

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF NORFOLK

### Meeting Minutes

The Economic Development Authority of the City of Norfolk called, and held, its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 12:03 PM, 999 Waterside Drive, Suite 400, Norfolk, Virginia 23510.

#### **DIRECTOR'S PRESENT:**

Morgan Whayland- Chair  
Carter Smith- Vice Chairman  
Jaeson Dandalides  
Michael Hull  
Richard Ottinger  
Henri Patten  
Simon Scott  
Keith Warren

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Sean Washington- Executive Director  
Bob Sharak- Assistant Executive Director  
Dawn Ryan- Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

#### **COUNSEL PRESENT:**

Barry Hunter- Kaufman & Canoles, P.C.

#### **ABSENT:**

John Garrett  
George Polizos  
Mike Paris- Secretary-Treasurer

#### **GUESTS:**

Ron Williams- Deputy City Manager  
Mike Roggow- Department of Finance  
Mia Byrd Wilson- Department of Economic Development  
Nikki Southall- Department of Economic Development  
Delk Koolman - Department of Economic Development  
Malijah Rubin- Department of Economic Development  
Christine Barreca - Department of Economic Development  
Maximilian Knight- Department of Economic Development  
Ashleigh Twyman- Whiting-Turner  
Stephen Meyers - Syncon

## **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Whayland called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM and welcomed Sean Washington back from his medical leave. She said George Polizos was absent because he was attending the Virginia Defense Forum and Mike Paris was taking some time off. She then asked if everyone had read the minutes and if there were any changes. Director Warren requested two corrections be made, stating that his name should be marked present at the last meeting and that he thought it would be helpful to note in the minutes that there were some questions and answers exchanged during the 2050 Plan presentation. Vice Chairman Smith moved to approve the minutes with the recommended edits, which motion was seconded by Director Hull and approved, with Director Scott and Director Ottinger abstaining. (Vote 6-0-2).

## **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Chairwoman Whayland turned over the meeting to Sean Washington for the financial update. Mr. Washington gave an update on the budget and encouraged the Board to email him or Mike Paris with any proposed budget changes by May so they could present the FY27 budget for approval in June. Chairwoman Whayland said that it might be helpful to distinguish discretionary budget items from money flowing through the EDA in the form of City grants. Mr. Washington noted that such separation would be put in place. (Attachment#1)

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Mr. Washington began the Directors Report by noting the City is currently in a hiring freeze. He reported that Military Circle Mall was officially transferred to City ownership on March 11, 2026, and that security was a top priority. He further reported that Divaris was completing final reconciliations that will be confirmed with Finance and the final transfer of funds should be prepared for City Council consideration on April 28, 2026, and completed soon thereafter. Chairwoman Whayland asked if funds were available from the recent Cinemark settlement transfer, noting that the funds have been used to cover insurance payments and shortfalls for the Mall. Mr. Washington

stated that since the City provided the financing for the acquisition of the Mall, this was a topic that would be further explored.

Mr. Washington reported that the grant was awarded to Mil-Spec Abrasives LLC on March 16, 2026, and the EDA was just waiting on the State to cut the check so that payment could be made to the business. He also reported that the Port Host Communities Revitalization Fund Grant for Colonna's Shipyard was awarded on March 25, 2026. Mr. Washington said that the official application date for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) closes on June 26, 2026, and reminded the Board that a resolution had already been approved for the EDA to apply for the PIDP Grant. Mr. Washington finally noted that on April 7, 2026, from 11 AM-2 PM at the Assembly, the Department of Economic Development would be hosting a "Back in the Building" event to help fill Class A office space.

Director Hull asked if tenants' moves are tracked when they vacate Norfolk buildings. Mr. Washington noted that, in addition to using the software, Costar, the Business Attraction team talks with brokers and the Business Retention and Expansion team talks with tenants to get this information.

Mr. Washington reported that there will be upcoming discussions at City Council regarding the Sewell's Point and Church Street Commercial Corridors and that a Cooperation Agreement would then be signed to administer the funds through the EDA.

Mr. Washington said that the deadline for applications for the Revolving Loan Fund program had been extended to April 17, 2026, and that there may need to be more discussions with the City regarding Neon District grant funds. Chairwoman Whyland asked if the funds were appropriated or in the City Budget for this year. Mr. Washington responded that \$1 million had been appropriated to fund both programs, and that there would be discussions with City Council on administration of the programs before the Cooperation Agreement would be signed to administer the funds.

Mr. Washington then reviewed some Development Department updates and upcoming events. He said that the Department of Economic Development will be updating its website, the RFP having been awarded to TechArk. He then said that the Development Department was currently leaning into the Military Economic Development Advisory Committee (MEDAC), with 13 members currently serving the Mayor to have defense space conversations and understand the Department of War's military defense plan. He noted that Director Polizos was currently at the MEDAC conference, learning how to secure money from the State, align with the Alliance's DEAL project, and collaborate with military subcontractors. He then mentioned DNC's First Fridays and that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Harbor Fest, as well as Sail 250, will be held June 19-21, 2026. He also noted that the State of the City will be held on April 15, 2026, and hoped everyone could attend.

Mr. Washington then spoke about the City's proposed FY27 budget, noting that there were currently increased revenues and expenses. (Attachment #2)

Chairwoman Whayland asked if there were any other FY27 City budget items that will involve the EDA. Mr. Washington replied that he had not seen that yet and said that the Development Department submitted a \$1.5 million enhancement request which is not currently reflected in the budget proposal.

Director Hull then asked about the Façade Improvement Grants and how focus areas were chosen and funded. Mr. Washington gave a synopsis of the last four years, noting that the Commercial Corridors are selected by the City not the EDA. Mr. Washington said that \$200,000 of the \$1.5 million request was for Ocean View.

Director Warren asked about a Commercial Corridor for Oceanview. Mr. Washington stated that further discussions with City Council were needed. He said he hoped to have the Cooperation Agreement finished for the Sewell's Point and Church Street Corridors in June. Chairwoman Whayland mentioned that the EDA has never picked a corridor and still has concerns with the naming of "Façade Improvement Grant" which led to a discussion among the Directors. In response to a

question regarding awards outside the specified corridors, Vice Chairman Smith said it was difficult to make awards outside of the designated Corridors due to the weighting criteria. Mr. Washington noted that awards outside the designated Corridor only occurred in the first round.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Washington then presented background information on the Virginia Business Ready Site Fund Program ("VBRSF"). He mentioned that the EDA had previously obtained a grant for Fairwinds Landing. The purpose of the new grant would be to obtain an enhanced study of the Military Circle Mall site to accelerate the tiering to achieve a Tier 3 or higher status. Mr. Sharak noted that the grant is up to \$500,000, if matched, and that the City wanted to apply for the Grant through the EDA. He said that cash and in-kind services within the past 5 years can be counted toward the match. He also said expenses paid to date should be sufficient to satisfy the match requirement. Chairwoman Whayland noted that Norfolk is a built-out city and that this site is an opportunity to get the State on our radar, which led to additional discussion among the Directors. Bob Sharak reiterated that this grant would give the EDA a good start in getting grant funds for predevelopment studies. Chairwoman Whayland mentioned that the grant is on a rolling basis and the State may not have the money forever.

Director Warren asked if there is a reason to achieve Tier 3 versus Tier 5 status and if a decision had been made as to what tier should be targeted to achieve maximum value. This led to a discussion, with Mr. Sharak stating that while the expenditure of funds would get us closer to Tier 4, we wouldn't get to Tier 5. Director Patten left the meeting at 12:50 PM. Chairwoman Whayland asked for a motion to approve the EDA making application for the VBRSF Grant. Director Ottinger moved to approve making such application, which motion was seconded by Director Warren, and unanimously approved. (Vote 7-0-0). Mr. Sharak mentioned that the application process should take weeks not months.

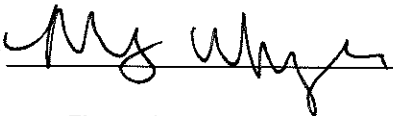
Director Hull asked if the EDA was leveraging AI for grant applications. Mr. Sharak reported that Microsoft Copilot is used at the City and he currently uses the tool. At 12:53 PM, Director Patten returned to the meeting.

Mr. Washington introduced the last item on the agenda, the Deed of Easement Resolution. Mr. Washington provided some background for the resolution, stating that the Board must vote on whether a parcel owned by the EDA near the Simon Premium Outlets could have a waterline running through it. Mr. Hunter explained that the Easement was a 20' Waterline Easement along the boundary of the Drainage Easement Parcel running from Burton Station Road to the parcel on which the Concorde Apartments would be built. He noted that it was originally thought that the Drainage Easement Parcel would be conveyed to the City before this easement was granted, but the transfer to the City was being postponed. DCM Williams mentioned that the goal was to have the Outlet Mall parcel generate additional tax revenue. Director Warren moved to approve the Resolution, which motion was seconded by Director Ottinger, and unanimously approved. (Vote 8-0-0). (Attachment #3)

Chairwoman Whayland asked if there were any closing items. Mr. Washington offered to do a deep dive into the Commercial Corridor program to provide more context on funding for façade and building improvements.

**CLOSING**

Chairwoman Whayland adjourned the meeting at 1:06 PM.

Approved by  \_\_\_\_\_

- Attachments: 1. Financial Report  
2. Directors Report  
3. Deed of Easement Resolution