



CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
July 1, 2026 6:00pm
In Person at Economic Development Offices

10306 Eaton Place, Training Room 115 AB, Fairfax, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Vice-Chair Kristin Feenstra
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Secretary Michelle Nguyen
Commissioner Jeff Hermann
Commissioner Mitchell Cho
Commissioner Kathleen Paley

Others Present:

Colleen Kardasz, Director, Economic Development Department
Matthew Easley, Assistant Director of Operations and Finance, Economic Development Department
Meryam El Gazzah, Economic Development Associate, Economic Development Department

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| 1. Call to Order | Vice Chair Feenstra |
| a. Vice Chair Feenstra called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. | |
| 2. Adoption of Remote Participation for Commissioner Nguyen [VOTE] | |
| a. Treasurer McGruder Motions | |
| b. Commissioner Paley Seconds | |
| c. Motion Passes Unanimously | |
| 3. Adoption of the July Meeting Agenda [VOTE] | Commissioners |
| a. Treasurer McGruder Motions | |
| b. Commissioner Paley Seconds | |
| c. Motion Passes Unanimously | |
| 4. Adoption of the June Meeting Minutes [VOTE] | Commissioners |
| a. Treasurer McGruder Motions | |
| b. Commissioner Paley Seconds | |
| c. Motion Passes Unanimously | |
| 5. Consideration and Adoption of the Fairfax City Film Permit Policy | Director Kardasz |
| a. Purpose: To formally consider and adopt Fairfax City's Film Permit Policy following completion of a staff-led pilot program. | |
| b. Background: | |
| i. The Authority previously authorized a pilot film permit process (adopted June 3, 2026); staff subsequently coordinated a pilot filming engagement with an independent film crew at Van Dyke Park. | |
| ii. Because the engagement was a pilot conducted to gather feedback, staff waived the daily permit fee but charged hourly staff time; approximately \$250 was deposited into the EDA account in connection with the pilot. | |
| iii. The filmmaker assisted staff in refining the format of the permit application during the pilot process. | |
| iv. Staff developed a standard park signage notice advising visitors that filming may be occurring and that their presence in the park may be captured on camera. | |

- v. The policy was reviewed by the City Attorney and the City's Risk Manager.
- c. Key highlights:
 - i. The policy will be posted to the City's permit page, providing a consistent point of reference regardless of which City office initially receives a filming inquiry (most requests currently arrive through the City Manager's Office).
 - ii. Staff noted the policy also creates an opportunity to formally re-engage the Virginia Film Office, which has been listing Fairfax City as a filming location without the City's prior knowledge, to actively market City sites for future productions.
 - iii. Staff indicated that minor amendments may be brought back in the future if a larger-scale production expresses interest, though such a request is not currently anticipated.
- d. Discussion: No additional questions were raised by Commissioners.
- e. Adoption of the Film Permit Policy **[VOTE]** Commissioners
 - i. Treasurer McGruder Motions
 - ii. Commissioner Hermann Seconds
 - iii. Motion Passes Unanimously
- 6. Adoption of the Updated All Virtual Meeting Policy Director Kardasz
 - a. Purpose:
 - i. To satisfy the annual state-law requirement that the Authority reaffirm its ability to conduct all-virtual and remote-participation meetings.
 - b. Background:
 - i. Virginia law requires the Authority to re-adopt this policy annually in order to continue availing itself of all-virtual and remote participation options.
 - ii. Staff confirmed the policy has been updated to reflect a 2024 amendment to the applicable state law.
 - c. Highlights:
 - i. The accompanying implementation policy provides staff guidance on administering remote-participation requests and clarifies who holds authority to approve or deny such requests.
 - d. Adoption of the All-Virtual Meeting Policy **[VOTE]**
Commissioners
 - i. Treasurer McGruder Motions
 - ii. Commissioner Hermann Seconds
 - iii. Motion Passes Unanimously
- 7. Adoption of the Updated Remote Participation Policy Director Kardasz
 - a. Purpose: To adopt updates to the Authority's remote participation policy for individual Commissioners
 - b. Highlights:
 - i. The updated policy requests three days' advance notice of a Commissioner's intent to participate remotely, where possible, to allow time for the request to be brought forward for Chair approval. Emergency circumstances are treated differently.
 - ii. Staff noted that remote-participation requests are not self-approving; the Chair retains approval authority.
 - c. Adoption of Remote Participation Policy **[VOTE]** Commissioners
 - i. Treasurer McGruder Motions
 - ii. Vice-Chair Feenstra Seconds
 - iii. Motion Passes Unanimously
- 8. Consideration of the Mason Enterprise Center (MEC) Fairfax FY26 EDA Contribution Director Kardasz
 - a. Purpose: To consider release of the Authority's FY26 contribution to MEC Fairfax, pending receipt of required documentation, or alternatively to authorize a 30-day extension to obtain additional documentation.
 - b. Background:

- i. Under the Authority's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with MEC, a 10-year agreement now approximately four to five years in the \$150,000 annual contribution is expressly prohibited from being used for personnel expenses.
- ii. Following extended discussions and a change in MEC leadership, staff requested documentation demonstrating that non-personnel expenses met or exceeded the \$150,000 contribution amount.
- iii. MEC, now working directly with the College of Business's head of finance, provided documentation showing expenses meeting or approaching the threshold; June figures were not yet fully closed out at the time of the meeting, but projected monthly totals were expected to bring the total over \$150,000.
- c. Key highlights:
 - i. Staff and Commissioners noted a substantially improved working relationship with MEC and expressed intent to negotiate a future MOA amendment clarifying eligible uses of the contribution, including possible allowances for MEC administrative/operations support.
 - ii. Commissioners questioned a line item of approximately \$80,000 for internet/connectivity services as appearing high; staff noted MEC's head of finance had reviewed invoices and receipts, though some Commissioners felt the figure may still reflect an unfavorable vendor rate rather than a documentation issue, and asked that it be revisited.
 - iii. Commissioners and staff identified marketing, MEC-hosted events (including hosting international delegations), and strategic planning support as priority areas for the partnership going forward, noting that under prior practice, funds directed to personnel had left little room for these activities.
 - iv. Staff noted the documentation would support the Authority's ongoing audit process.
- d. Discussion: Commissioners discussed whether a 30-day extension would materially change the information available and agreed it would not meaningfully improve the documentation provided.

9. Consideration and Adoption of the FY27 EDA Budget

Director Kardasz & Assistant Director Easley

- a. Purpose: To review and adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Economic Development Authority budget.
- b. Background:
 - i. Staff presented the budget in a new, standardized format as the Authority onboards new accounting and audit partners; staff noted intent to bring a fuller financial package (modeled on other Virginia EDA's) in future cycles.
 - ii. Staff noted no substantial changes from the prior months draft other than potential reductions in Class 5 public relations/marketing spend.
- c. Key Highlights:
 - i. Marketing/PR: Potential reduction in duplicative costs (e.g., Cision/PR Newswire, Sprout Social) once the City's new enterprise communications platform is operational; the full budget was conservatively retained pending completion of the County/City procurement process.
 - ii. Agency of Record: Staff received 32 RFP responses (local to international firms) for an all-inclusive marketing agency-of-record contract (approximately \$90,000, including a \$10,000 dedicated advertising allocation), structured as an extension of staff: covering templates, strategic guidance, pitch packets, the annual report, website updates, and rollout of the new tourism brand, rather than a project-based engagement. Contract start anticipated in September 2026; staff is separately in the process of hiring a marketing associate to absorb day-to-day social media and Restaurant Week support currently handled by an interim agency.
 - iii. Economic Opportunity Fund: An incentive fund to support individual business attraction and expansion efforts, informed by economic and ROI analysis, potentially in partnership with the state.
 - iv. Business Support & Grants: A planned rebrand and expansion of the existing FIG and LIFT grant programs (up to \$100,000) to help fund improvements to critical commercial spaces, in response to City Council concern over the ongoing loss of commercial space to residential redevelopment.
 - v. Research & Analysis: A proposed second phase of the office-conversion study, shifting from the prior inventory-focused first phase to a prioritization and gap analysis of existing commercial buildings —

assessing which properties can realistically be preserved or upgraded and what public investment (potentially including state programs) would be required to make them competitive.

- vi. Development Review: Economic Development is now a formal referral agency in the City's development review process, allowing staff to comment on applications and advocate against further loss of commercial space where appropriate.

d. Discussion:

- i. Commissioners discussed the structural loss of standalone commercial space to residential and mixed-use development, noting the market currently only supports financing for residential product, and discussed the EDA's three-to-five-year window to address the resulting gap in office and light-industrial space for growing local companies (including businesses spinning out of the Mason Enterprise Center).
- ii. Commissioners discussed whether the Authority should consider a more active role, as investor, owner, or partner, in commercial redevelopment, citing Prince William County's investment in its BioHealth Campus as a case study, and discussed related considerations for the Authority's Drapers property and other Old Town real estate, including a since-listed sale price for a nearby bank-owned building.
- iii. Commissioners emphasized the importance of a building-level condition assessment (e.g., environmental conditions such as asbestos) before committing capital to any specific property.

e. Adoption of the FY27 EDA Budget **[VOTE]**

- i. Treasure McGruder Motions
- ii. Vice-Chair Feenstra Seconds
- iii. Motion Passes Unanimously

10. New Business:

Commissioners

a. FY27 Commissioner Welcome Packet:

- i. Staff presented a draft FY27 Commissioner Welcome Packet, with updated staff and commissioner rosters and program descriptions, noting the intent to distribute an updated version at the start of each fiscal year going forward.
- ii. Staff noted the document remains in draft form, with known outstanding corrections and will return in final form for approval in September.
- iii. Commissioners were asked to send any additional edits or comments to staff.

b. Expanded Community Guide for Incoming Council Members:

- i. Staff described plans for an expanded 'community guide' version of the welcome packet to be provided to new City Council members, offering greater depth on the Authority's role, the strategic plan, and economic development generally.
- ii. The guide would also outline 'rules of engagement' consistent with City policy for interacting with candidates and elected officials — for example, routing candidate meeting requests through the City Manager's Office, maintaining political neutrality while representing the City, and ensuring consistent messaging is provided to all candidates.
- iii. Staff clarified that while City staff must remain politically neutral in their official capacity, individual Commissioners are not legally restricted from personal political speech or candidate endorsements, provided such activity is undertaken in their individual capacity and not through EDA staff functions.
- iv. Commissioners expressed support for developing the more robust guide.

11. Public Comment

a. Representatives of the Old Town Fairfax business community provided updates, including:

- i. An introduction from an incoming chamber/committee chair and remarks from the outgoing chair, including an invitation to Commissioners to join an upcoming Fourth of July breakfast and parade viewing event in Old Town.
- ii. Comments on the economics of the local business community and continued investment in the City.

- iii. A discussion of potential redevelopment of an insurance-company-owned property on Main Street and its implications for the mix of residential versus commercial use in Old Town, offered as a potential source of commercial-side feedback for the Authority.
 - b. Public comment was closed following the remarks.
12. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:57 PM.

*****Next Meeting: September 2, 2026*****

6 pm, 10306 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Subject to Change. Please Check gofairfaxcity.com for more information.