Willis reported he had worked in a promise neighborhood in the City of San Francisco. His current director in the City of Richmond had launched Promise City in the City of Oakland, and Richmond was prime for that. Preparing people to get to and through college and other pathways was important. He reported on the statistics that only one in five high school students in the state actually finished college and 50 percent finished college with Liberal Arts Degrees that did not translate to higher wages.

Commissioner Willis argued that college was a part of the solution, but with the trades and apprenticeships, which he specialized in, consistently having better outcomes in over the lifetime earnings. He found the City of Richmond was positioned to capitalize on funding for a promise city model. Anchor institutions like the East Bay Center for Performing Arts, was a great one to call out and could do more than child-based art activities. It could offer job training opportunities as well.

Council Liaison Robinson liked the idea of promise cities and she and Commissioner Willis discussed the benefits of promise cities, zones and neighborhoods.

1st - Thompson 2nd – Gliksohn, approved by a Roll Call vote, to extend the EDC meeting five minutes.

8. Public Comments/Announcements

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, offered the following comments: He welcomed David Robinson to the EDC; reported he attended the Youth Council meeting to encourage filling vacancies on the EDC and planned to attend a future meeting to again encourage interest. He hoped the City Council would appoint new members in January 2026; had projects he was working on for economic development but could not share them at this time; invited everyone to the Contra Costa Mayors Conference on December 4, 2025, R.S.V.P required, with dinner at \$70 per person at the Pinole Senior Center; and reported he had participated in the Viridi Parente tour, but the sound was difficult and a Public Address (PA) system should be considered in the future when tours were scheduled.

Mr. Hindler also invited everyone to the Santa Fe Neighborhood Council Hug-a-Bear Dinner at the Galileo Club, December 10, 2025 from 6:00 to 10:100 p.m., \$50 a person. People were encouraged to bring a bear. In addition, the Senior Winter Ball, would be held December 13, 2025 hosted by the Commission on Aging, \$50 per person with Top Shelf to perform.

Commissioner Wear reported a new Chair would need to be elected at the December EDC meeting.

9. Closing Comments

Vice-Chair Thompson thanked everyone for their contribution and participation.

10. Adjournment: 12:58 p.m.