

Agenda

Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors

City of Kalamazoo



Thursday, April 17, 2025

7:45 AM

CPED Main Conference Room - 245 N. Rose Street, Suite 100

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes from the EDC Board Meeting held on March 20, 2025

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

E. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Recommend approval to the City Commission to appoint 3 new EDC/BRA Board members and to reappoint 3 current board members for a second term.
2. Approval of a proposal from Restorative Economics Group to develop leading metrics for the performance targets of the Economic Development Strategy.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

J. ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 20, 2025
Community Planning and Economic Development
245 N. Rose Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevan Hess; Jason Novotny; Sharon Ferraro; Kyle Gulau; Lucas Middleton; *Andrew Schipper; Michael Gurnee; Alonzo Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nathan Bolton; Rachel Bair

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Jamie McCarthy (Development Manager); Steve Glista (Attorney, Dickinson Wright); Logan Mulholland (Consultant, Fishbeck); Jared Chambers (Business Specialist); Heidi Waffle (Brownfield Project Assistant)

Meeting was called to order at 7:49 AM by Chair Novotny.

MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS: Director Middleton moved to excuse absent members; seconded by Director Gulau. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Director Gurnee moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Director Hess. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Director Gurnee moved approval of the minutes from the meeting of February 20, 2025; seconded by Director Middleton. Motion approved by voice vote unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Director Gulau asked when they will see the next item of business related to the Economic Development Policy. Mr. Chambers said he can ask other staff involved for an update. Ms. McCarthy said that item is top of the list for the EDC/BRA Retreat.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office for a 2-year approval of the Adult Use Retailer Permit to True Leaf Solutions, LLC.

Mr. Chambers shared information about the business, as found in the packet.

Director Ferraro moved approval of a recommendation to the City Clerk's Office for a 2-year approval of the Adult Use Retailer Permit to True Leaf Solutions, LLC; seconded by Director Hess. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of a Contract Renewal extension with Dickinson-Wright to provide legal services to the Economic Development Corporation through December 2026.

Attorney Glista said he is happy to answer any questions.

Director Middleton noted that he has enjoyed working with Dickinson-Wright and that Attorney Wood is very knowledgeable. She has been receptive and helpful whenever they have questions, and their rates are very reasonable.

Director Gulau moved approval of a Contract Renewal extension with Dickinson-Wright to provide legal services to the Economic Development Corporation through December 2026; seconded by Director Ferraro.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Adoption of a Resolution Approving and Recommending City Commission Approval of an Economic Initiative Fund Loan for Kalamazoo Candle Company.

Mr. Chambers shared staff is recommending an \$86,000 loan for the \$860,000 project over a term of fifteen years at 2%. The loan amount recommendation is based upon the policy that states the EIF loan can support a 10% maximum of the total project.

Adam McFarlin, owner of Kalamazoo Candle Company, said the company started about 11 years ago and that they have always been interested in being a part of downtown. When they moved into their first warehouse, what he felt they were missing more than anything was that connection to downtown. He shared about their current store called Marketplace and the new project they are pursuing. With the new project and opportunity, they are taking over the stewardship of a building of a business that has been around for over one hundred years. There is a lot of history to it, and it is important to him to steward the building for what it is and the history that it has. As they redevelop the building, they are going to keep the mid-century touches. They are working with a design firm out of Detroit to focus on the mid-century modern design and touches. Their general contractor is out of Kalamazoo.

Mr. McFarlin continued to explain their plans for the project. They will have production in the store, and in one of the front windows of the store, the public will be able to watch them make things from outside. It will bring some of the hand-crafted-ness they like to share with people. It will also be used as their design center where people can come in and work on custom projects. Hopefully they can bring in some extra traffic into downtown that way. The DIY experience they already have will be expanded, as well as get more space and elements added to it.

He said they will be adding 2-5 incubator spaces to let up-and-coming makers in the area to try out having a store retail presence downtown without having the commitment of a full-fledged store. He said there is a big learning curve that a lot of people are not aware of and this would give a safe space to try that in their store. He mentioned if they are in the mindset to try to wholesale, that they definitely have connections to assist with that. They will reach out to Can Do Kalamazoo, City staff, and others in the community to see if they have anyone who might be a good fit.

Mr. McFarlin shared one of the missing pieces downtown is an entertainment area that doesn't rely solely on alcohol as a sales point at night. He said their store will become a non-alcoholic cocktail lounge at night. It will have a variety of entertainment like alcoholic bars offer. He said there is a growing trend of not drinking anymore and there is not really a place to do that – they would like to be that place. This will create expanded hours for their store.

He shared a lot of these project components are expensive to do, and they would appreciate any kind of financial support they can get to help facilitate the project. He is aware there are a lot of grants out there at different levels, but they are not pursuing those. He believes those are better left for smaller businesses that can really help round out downtown. If downtown as a whole is better, his business will be better off.

*Director Schipper entered the meeting at 8:01 AM.

Director Middleton thanked Mr. McFarlin for investing in downtown. He thinks this is a cool project and good re-use of the VA Bootery space. He said the zero-alcohol theme is a good thing to center around and that there is a need for that.

Director Gulau said he is excited to see them coming downtown and bringing some creative new energy.

Director Gulau asked Mr. McFarlin how he heard about the loan and how it was working with city staff.

Mr. McFarlin said he originally reached out to Mr. Jerrod Burdick because he was aware of work he had done with another business downtown. Mr. Burdick had informed him of this loan program. Mr. McFarlin said it has been really good and smooth working with city staff. He said working with staff was educational as well because they connected him with other resources. He tried at one point to work with MEDC on other funding options, but realized he is too late in the planning process to go for those resources.

Director Gulau asked if he needs to get a Site Plan Review for the changes they are making.

Mr. McFarlin shared they do not need a Site Plan Review, they just need permits. He said Mr. Paul Thuringer helped connect him to the permitting staff and figuring out exactly what they needed.

Director Gulau moved adoption of a Resolution Approving and Recommending City Commission Approval of an Economic Initiative Fund Loan for Kalamazoo Candle Company; seconded by Director Gurnee.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

None.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 AM by Chair Novotny.

Signature

Printed Name/Chair

Heidi Waffle/Recording Clerk



EDC Board of Directors Staff Report

City of Kalamazoo

TO: The Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors

FROM: Antonio Mitchell, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development
Prepared by: Jared Chambers

DATE: April 17, 2025

SUBJECT: New EDC/BRA Board Member Appointments

SUMMARY:

The committee reviewed applications from seven candidates and conducted seven interviews. The committee voted to recommend the appointment of the following individuals:

- Mr. T.J. Ward has experience as a commercial real estate developer and broker in the community. This experience will replace a gap created by a board member that is terming off.
- Mr. Scott Peterson has experience as a commercial lender and is a City resident. This experience will replace a gap created by a board member that is terming off.
- Mr. Eddie Warr works at Greenleaf, is a City resident, and has a unique community perspective not currently available on board.

Kyle Gulau, Jason Novotny, and Rachel Bair are seeking reappointment to continue their service on the board.

BACKGROUND:

In February 2025, the EDC/BRA board convened a nominating committee to review board applications and conduct interviews to fill up to three vacancies on the board. The vacancies were created by two board members' term limits and one resignation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Economic Development Corporation/Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Boards recommend the appointment of T.J. Ward, Scott Peterson, and Eddie Warr as new board members. The EDC/BRA also recommends the reappointment of Kyle Gulau and Jason Novotny for a second full term, and Rachel Bair for a first full term after serving a partial term.



EDS Metrics

A collaborative process for evaluating implementation efforts of the EDS to inform decision making

Project Contact:

Dr. Sarah Crane
Executive Director
sarah@restoreecon.com
51-240-7005

Proposal Valid Through:

4/30/25

SCOPE OF WORK

The goal of this project is to develop critical leading metrics for the outcomes of the City of Kalamazoo's Economic Development Strategy (EDS). To achieve this, our team will lead a facilitated planning session for up to seven action plans, ensuring that impact and progress are captured in a clear, actionable, and measurable way.

This process will be highly participatory, engaging both board and staff members in defining success and identifying relevant leading metrics. Restorative Economics Group (Restore Econ) will provide expertise in inclusive facilitation, robust data collection and analysis, and best practices in data-driven decision making to support the development of meaningful and effective metrics.

PHASES OF WORK

1 FACILITATION PLANNING & PRELIMINARY METRIC ANALYSIS

Facilitation Planning: Restore Econ will design a facilitated session to collaboratively identify leading metrics for seven pre-determined action plans. This session will advance the community-informed EDS by developing consensus-built metrics connected to the final lagging metrics in the strategy. Working with City staff, Restore Econ will complete a facilitation plan for a 90-minute session and prepare the necessary support materials for the May meeting.

Preliminary Metric Analysis: Concurrently, Restore Econ will conduct a comprehensive preliminary analysis for potential leading metrics. This analysis will evaluate the potential external, publicly available data sources, document the internal data currently collected by the City, and example metrics from other regions. This information will support both the facilitated session and final report.

2 IDENTIFYING ACTION PLAN LEADING METRICS (*Meeting*)

Meeting facilitation: During the May board meeting, Restore Econ will guide board members and staff through a facilitated session to identify actionable and meaningful metrics. This ensures a shared understanding of what progress looks like at various levels. Key guiding questions for this phase may include: What does success look like for this action plan, both qualitatively and quantitatively? What are the stages of progression toward achieving these outcomes? How will we know if activities related to this action plan are effective? What lens or lived experiences influence how we see and define progress? Are there other perspectives we need to consider?

Restore Econ will provide insight into best practices in metrics and measurement, building on the foundational work conducted in Phase 1.

SCOPE OF WORK (con't)

3 FINAL DELIVERABLE

Leading Metrics: Using a restorative and equity-focused lens, Restore Econ's team will refine and validate the selected metrics. This ensures that definitions of success are: (1) Multifaceted – Considering economic, social, and community well-being dimensions; (2) Inclusive – Reflecting the lived experiences of diverse residents; and (3) Actionable – Providing a clear roadmap for implementation and monitoring. Our team will meet with City staff to finalize the report on the leading metrics connected to the EDS' lagging metrics. Our final deliverable will be a concise report or slide deck, tailored to best support the board and staff in their ongoing work.

BUDGET

Activity	Hours
Phase 1: Facilitation Planning & Preliminary Metric Analysis	16
Phase 2: Identifying Action Plan Leading Metrics (Facilitated Meeting)	6
Phase 3: Final Deliverable	15
Total Hours	37
Total Cost	\$6,475

ABOUT US

We are a boutique applied research firm that specializes in integrating restorative practices into economic development spaces, including entrepreneurship, manufacturing, workforce development, and more. Our team provides in-depth research as well as training on integration of findings into organizations and communities.



Our team has worked with both national and local governments, including Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, United Way of South Central Michigan, Grundy (IL) County Economic Development Corporation, Tampa Bay Partnership, United Way Suncoast, and many more. For an overview of current and recent project, please visit our [website](#).

TEAM

Dr. Sarah Crane, executive director, is an applied researcher exploring the theoretical and on-the-ground implications of economic approaches that are rooted in connection and restoration. She provides a diverse set of research services to support nonprofits, government leaders, and industry professionals in decision making through robust methodologies that answer pressing questions in economic development at the local and national levels. Dr. Crane specializes in qualitative data collection analysis that integrates quantitative data for comprehensive findings. Through holistic project management and rigorous research methods, she delivers comprehensive reports and tools that inform leaders and drive positive outcomes.

Dr. Lucia Farriss, senior advisor, is an experienced economist with over 20 years of expertise in mixed-methods research, combining quantitative economic analysis with lived experiences to drive meaningful social impact. Her work takes a multifaceted approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the interconnectedness of economic and social issues. More recently, she has collaborated with public and private sector leaders to develop economic indicators that strengthen the business case for investments and policy decisions.