

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL  
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE  
CULVER CITY  
STANDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CULVER CITY STANDING  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

April 11, 2025  
1:00 p.m.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Council Member Vera called the special meeting of the Standing Economic Development Subcommittee of the City Council to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Patio Room at City Hall and via Webex.

Present:            Freddy Puza, Vice Mayor  
                      Albert Vera, Council Member

Staff Present: Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development  
                      Director  
                      Elizabeth Garcia, Economic Development  
                      Project Manager  
                      Luis Gonzalez, Economic Development Project  
                      Manager  
                      Edgar Varela, Special Events Manager  
                      Christina Burrows, Deputy City Attorney  
                      Lisa Soghor, Chief Financial Officer  
                      Michelle Villongco, Associate Analyst

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Council Member Vera led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Public Comment for Items NOT On the Agenda**

Council Member Vera invited public comment.

Michelle Villongco, Associate Analyst, reported that no public comment had been received.

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**Receipt of Correspondence**

Michelle Villongco, Associate Analyst, reported that no correspondence had been received.

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**Consent Calendar**

Item C-1

**Approval of Minutes for the Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting of October 9, 2024**

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VERA, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR PUZA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE STANDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 9, 2024.

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**Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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**Action Items**

Item A-1

**Discussion Regarding Economic Development Work Program Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and Work Plan Priorities for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development Director, provided a summary of the material of record.

Council Member Vera invited public input.

Michelle Villongco, Associate Analyst, reported that no requests to speak had been received.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the intent of National Public Radio (NPR) to move; the art piece that needs to be moved at Westfield; continued partnership; the status of ReThink; increased construction costs; donation of the blue Shop Local bumper stickers with the City seal; Washington and Zanja; tamper resistant box covers to protect from cable theft; appreciation for the work of staff; recent events; collaboration with Grand Performances on event curation; the Media Park lighting project; elevator modernization projects in the parking structures; and collaboration with the Downtown Business Association (DBA).

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Item A-2

**Discussion of Visit Culver City Tourism Branding Efforts, Website Development and Business Inclusion Criteria**

Luis Gonzalez, Economic Development Project Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the MMGY proposal; the approach to stakeholder engagement; understanding criteria for what should be included in the City-directed effort; support for the work being done; ensuring that the end result is not just a business directory; including tourism related businesses; brick and mortar businesses; outreach to determine interest in inclusion; motels being used for the voucher program; vacancy rate; star ratings; looking at the face of tourism for Culver City; content curation; understanding which hotels serve more of a tourist clientele; featured businesses; additional information; potential layout and format; indicating signature brand and budget-friendly hotels; directing people to hotel websites; featured events; entities to co-partner with; City-sponsored events; allowing people to opt-in; being clear on the process; starting with a narrow focus and then broadening inclusion; initial focus on tourism-specific businesses; highlighting dog-friendly places; and including a blog on the website.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding agreement to include a calendar of events, mobility resources, tours, grocery stores of convenience and dog-friendly businesses; categories included in the calendar of events; listing events by local partners; Culver Steps; the six to nine month timeline; and work to build content and data.

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Item A-3

**Consideration of a Pilot Micro-Grant/Small Business Assistance Program**

Elizabeth Garcia, Economic Development Project Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding clarification that the item is not currently in the City-budget; a city-run public/private partnership in Korea providing grants to help students facilitate their passion that serves as a revenue generating mechanism for the city; providing job skills; workshops; the permit fee reimbursement program; helping people adjust to higher fees; program terms; outreach to West LA College; helping brick and mortar businesses; existing business support; helping smaller businesses; providing seed money; criteria; creating an incubation program; training; helping people put together a sustainable business plan; providing incentives for people to keep them from moving out of smaller cities; narrowing the focus to keep the type of businesses Culver City wants; tenant improvements; providing a general grant to help cover City obligations; the permit reimbursement program to incentivize businesses to get started; addressing barriers to entry; budget; and number of businesses that could be served.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding eligibility and providing support for independent businesses rather than for national franchises.

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Item A-4

**Discussion of a Business Visitation Program**

Elizabeth Garcia, Economic Development Project Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding scheduling and availability for visits; bringing the community together with a Gratitude Day; the current recognition program for businesses that meet certain milestones; criteria for commendations and proclamations; and staff research into holding a Business Expo.

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Item A-5

**Receive and File an Update on Culver City Commercial Vacancy Rates**

Luis Gonzalez, Economic and Cultural Development, provided an update on Culver City commercial vacancy rates.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding ideal vacancy rates.

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Item A-6

**Receive an Update on Previous and Upcoming City Produced and City Sponsored Special Events**

Edgar Varela, Special Events Manager, provided a summary of previous and upcoming City produced and City sponsored special events

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for activating space with the Summer Concert Series; partnerships; the Olympics; bringing the focus to Culver City; sponsorships; public/private partnership for an ice skating rink; diversity; multi-generational engagement; Lunar New Year; Women's History Month; World Dog Day on May 17; animal adoptions at events; The Boneyard; permitting; collaboration with Petco; Media

Park; decomposed granite; looking at more pet-oriented events; and accommodations.

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**Public Comment for Items NOT On the Agenda (Continued)**

Council Member Vera invited public comment.

Michelle Villongco, Associate Analyst, read Kevin Lachoff's response to the question about preferred occupancy rates and discussed difficulties for downtown businesses suffering from a lack of daytime business, lunch, drinks, etc.

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**Items from Members/Staff**

Elizabeth Garcia, Economic Development Project Manager, indicated that May is Small Business Month and they would be going to the City Council with a proclamation on April 28; discussed working on a workshop with Cal/OSHA on Outsmarting Disaster to help businesses prepare for the unexpected; communication with SBA (Small Business Administration) on SBA-specific services; communication with JVS regarding a job fair; and a proposed webinar for small businesses.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 2:20 p.m., the Economic Development Subcommittee of the City Council adjourned its meeting.

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Jeremy Bocchino  
SECRETARY of the Culver City Economic Development  
Subcommittee of the City Council Culver City, California

APPROVED

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Albert Vera  
COUNCIL MEMBER, Economic Development Subcommittee of the  
City Council Culver City, California