Economic Development Committee

September 8, 2026

The South Burlington Economic Development Committee held a regular meeting at 5:30 PM in Room 301 of the South Burlington City Hall, 180 Market Street, South Burlington and by remote participation.

Members present: Nicole LaBrecque (Chair), Chris Carrigan (Vice Chair), Harold Hershberg, Paige Brochu, John Burton, Emma Shouldice-Boardman, Rebecca Killian, Brad Krompf, Jason Mintz

Members absent: None.

Also present: Ilona Blanchard, South Burlington Community Development Director (Committee Staff), Andrew Chalnick, City Council (Council Liaison)

1. The meeting was called to order by Nicole LaBrecque, Chair, at 5:30 p.m. Emergency exit procedures were reviewed. The Committee welcomed Jason as a new committee member. The agenda was approved (moved by Rebecca Killian, seconded by Emma Shouldice-Boardman) unanimously.
2. Comments from the Public. No members of the public were present; no public comment was offered.
3. Review and Approve Minutes from Prior Meetings

   a. August 11, 2026. The draft minutes were approved (moved by Emma Shouldice-Boardman, seconded by Paige Brochu).
4. Updates:
   a. Chair (Nicole LaBrecque):
      - Connected with Bettina regarding participation in the Green Community Festival (September 19); there is no more room for additional companies or organizations this year – strong interest from many. Members were asked to send Bettina the names of any additional organizations to consider for the future.
      - Second-round interviews are underway for the Economic Development Director position; Nicole has met one candidate already. The process is expected to conclude with a recommendation by September 9, with a name to be announced most likely by the next meeting.

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- Nicole has been assisting Beta Technologies with site planning and expansion.

b. Staff (Ilona Blanchard):
    - Met with Hello Burlington to review credit card and phone-activity data using AI tools; prompts and questions can be submitted to help analyze hospitality-related data. The dataset covers a two-year period (June 2024 – June 2026). Emma expressed interest in attending the next meeting.
    - Shared a breakdown of first-time versus repeat visitors to City Center. Notable findings: City Center draws more visitors than Burlington itself; City Center figures include Staples Plaza and University Mall.
    - UVM undergraduates have moved in; roughly 150 residents were using the bus stop at the Garden Street apartments daily last week.
    - Economic Mobility Initiative event: approximately 30 people attended, including many service providers and entrepreneurs. Discussion touched on how the City is reaching out to communities, what opportunities exist with various communities, and career development / untapped potential.
c. Member Committee Activities (Paige and Chris):
    - UVM has launched a new, statewide Division of Economic Development. This may create an opportunity for the South Burlington EDC to participate around messaging and coordination with UVM and communities across the state.
    - Leahy Center is conducting a listening session with communities.
    - Noted that the Burlington Business Association (BBA) has dissolved and that the Chamber plans to build an association.
d. Council (Andrew):
    - Quality of Life Ordinance ("empowering public safety with compassion"): addresses tents on public land and solicitors on medians. The ordinance would make it illegal to set up a tent on public property or to stand on a median, with the intent of using ordinance and compassion together to improve quality of life in South Burlington. Andrew noted there is an economic development impact associated with this issue.
    - E-bikes that function as motorcycles: new authority will allow enforcement of speed and vehicle rules on bike paths.
    - Noise ordinance enforcement is an ongoing issue with motorcycles operating without mufflers in downtown Burlington.

5. Officer Elections

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Elect Clerk: The Committee decided (no formal action needed) that a standing Clerk will not be elected; instead, a clerk/minute taker will be designated at the start of each meeting going forward.

6. Economic Development Strategic Plan

a. Work Session: How to Tell the Story to the Community – Communicating Plan/Rollout.

b. Working Groups Report:

- Innovation District and Aviation Sector: Noted an uptick in mergers and acquisitions activity, with discussion of pursuing such mergers in a sustainable way.
- Hospitality/Destination: The working group plans to write up its thinking into an onboarding-style document/approach.
- Permit Expediting/Concierge Permitting Concept: Continuing to test the process with Beta Technologies, meeting with the City every couple of weeks and bringing in Planning, Zoning, Public Works, and other departments. This approach is already being piloted through the Beta Technologies Master Plan process.
- The working group structure may be reimagined once the new Executive Director is in place. Frameworks need to be drafted by October.

7. Annual Report FY2026

a. Review Draft Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). The draft was circulated at the meeting. The Committee will submit edits/comments before the next meeting; edits noted during discussion included:

- Update Chris Carrigan's term end date to 2028.
- Strategic Plan Implementation, 2nd bullet (Innovation District and Aviation): add reference to SBBA, UVM, and area businesses.
- Regional Collaboration: revise the “removing systemic barriers” language to specifically reference economic mobility (i.e., “removing systemic barriers to upward economic mobility”).
- Add language welcoming all new businesses to City Center, not solely Leunig's.

b. Approval was deferred pending the Committee's edits and comments, to be submitted before the next meeting.

8. Other Business

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The committee photo, originally planned for September, will instead be taken at the October meeting. Members asked that this be placed on the October agenda, scheduled for approximately 6:15–6:20 PM.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned (moved by Harold Hershberg, seconded by Emma Shouldice-Boardman/John Burton).

Respectfully submitted by

Paige Brochu, Minute Taker

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