

MINUTES
Regular GEBAC Meeting of the
Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission
Wednesday, January 15, 2025

The Regular GEBAC Meeting Notice and Agenda of the Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission of the City of Gardena, California, was called to order at 11:30 AM on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, in the Nakaoka Community Center, 2nd Floor, Room G at 1670 W. 162nd Street, Gardena, California.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:43 AM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Steve Rogers; Commissioner Joshua Bettencourt; Commissioner Jules Laross Kanhan; Commissioner Moe Shemirani; Commissioner Louis Enriquez; Commissioner Kale Morita; Commissioner Gilbert Bernal Jr; Commissioner Christyna Giles Washington. Employees present: Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi; Police Lieutenant Alexander Rivera; and Administrative Analyst I, Georgina Placido.

Commissioners Gene Hale and Naresh Solanki were absent.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Steve Rogers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Rogers noted that no members of the public were present, and no member of the public wished to speak to the Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission at this time.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.A September 18, 2024

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Enriquez and seconded by Commissioner Washington to approve the minutes of the meeting on September 18, 2024:

Ayes: Rogers, Bettencourt, Kanhan, Enriquez, Morita, Bernal and Washington

Noes: None

Absent: Hale and Solanki

6. NEW BUSINESS / MEMBER INITIATIVES

6.A Discussion of the Gardena Boulevard Revitalization Program Guidelines

Chair Rogers began the meeting by asking if everyone had the chance to review the program guidelines and if there were any questions or concerns. Ms. Jackie Choi noted that the color palette was included and attached to the guidelines.

Chair Rogers confirmed that since no one had any issues with the guidelines, he wanted to discuss the color palette as they would need to make a recommendation to the City Council.

Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi briefed all the Commissioners on the discussions at the last meeting. She highlighted that staff had presented a color palette for the Commissioners to review, which was an adopted color palette for residential paint in the City of Gardena. Additionally, she mentioned that one of the Commission's recommendations was to narrow down the color options. If the Commission chooses to review and approve the guidelines and color palette, GEBAC will make a recommendation to the City Council at the next meeting. Once the Council considers this, the Gardena Boulevard Façade Project will be initiated.

Chair Rogers indicated that the color scheme consisted of an upper and lower color. Ms. Choi confirmed his assessment, stating that lighter colors would be used for the upper part of the building and darker colors for the lower part.

Chair Rogers also mentioned that an awning would be included, to which Ms. Choi agreed. He inquired whether the awning would be made of fabric. Ms. Choi clarified that the awning would be made of steel and would not require a fabric color scheme.

Chair Rogers then asked if any of the Commissioners had recommendations.

There was an extensive discussion involving Chair Rogers and Commissioners Shemirani, Washington, Bettencourt, Bernal Kanhan, Morita, and Police Lieutenant Alexander Rivera. The main points of the discussion included the following:

Commissioner Shemirani recalled that the initial plan was to use a darker color for the upper part of the building and a lighter color for the lower part. However, Commissioner Washington noted that this decision had been discarded and that no final decision had yet been made.

As a business owner on Gardena Boulevard, Commissioner Washington expressed her preference for a neutral paint color, believing it would allow the signage to be the focal point. She also suggested using a darker awning.

Commissioner Bettencourt supported the idea of a darker bottom color with a lighter top color and also recommended a darker awning.

Chair Rogers noted that darker awnings would require more maintenance.

Commissioner Bettencourt suggested that it would be beneficial to offer business owners three color scheme options. He emphasized the importance of having a staff member or professional provide expert advice on which colors work well together, ensuring that property owners receive cohesive color schemes. Chair Rogers agreed.

Ms. Choi noted that once the program is initiated, a consultant would be hired to manage it. This consultant would be the expert responsible for discussing color selection with property owners and making recommendations.

Police Lieutenant Rivera, who serves as the district commander for the area, requested that color choices for Gardena Boulevard (from Vermont to Normandie) be considered. He asked that any provided options align with the existing colors in that area. Both Commissioner Bettencourt and Chair Rogers agreed with this suggestion.

Chair Rogers asked about the next steps for the remaining businesses after the project is completed. Ms. Choi reminded everyone that the project would specifically focus on the target area and that additional funding would be required to move forward with the remaining businesses.

Police Lieutenant Rivera asked what would happen if a business decided not to participate in the services being provided. Ms. Choi explained that, as a city, we cannot force businesses to change their façades since participation is voluntary. Therefore, if a business decides not to participate, that is their choice. There was a discussion about the hope that the façade improvements made by some businesses might encourage others to enhance their own appearances. Chair Rogers emphasized that the improvements offered would be provided at no cost.

Commissioner Kanhan asked if discussions had occurred with the business owners to reach a compromise. Chair Rogers replied that it is essential to present a positive perspective to all the business owners in the target area, highlighting the benefits of the program. Since the improvements are free, this opportunity could increase the value of their property, while opting out may diminish that value. Ideally, all businesses should participate in this one-time opportunity. Ms. Choi confirmed that the businesses will have five years to participate in the program. Commissioner Bettencourt asked if that five-year period had already begun. Ms. Choi confirmed that they are currently in the second year and that the timeline started when the city received the grant funds.

Commissioner Bernal inquired whether they would begin their outreach with the business or property owners. Ms. Choi responded that they would reach out to both groups simultaneously. She noted that for the city to proceed with façade improvements, business owners would need authorization from the property owners, as they own the buildings. Most of the commissioners voiced their opinions and agreed it would be best to contact the property owners first.

Commissioner Washington mentioned that, in her case, since the property owner resides out of state, she would take the initiative to inform him about the city's offerings. This proactive approach would facilitate better communication, noting that

every situation is different. However, she believes that a collaborative "tag team" approach would be beneficial for both parties involved.

Chair Rogers added that they have a duty to contact the property owners, who can then reach out to their tenants to inform them about the city's offerings and gather their thoughts. Commissioner Bettencourt expressed his agreement with Chair Rogers on this matter. Ms. Choi remarked that as a city, they have access to the property and business owners' information since both are required to have a business license.

Chair Rogers inquired about the deadlines for tenants and property owners to express their interest in participating in the program, following City Council approval and outreach efforts. Ms. Choi responded that the Commission would need to establish this deadline. She suggested that property and business owners be given one to two months to indicate their interest, allowing time for the city to effectively market the program for a few weeks. Ms. Choi emphasized the importance of reaching out to both business and property owners to give them ample time to consider the program, which could take another month or two. She noted that this is also a topic for consultants to provide their professional recommendations. Once the deadline closes, the city will review all applications received. As part of this process, a participation agreement will be established with each business and property owner.

Chair Rogers recommended a 60-day timeline for any interested participants to respond. Ms. Choi agreed that a timeline should be established. If the Commission decides to recommend the guidelines and color scheme to the City Council, a presentation will be made to the Council. Following that, the Commission will reconvene for further discussion on the timeline, process, and the hiring of consultants.

Commissioner Bettencourt inquired about the final goals of the Commission for concluding this program. Ms. Choi replied that the main objective is to complete the project. She further explained that once the consultants are on board, they can recommend necessary changes to the approved guidelines to ensure compliance. Ms. Choi noted that any proposed changes will be submitted to the Commission and the City Council for review. After the program begins, the staff will provide regular progress reports to both the Commission and the City Council.

Commissioner Washington inquired whether the second phase of the project, beyond Budlong, falls under their jurisdiction, especially since additional funds are required. Chair Rogers clarified that it is the City's responsibility to secure that funding. Ms. Choi added that it would ultimately be up to the City Council to decide whether to extend the Gardena Boulevard project and to have the Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission (GEBAC) oversee it.

Lieutenant Rivera asked what the projected total cost of the project would be if 100% compliance were achieved from every business between Vermont and Budlong. Ms. Choi confirmed that the total would be \$2 million, minus the administrative costs. She noted that the three improvements being offered—façade improvements, painting, and awnings—would be covered along Vermont and Budlong.

Commissioner Morita inquired about the implications of a low participation rate. Ms. Choi explained that the Commission might recommend extending the time period to encourage property and business owners to express interest in the program, or the City Council may propose expanding the target area. She emphasized that there were no area restrictions when the grant was received, and GEBAC recommended the target area to the City Council.

Commissioner Bettencourt expressed concerns over business participation, particularly regarding the potential challenges of starting and stopping construction and any cost variations associated with painting early in the process versus later. Ms. Choi clarified how the city plans to manage the project, highlighting their experience with other grant projects, which typically operate in phases. She provided a detailed explanation of how the process would be implemented. Commissioner Bettencourt shared his thoughts on the subject, and Chair Rogers added that a consultant would be advising them as the project progresses.

Commissioner Bettencourt recommended including a clause informing businesses that if they do not apply by the deadline, they will have to wait for the next project cycle. He suggested making this recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Bernal proposed conducting a community outreach effort to inform all businesses about the proposed program. Ms. Choi noted that the guidelines could be made available in both English and Spanish.

There was a discussion among the Commissioners regarding the details of the community outreach presentation and the offering.

Ms. Choi confirmed that an informational session can be held. She recommended that once all guideline applications are finalized, staff would begin promoting the event. It is at that point that staff will conduct an informational session for businesses to review the application. If they have any questions, the Commissioners, Consultants, and staff will be available to address these inquiries. Additional time can also be allocated to allow businesses to understand the guidelines thoroughly. If needed, more than one session can be arranged to ensure all questions are answered, and renderings can be displayed.

Commissioner Washington inquired whether alternative platforms, such as Zoom or Google Meet, could be utilized since some business owners reside out of state. Chair Rogers and Ms. Choi agreed to this suggestion.

Lieutenant Rivera inquired whether they expected any issues with the businesses beyond Budlong. Chair Rogers confirmed that yes, those businesses would receive an explanation.

Chair Rogers moved the meeting along and proposed that the Commission decide on three color schemes to recommend to the City Council. A discussion followed among the Commissioners and Ms. Choi.

Ms. Choi reminded the Commission that the property and business owners will choose their own colors from the options selected by the Commission. She advised against narrowing down the color choices too much, as this could impact participation.

Chair Rogers expressed that his color preferences would include various shades of whites, greys, and browns.

Ms. Choi suggested that the selection of colors be made now for a recommendation to the city council.

After further discussion of the color options, the Commission reached a compromise on the following colors.

MOTION: Chair Rogers made a motion to select a variation of whites only for the upper part of the building and a variation of greys and browns for the lower part of the building.

Upper Color:

- Whites: White Mocha; Fresh Popcorn and Confident White

Lower Color:

- Greys: Hailstorm Gray; Silver Mine and Natural Gray
- Browns: Pottery Wheel; Nightingale Gray and Graceful Gray

MOTION: A motion was made by Chair Rogers and seconded by Commissioner Bettencourt to Recommend to the City Council for the Gardena Boulevard Revitalization Program Guidelines and the Revised Color Palette to include white for the upper section and grey and brown for the lower section:

Ayes: Rogers, Bettencourt, Kanhan, Shemirani, Enriquez, Morita, Bernal and Washington

Noes: None

Absent: Hale and Solanki

7. CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS

No reportable items.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi informed all Commissioners that they have until January 22 to complete the Ethics Training.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

- 1) CHAIR ROGERS – No items to report.
- 2) COMMISSIONER BETTENCOURT – No items to report.
- 3) COMMISSIONER KANHAN – No items to report.
- 4) COMMISSIONER SHEMIRANI – No items to report.
- 5) COMMISSIONER ENRIQUEZ – No items to report.

- 6) COMMISSIONER MORITA – No items to report.
- 7) COMMISSIONER BERNAL – No items to report.
- 8) COMMISSIONER WASHINGTON – No items to report.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Rogers adjourned the meeting at 12:37 PM.

SUBMITTED:



Jackie Choi, Liaison

APPROVED BY:



Steve Rogers, Chair