

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
HENRICO COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**To wit:**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County, Virginia, was held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at the Henrico EDA offices at 4300 East Parham Road, Henrico, VA 23228.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Susan W. Custer, Chair  
Dennis J. Berman, Treasurer  
Philip C. Strother, Secretary  
Sam Bagley  
Floyd Mays  
Travis Pearson  
Suresh Soundararajan  
Frank Thornton

**DIRECTORS ABSENT**

Eddie S. Whitlock, Vice Chair  
Linda Melton

**DIRECTORS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY**

None

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Anita Taylor, Executive Director of Corporate Development, VCU College of Engineering  
Brian Trader, President/CEO, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
Numo Dzamdzic, VCU College of Engineering student  
Masrik Dahir, VCU College of Engineering student  
Ryan Murphy, Deputy County Attorney  
Anthony Romanello, Executive Director  
Ashley Kubat, Office Administrator  
Krista Rodgers, Marketing Manager

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The chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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## **AUTHORIZATION OF ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Custer announced that no directors would be participating electronically and moved to the next agenda item.

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## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Custer asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the special meetings held on August 17th, 2023 and August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Hearing none, with a motion by Mr. Pearson, seconded by Mr. Thornton, both sets of minutes were approved, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting “aye.”

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## **VCU ENGINEERING SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION**

Mr. Romanello introduced Anita Taylor, Executive Director of Corporate Development, with the VCU College of Engineering. Ms. Taylor explained how much of a difference the EDA's scholarship with the VCU College of Engineering makes in the lives of students. The scholarship program is often the deciding factor for students when choosing between schools. Ms. Taylor introduced Numo Dzamdzic and Masrik Dahir, two VCU Engineering students and scholarship recipients.

Mr. Dzamdzic is currently a senior at VCU majoring in mechanical engineering. Mr. Dahir is currently employed by CoStar and is working towards his master's degree in computer science. Both students relayed how vital the scholarship was to their education and discussed the opportunities awarded to them through the program.

Ms. Taylor provided a snapshot of VCU Engineering, stating that there are five departments with 15 different degree concentrations and minors offered. VCU Engineering had over \$10 million in research funding in 2022 and has over 2,200 students enrolled. Diversity is one of the strengths of the school, with female students comprising nearly 30% of the population. From 2018-2022, the graduate program saw an increase of over 100% in under-represented minorities.

Ms. Taylor highlighted VCU's focus on retaining jobs and industry in Virginia. 90% of VCU Engineering students remain in Virginia post-graduation. The school provides a pipeline of talent to companies in Henrico while also partnering with economic development agencies to bring business to the region.

Mr. Strother asked what the percentage of students who graduate with job offers is. Ms. Taylor stated that 90% of students are employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months of graduation. Mr. Thornton asked if VCU Engineering offers any dual degree programs with other colleges. Ms. Taylor replied that VCU currently partners with Virginia Union to offer dual degrees in physics and engineering and chemistry and engineering.

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**RESOLUTION – SIGNATORY AUTHORITY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AGREEMENT – LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN, INC.**

Mr. Romanello introduced Brian Trader, President and CEO of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Mr. Trader stated that the Garden is rapidly growing with record numbers of visitors and new memberships. The proposed agreement would help the Garden complete its first expansion since 2005. The Garden is currently 50 acres, and the expansion will consist of 11 additional acres. The Garden plans to break ground on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Mr. Trader explained that the expansion would allow the Garden to expand their native plant collection as well as their conservatory, which would allow for more unique plants from other regions. The Garden also plans to expand its existing education program by strengthening the workforce development program with Varina High School and the Roots program at the Coal Pit Learning Center.

Mr. Trader said that the new expanded gardens will have a focus on environmental stewardship and will consist of 70% more native species. Healthier ecosystems will provide a way for the Garden to teach visitors about the use of native plants for fertilizer reduction and water conservation. Lewis Ginter will also continue to prioritize resilient communities by increasing their support of FeedMore and ReEstablish Richmond.

Mr. Thornton asked if the Garden is aligned with the 4H program. Mr. Trader answered that the Garden works with the 4H program through the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia State University. Mr. Thornton questioned if Lewis Ginter's workforce development coordinator hires high school students and if so, what skills are needed. Mr. Trader replied that the Garden collaborates with A Partnership for the Future to engage with students with a focus on horticulture development. The Garden is working toward incorporating additional internships into a larger variety of roles for a broader opportunity for learning.

Mr. Soundararajan asked if Lewis Ginter participates in corporate partnerships. Mr. Trader stated that McGuireWoods was recently onsite to host a seminar on doing business in the current climate, and the VCU School of Nursing hosts their graduation ceremony at the Garden. Mr. Strother asked if the Garden contains any biking trails. Mr. Trader replied that there are no biking trails in the Garden directly, but that they are working toward adding the Garden as a point of interest on the Fall Line Trail.

Mr. Romanello informed the Board that the agreement will provide Lewis Ginter with incentives to assist in the company's expansion and will reimburse local permit fees and water charges. On a motion by Mr. Strother, seconded by Mr. Thornton, the resolution was approved, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye."

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**RESOLUTION – SIGNATORY AUTHORITY – AMENDMENT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – PPD DEVELOPMENT, L.P.**

Mr. Romanello stated that Henrico's 2022 R&D tax rate reduction significantly reduced the taxes that PPD paid on lab equipment as a result of their 2020 expansion. Under the previous agreement, the EDA would match the Commonwealth's Development Opportunity Fund ("COF") dollar for dollar through annual reimbursements of 50% of personal property tax revenue up to \$675,000. The tax rate reduction allowed the EDA to match the COF dollar through dollar through the tax savings realized by PPD. Under the amended agreement, the EDA will reimburse PPD 50% of the personal property taxes that it paid in 2020, and PPD recognizes that the tax savings resulting from the tax rate reduction matched the COF.

Mr. Romanello recommended the amended agreement for approval. On a motion by Mr. Mays, seconded by Mr. Bagley, the resolution was approved, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye."

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**RESOLUTION – SIGNATORY AUTHORITY – AMENDED AND RESTATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – MIDTOWN LAND PARTNERS, LLC.**

Mr. Romanello said that the Libbie Mill developers had identified a site in 2018 to be an office building, but they have decided not to pursue the office development on that site due to the current market. Instead, they are considering turning it into a residential building. The developers have identified other potential locations for office buildings. Their current agreement expires in 2023 and the amended agreement will provide them with five more years to select a site and develop the office building. The remaining terms of the agreement will not change. On a motion by Mr. Mays, seconded by Mr. Thornton, the resolution was approved, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye."

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## **RESOLUTION – SIGNATORY AUTHORITY – CONVEYANCE OF 1401 EASTRIDGE ROAD**

Mr. Romanello stated that the County has agreed to convey the property located at 1401 Eastridge Road to the EDA. A Rebkee/Thalhimer entity would then purchase the property from the EDA for development. If the development does not occur, the EDA holds a right of first refusal. The development is contingent upon rezoning, but a bank is being considered. On a motion by Mr. Pearson, seconded by Mr. Strother, the resolution was approved, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting “aye.”

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## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Personnel: Mr. Berman informed the Board that the Personnel Committee will soon have a meeting to discuss new changes to the employee handbook, as well as to review the results from the Executive Director evaluation. The Executive Director survey is due October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Finance: Mr. Berman provided the Finance Committee report on behalf of Ms. Melton. The EDA currently has over \$23 million in laddered Treasury bills due from October to February of 2024, and over \$1 million in the Virginia Local Government Investment Pool. Due to consistently strong interest returns, the EDA has already exceeded the yearly budget for interest in July and August alone.

Strategic Planning: Mr. Romanello will provide the strategic planning update in the Team Report.

Nominating: No report.

Marketing: Mr. Romanello provided the marketing update in the Team Report.

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## **TEAM REPORT**

Mr. Romanello stated that the EDA and Mr. Silber have been working with the Fisher-Garthright family representatives on the proposed memorial. The next meeting with the family is scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

Mr. Romanello informed the Board that an Office Task Force had been created to explore opportunities and share ideas on what is happening with office space. The kick-off meeting was held in July and included attendees from Highwoods Properties, Lingerfelt, Pruitt Companies, Thalhimer, GRP, and the County Planning Director Joe Emerson. While the downsizing of office space is still trending, leases are still being signed. The next meeting is scheduled for October.

Mr. Romanello announced that the EDA is developing a soft-landing program for international companies looking to establish a U.S. operation in Henrico. The program would provide reduced cost on office space and other incentives and could serve as an incubator or coworking space for startups. The EDA is building out the program framework and gathering best-practice stories from across the country.

Mr. Romanello stated that the Governor signed the budget last week, and the legislative change with respect to White Oak Technology Park sale proceeds was part of that approval. The budget also included \$175m for the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program in FY24. The program's award funding requires a one-to-one local match. The application process timeline is pending, with pre-applications due on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Mr. Romanello displayed a chart showing the total amount of investment from the EDA agreements versus the grant amount from the past ten years. The EDA gave out \$55 million in grants while garnering a total private investment of \$2.5 billion. The chart provides a good demonstration of the impact of the EDA's work in the community.

Mr. Romanello advised that the EDA is in the beginning phase of the 2025 strategic plan update. The staff gathered at the Highwoods office in Innsbrook in August to discuss Henrico's future and to develop the questions needed to begin the plan update. Liz Povar facilitated the session, and the results will be used when issuing our RFP next year. The EDA recently issued an iRFP to update the Trends and Disruptors report that Janet Ady created and received three proposals. The EDA will bring a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Romanello stated that while the conversations with the owner of the dragstrip property continue, no lease has been executed at this time. The owner is working with IAA on a potential site outside of Henrico. The EDA has not spent any money on the project yet, and the EDA will provide updates on any changes.

Mr. Romanello told the Board that the EDA is working to acquire a property from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The property is zoned M-2 and is 38.2 acres, bordering White Oak Technology Parks Sites 1 & 2. Under current state law, when a state agency sells land, half of the money goes to the state and the remaining half goes to the parks fund. The Department of Conservation and Recreation would like all the money to go to the parks fund, which will take a legislative act. Chris Lloyd with McGuireWoods is assisting with shepherding the legislation through the Governor's Office and General Assembly.

Mr. Romanello announced that Sentara will be opening its first facility in Richmond at Meadowood Square in March of 2024. Sentara will be located across the street from the

Amazon building. It will feature a mobile healthcare unit. Ropeblock, a Dutch company, will open at 2115 Westmoreland Street in the Westwood area. It is the company's first U.S. location.

Mr. Romanello introduced an application for a remediation grant through the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund. He noted that in June, 4800 Thalbro LLC, the developer of a parcel of land along Thalbro Street in the Westwood area, had asked the EDA to complete an application for a planning grant on its behalf, as required by the Fund's programmatic criteria. 4800 Thalbro LLC has not submitted their grant application for the planning grant and is now asking that the EDA complete an application for a remediation grant in advance of the upcoming deadline and provide matching funds. While the EDA denied their request for matching funds, the EDA agreed to request Board authorization to execute the remediation grant application, which requires the applicant be a governmental entity. Mr. Romanello informed the Board that the EDA would ask the Board to consider the request. On a motion by Mr. Mays, seconded by Mr. Pearson, the matter was added to the agenda, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye." Hearing no further discussion, on a motion by Mr. Mays, seconded by Mr. Pearson, the Board authorized Mr. Romanello to execute the remediation grant application on behalf of the EDA with the match requirement provided by the property owner, with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye."

Mr. Romanello asked the Board if they would be open to moving the December Board meeting, since the third Thursday falls close to Christmas. The Board reached a consensus to move the December Board meeting to December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A calendar hold will be sent out.

Mr. Romanello introduced Ms. Rodgers to provide a marketing report. Ms. Rodgers stated that the EDA focused on developing a content package dedicated to semiconductors. Other items of interest in August included the Project Tiger content package, the Quality-of-Life report draft, and the HIP Zone one-pager. The EDA has been working with West Cary Group to evaluate their core messaging tactics and update the color palette. The new marketing strategy will continue to evolve over the next few months and as the new website is designed.

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### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Custer asked if there was any old business. Hearing none, she asked if there was any new business. Hearing none, she moved to the next agenda item.

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## **CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Custer moved that the Board go into a closed meeting pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (A)(5), for a briefing of the members of the Board of Directors and discussion concerning the conveyance of publicly held real property, including potential contract terms, such as price and due diligence conditions, and the anticipated development, investment in, and use of the property, to a prospective business interested in locating its facilities in the County, where no previous announcement has been made of the business's interest in locating its facilities in the County, and where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Economic Development Authority.

With a second by Mr. Pearson, and with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye," the Board entered closed session.

When the closed session discussion was completed, Ms. Custer moved that the Board exit the closed session and return to open session. Mr. Pearson seconded the motion, and with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye," the Board returned to open session. Then, after returning to open session, Ms. Custer read the following Certificate of Closed Meeting into the record:

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County, Virginia, has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board that such a closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

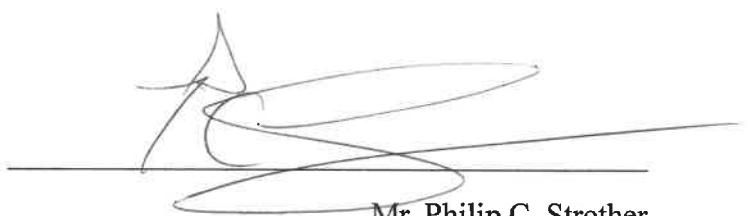
Ms. Custer moved that the Board certify the closed meeting in accordance with the Certificate of Closed Meeting. Mr. Mays seconded the motion. With Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye," the Board certified the closed meeting.

Ms. Custer moved that the Board approve the resolution authorizing Mr. Romanello to sign a purchase and sale agreement and related documents and agreements pertaining to the sale of Site 2 at White Oak Technology Park and authorizing the chair to sign the deed. On a second by Mr. Mays, and with Ms. Custer and Messrs. Bagley, Berman, Mays, Pearson, Soundararajan, Strother, and Thornton all voting "aye," the resolution was approved.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mr. Philip C. Strother". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'P' at the beginning.

Mr. Philip C. Strother  
Secretary