

ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024

| Member Name | Present | Virtual | Absent |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Amal, Tommy | | X (Travel) | |
| Bates, Kate | X | | |
| Boyd, Ryaan | X | | |
| Brewer, Janetta | | X (Travel) | |
| Burchard, Anthony | X | | |
| Cooper, Steve | X | | |
| Dunn, Bill | X | | |
| Fedorchak, Stephen | X | | |
| Garthwaite, Ben | | | X |
| Gregorios, Nick | X | | |
| Lynch, Catherine | X | | |
| Mansur, Sid | X | | |
| Mason, Brad | X | | |
| Meyyan, Praveen | X | | |
| Oyler, Joseph | X | | |
| Pedowitz, Scott | X | | |
| Rosales, Karen | | X (Travel) | |
| Sampaio, Flavia | X | | |
| Schoenfeld, Mary Margaret | X | | |
| Sisk, Avril Ussery | X | | |
| Sorrell, Paula | | | X |
| Tate, Jordan | X | | |
| Van Horn, Andy | X | | |
| Virasingh, Vicky | | | X |
| Yam, Kevin | X | | |
| Weinstein, Matthew | X | | |

1. WELCOME AND CALL TOGETHER

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m. by Chair Dunn

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Pedowitz and seconded by Commissioner Praveen Meyyan to approve the Dec. 12, 2023, meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Dunn introduced the new Commission Members, Anthony (Tony) Burchard and Matthew Weinstein, who fill the two remaining vacancies bringing the total number of Commission members to 25. Tony Burchard is senior vice president of Virginia Hospital Center and president of the VHC Foundation. Virginia Hospital Center is one of the biggest employers in Arlington. Tony also serves on the board of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce. Matt Weinstein is a land use attorney with McGuire Woods. Matt has deep experience in Arlington, having served on the Transportation Committee, the Langston Blvd. Alliance Board and as a member of the Virginia State Board of Elections. He is the Co-chair of NAIOP's Arlington Committee. Chair Dunn allowed both new members to introduce themselves to the Commission.

Chair Dunn reminded the Commission Members of their commitment to the Commission and the investment of their time in the EDC, recognizing that their "day jobs" take precedence over the Commission. The monthly meeting is not a huge commitment, and members can be more involved in the working groups. He emphasized that the Commission is a voice for the business community and acts in an advisory role to the County Board.

4. AED DIRECTOR'S REPORT

KATE ANGE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Kate thanked the EDC for their feedback on the AED strategic plan. She informed the Members that the Arlington Innovation Fund (AIF) would award five grants out of the 22 applications and that a public announcement would be made in February. She thanked the IDA for their support. Kate gave an update on CMRI and thanked Commissioner Pedowitz for keeping the working group going. Next month, staff will look at Major/Minor administrative changes and parking regulations on Jan 23. Kate informed the Commission of the upcoming BizLaunch (small business) Bootcamp, which will train 65 entrepreneurs. Graduates of the program will work with a SCORE counselor and then be eligible to "pitch" their business for grant money.

Michelle Isabel-Stark gave an update on Cultural Arts and the two capital improvement projects underway. The buildings at 2700 S. Nelson and 2100 S. Oakland are being demolished, and a flexible plaza is being installed for performances, workshops and community experimentation in the arts. The other project at 3700 S. Four Mile Run will be a shared studio for textile and ceramics and printmaking, which will move from the LAC on Langston Blvd. Dates for completion of the projects will be the end of calendar year 2024 for flexible space at 2700 S. Nelson and the date beginning of 2025 for the shared studios at 3700 S. Four Mile Run.

Lastly, Kate Ange introduced AED's new employee, Adrianna Bonilla, who is the assistant director for business development.

5. Information and Discussion:

County Board Member and Liaison to the Economic Development Commission, Mr. Karantonis Karantonis

Board Member Karantonis began by stating that the purpose of this meeting with the Commission was for him to absorb the EDC's work. He plans to join the EDC every six months.

Mr. Karantonis spoke about preparing for February, when the County Manager will present his budget. He informed the EDC about the resources that make the county work, which include a \$212.55 billion operations budget that includes over 120 lines of business. Mr. Karantonis discussed the County's focus on attracting, retaining and enhancing economic development opportunities. He acknowledged there are challenges but also opportunities.

Mr. Karantonis commented that unemployment is in a good place with low rates, but there are still underlying consistent concerns. The County needs to focus on workforce development, and he acknowledged that the Commission has done a lot of work on this topic and that we have significant opportunities for growth in this area.

Mr. Karantonis discussed the biggest challenge the County faces is the office vacancy rate and that we are in a tough situation. He applauded the EDC for presenting some very compelling and good ideas to help combat the vacancy rate, some of which have been incorporated into the CMRI. It begins with a rethinking of how we do business. He believes the County will make a lot of quick, authoritative progress, and he counts on EDC's partnership to get the best results.

Mr. Karantonis pointed out that there is a big project [Monumental Sports] in Potomac Yards. It is uncertain how the financial conditions of the project will play out, but for Arlington, it is positive. It will be located right at our doorstep and Arlington has all the assets (hotels, restaurants, shopping, etc.) next to the location, which we will benefit from that.

Lastly, Mr. Karantonis discussed the FY25 County budget; early indicators show weakness in revenues of \$20–40 million shortfalls. The County Board has not excluded a tax rate increase, which will increase the burden for residential. He assured the EDC the County would run a frugal budget by reducing our expenditures and focusing on our essentials. Mr. Karantonis said he would propose a 1 ½ cent tax increase to support the Affordable Housing Investment Fund.

Mr. Karantonis concluded the discussion by taking questions from the Commission Members.

6. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Office Vacancy: Commissioner Scott Pedowitz gave an update on the Office Vacancy working group. The group met in December. Members focused on planning for this year and bringing the items they will bring forward and bring a sense of the market to the EDC. The working group is going to act as a review committee for the EDC on office vacancy issues. They want to position the EDC to weigh in on that. They are going to try to hear items and ask questions as they are being brought forward to the County Board. The committee has a standing meeting the following week after EDC meeting on Fridays, at 8:30 a.m. The next meeting is on Jan. 19.

Work Force Taskforce:

The task force remains on hiatus. If a Commissioner is interested in participating in future meetings, contact Bill Dun. Steve Cooper mentioned that the task force's work is what spanned the Talent program, and the program recently kicked off the second cohort, for a total of 25 graduates of the program.

7. Old Business

None

8. New Business

Commissioner Kevin Yam recommended fellow Commissioners subscribe to the VEDP Quarterly newsletter. It highlights an array of economic development issues. The past issued on Virginia clean energy. Sign up: [Subscribe to Our Newsletter | Virginia Economic Development Partnership \(vedp.org\)](https://vedp.org)

Next meeting: Feb. 13 will be in person, with no virtual options at the AVL building at 545 15th Street.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Dunn adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.