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ALBEMARLE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES
October 14, 2025
Room 241, 4:00 p.m.

Directors present: Don Long, Chair; Jeff Morrill, Vice-chair; David Storm; Steve Hood; Frank Friedman, Bill Mechnick

Directors absent: Andrea Johnson, Secretary Treasurer

Staff present: Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development; Ashley Hernandorena, Business Development Manager; Avery Thompson, Management Analyst III; Sabawoon Ahmadzai; Senior Manager for Economic Development; Andy Herrick, County Attorney; Bea LaPisto-Kirtley, Board of Supervisors Liaison to the EDA, Rivanna District

Staff absent: None

Charlottesville EDA Directors Present: J Addison Barnhardt; James Cauthen; Gareth Gaston; Jay O'Donnell; Denise Herndon; Steven L. Johnson; Quinton Harrell

1. **Call to Order and Establish Quorum**
   Chair Long called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **Opening Remarks**
   Chair Long and Charlottesville EDA Chair Addison Barnhardt provided opening remarks. The members of the Albemarle EDA and the Charlottesville EDA introduced themselves.

3. **New Business**
   a. **Innovation Corridor Presentation**
      Helen Cauthen, President of Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED), introduced her team members that were present, including Katie Delaney, Shannon Holland, Miles Davis. She provided a presentation reviewing the Innovation Corridor, highlighting the region's strengths in innovation, particularly in biotech, IT, data science, and national security.

      Katie Delaney, Talent Director at CVPED, reviewed information about the consultant working on the Innovation Corridor planning grant, Teconomy. She said Teconomy, a nationally recognized firm, was based in Ohio, and they specialized in economic development and innovation. She explained that the consultant would share the strategic roadmap next spring with an expected completion date by the end of March 2026.

      Ms. Cauthen reviewed the methodology that the consultant would use to develop the strategic roadmap. She emphasized that the goal was to create a shared regional vision for a technology-driven future and establish Virginia as an innovation hub. She

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said that at this point, their work was focused on data-collection and industry sectors.

Gareth Gaston, Charlottesville EDA Director, asked if the consultant was directed to consider the City and County's climate and housing goals when developing the plan.

Ms. Cauthen replied that the climate and housing goals were more at the local level, while they were focused at the regional level in terms of industry sectors and messaging. She mentioned that the consultant received the City and County's strategic plans, but the RFP did not include those considerations.

Steven L. Johnson, Charlottesville EDA Director, emphasized the need to consider the impact on the existing workforce and residents.

Mr. Friedman emphasized the shared goal of both the City and County to prioritize local hiring. He highlighted the need to create pipelines for local people to access better-paying job opportunities, as a key step in addressing poverty and economic development challenges in the area. He said that the solution to poverty was money, and people needed to be able to make more money through their employment.

b. **Charlottesville Economic Development Strategic Plan Overview**
Chris Engel, Charlottesville Director of Economic Development, reviewed the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

c. **Albemarle County Economic Development Strategic Plan Overview**
Ms. Kilroy reviewed the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

d. **Small Group Discussion on Strategic Plan**
The meeting broke into small group discussions on the strategic plans, focusing on the following two questions: where do you see the greatest opportunity for collaboration; and what do you want to be celebrating at next year's joint meeting.

Mr. Long said his group discussed how education could be a focus for future collaboration, particularly how employer pipelines could be improved. He said they also discussed redevelopment and infill planning as a focus of collaboration. He said that they looked forward to celebrating Go Virginia grant funding to implement their strategic plan initiatives.

Mr. Johnson said his group discussed how they could support workforce development aspects of housing, affordability, and transit.

Mr. Storm said his group discussed celebrating the future redevelopment of Seminole Square through Fashion Square. He said they focused on collaborating on infill development and revitalization.

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Jay O'Donnell, Charlottesville EDA Director, said his group discussed what smart growth would look like, developing pathways to job opportunities, utilizing entrepreneurship, bridging gaps in skilled trades training, and leveraging data to inform economic development decisions. He said that they looked forward to celebrating progress in all of these areas.

Mr. Mechnick said his group emphasized the City and County's unique characteristics, the importance of placemaking, and the need for collaboration between the two entities on various issues such as economic development, environment, housing, and infrastructure, with a focus on creating jobs. He said that they hoped to celebrate successes like the completion of the innovation corridor study and job creation.

4. **Other Matters**
   There were none.

5. **Adjourn**
   Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 5:17 p.m. The next meeting is November 18, 2025 in Room 241.

Signed by:
Teste: Donald D. Long 3/11/2026
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Donald Long, Chair

Signed by:
Approved: Emily Kilroy 3/11/2026
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Emily Kilroy, Assistant Secretary