

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
ARLINGTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

March 10, 2026

The Economic Development Commission convened its meeting at 8:03 AM on March 10, 2026.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON)	Nick Gregorios Sara Barker Kate Bates Janetta Brewer Steve Cooper Stephen Fedorchak Betsy Frantz Ben Garthwaite Timothy Jones Ben Joseph Charles Kachadoorian Brad Mason Kaly McKenna Evan Pritchard Paula Sorrell Brian Stout Meredith Sumpter William Walsh
ABSENT	Catherine Lynch Praveen Meyyan Andy VanHorn

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Chair's Report – Chair Nick Gregorios

Chair Gregorios opened the meeting by highlighting the significance of the March agenda, particularly the annual visit from County Manager Mark Schwartz. Gregorios recapped key themes from the February meeting and then offered brief remarks on recent EDC-related engagement, including attending the National Innovation Quarter (IQ) event. He noted that the initiative reflects strong public-private collaboration, cross-jurisdictional partnerships, and a growing focus on emerging technology and talent attraction.

AED Director's Report – Acting Director Kate Ange

Acting Director Ange reported a strong month for economic activity, citing two recent business openings: KnowBe4 and Forterra. She highlighted the successful launch of the National IQ and emphasized its regional economic potential backed by major partners. Ange also described progress in small business support programs, including completion of the Transformational Challenge training cohort, which will culminate in an April pitch event. She noted legislative success in expanding tools related to tourism promotion funding. Ange described FY2027 budget impacts on AED, sharing that both

AED's operating resources and tourism promotion funds are reduced. She reiterated the department's commitment to ROI-driven programming and market intelligence.

FY2027 Proposed Budget – County Manager Mark Schwartz

County Manager Schwartz delivered an overview of the FY2027 Proposed Budget, emphasizing competing demands within a \$1.7 billion operating framework. Schwartz acknowledged reductions in several departments, including AED, while noting that schools remain the County's largest and most critical partner. He explained the structural constraints of Virginia's revenue system, particularly local reliance on real estate taxes, and observed that residential assessments are rising due to constrained housing supply, while broader economic conditions remain uncertain with softness in sectors such as hotels and meals taxes. Schwartz discussed the equity implications of across-the-board rate increases, the challenge of offering targeted relief under current law, and encouraged advocacy for innovation and small-business programs with demonstrable ROI at upcoming budget hearings.

During discussion with Commissioners, Schwartz addressed topics including third-place community spaces, impacts of winter weather on infrastructure, and the feasibility of additional revenue mechanisms.

EDC Governance and Nominations Update – Commissioner Brad Mason

Commissioner Mason reported that he is reviewing membership needs, open seats, and onboarding processes with the Chair. Mason described efforts to develop a skills matrix to better align recruitment with Commission needs and broaden representation. Commissioners discussed best practices for identifying skill sets, balancing transparency, and ensuring a diverse and effective Commission membership.

EDC Programming and Engagement Update – Commissioner Meredith Sumpter

Commissioner Sumpter facilitated updates from Commissioners representing County and regional advisory groups. Reports included:

- Positive community response to the Look temporary arts activation, including strong attendance, family-friendly programming, and mobile retail/food vendors as well as observations on improvements and future considerations for temporary placemaking installations.
- Announcements regarding upcoming events, such as the BizLaunch Pitch Fest.
- Updates on climate-related research initiatives.
- Request for an EDC liaison for the Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council (CPCC).

New Business

Commissioners shared announcements and community updates, including:

- Recognition of local arts programming.
- Notification of Commissioner Joe Oyler's resignation from the EDC.
- Discussion of non-profit sector's workforce challenges, highlighting concerns about compensation, housing affordability, and long-term workforce retention.

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Commissioner Sumpter moved that the Commission approve the minutes from the February EDC meeting. The motion was seconded, and the Commission unanimously supported the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 AM.