



**CITY OF CONCORD**  
*New Hampshire's Main Street™*  
**Community Development Department**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDAC)**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 21, 2025 @ 5:00PM**  
**Concord City Library Auditorium**  
**45 Green Street Concord, NH 03301**

**Attendees:**

Committee Members:

Mike Vlacich, Chair, Mayor Byron Champlin, Steve Duprey, Michelline Dufort, Jim Bouley (Arrived 5:15), City Councilor Judith Kurtz, Patrick Tompkins, Alex Stoye, Chuck Gilboy, City Councilor Ali Sekou (Arrived 6:27), Emily Ricard, Sal Prizio

**Absent Members:**

Bobby Segal, Ari Pollack, Jean Hakuzimana

**Staff Present:**

Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager – Development  
Tim Thompson, AICP- Assistant Director of Community Development  
Stephanie McKim, Administrative Coordinator

**Meeting called to order:** 5:01 pm.

**1. Adoption of Minutes:** A motion was made by Chair Vlacich and duly seconded by Mr. Duprey to adopt the minutes of June 24, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Welcome by Chair Vlacich:** Chair Vlacich welcomed those in attendance and reviewed the agenda.

**3. Comments by Mayor Champlin:**

a) Mayor's Visitation Program: 603 Bar-B-Q Visit – Mayor Champlin reported on August 25, the Mayor's Visitation Program met with Ben Normandeau of 603 Bar-B-Q at his Hall Street location. Mr. Normandeau graduated from Concord High School and continues to live and operate his business here in Concord. Mayor Champlin reported that 603 Bar-B-Q presently sublets its location on Hall Street and only has room for approximately 22 seats. Mr. Normandeau desires to grow into a large space, and is seeking a lease/purchase arrangement for a 6,000sf building with a space outdoors for meat smokers that operate outside of normal business hours. Mayor Champlin further reported after the meeting, Mr. Normandeau met with Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Small Business Administration regarding a creation of business plan to help plan for future expansion. Mayor Champlin reported they discussed potential locations in Penacook Village and Loudon Road, however, Mr. Normandeau expressed concern regarding Penacook Village due to the unusual hours of operation of the business and any location near residential neighborhoods. Mayor Champlin reports 603 Bar-B-Q has nine employees with six being fulltime, a strong customer base, large social media following, and Mr.

1 Normandeau plans to be in Concord for a long time.

2  
3 A brief discussion ensued around 603-Bar-B-Q involvement in the business community.

- 4  
5 b) Concord 2050 Visioning Session Update - Mayor Champlin reported the Concord 2050 Visioning  
6 Committee engaged New Hampshire Listens (NHL) to facilitate the 2050 Visioning process. The  
7 Committee met on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to begin the framework activity. The Committee members along  
8 with invited members of the public were broken out into groups to discuss questions provided  
9 by NHL. Mayor Champlin reported many robust conversations were had within the groups and  
10 the Committee gained some insightful feedback. He further reported some of the feedback was  
11 focused on shaping public knowledge of the upcoming Master Plan and expectation regarding  
12 input in that process.

13  
14 Mayor Champlin reported the Committee had discussed options for two public input sessions to  
15 be held in person and virtual, to attract a broad cross section of the community, in addition to  
16 food and child care for public input sessions. Mayor Champlin reported the next step is for NHL  
17 to meet with City Planning staff to get a better understanding of the current Master Plan and  
18 which chapters to bring to public input. After this step is complete, dates will be set for future  
19 meetings.

20  
21 Mr. Walsh reported City staff expects to have a Master Plan scope of work ready for review by  
22 the Planning Board in November with the hope of having consultants hired for the project by  
23 February 2026. He gave an overview of the anticipated chapters of the Master Plan to guide  
24 policy making for the next two decades or longer. Mr. Walsh reported the Master Plan process is  
25 comprehensive and public input is an essential component to the process, in addition to input  
26 from multiple Boards and City Council.

27  
28 A brief discussion ensued around the role of EDAC in the upcoming Master Plan, scope of work  
29 criteria for potential consultants, potential Master Plan chapters, the use of AI tools to gather  
30 data for the upcoming Master Plan, and the Concord community educating decision makers  
31 about what they envision their community to be.

- 32  
33 4. **Conversation with Bryanna Marceau, newly appointed President and CEO of the Greater Concord**  
34 **Chamber of Commerce (GCCC)** – Chair Vlacich welcomed Ms. Marceau, who gave a brief introduction to  
35 the Committee members. Ms. Marceau reported the GCCC continues to support the mission of this  
36 Committee, the City, local businesses and a thriving economy in Concord.

37  
38 Ms. Marceau reported GCCC will be partnering with Business and Industry Association (BIA) to tackle hot  
39 button items such as child care and workforce housing. She reported GCCC is open to having more  
40 conversations regarding promoting local tourism. Additionally, Ms. Marceau reported as the newly  
41 elected President and CEO of GCCC, she is passionate about tackling issues such as workforce  
42 development and creating pathways between education and businesses.

43  
44 Mayor Champlin inquired about the economic development challenges GCCC thinks the City is facing. Ms.  
45 Marceau reported housing continues to be a challenge despite the work the City has done to be named  
46 Housing Champion. She recognized the challenge may be surrounding communities that are not  
47 supporting housing development like Concord is.

48  
49 At 5:35, Mr. Duprey reported he had another commitment but wanted to mention an alternative to  
50 painting murals on brick facades would be vinyl wall murals. It can be a much more affordable option  
51 rather than repainting/repainting the brick and furthermore, it protects the older brickworks around the  
52 City.

53  
54 A brief discussion ensued around engaging in more conversations with GCCC to solve issues in workforce  
55 development, housing, and economic development.

1  
2 **5. Conversation with Natch Greyes, Vice President of Public Policy at Business and Industry**  
3 **Association about child care efforts in New Hampshire** - Chair Vlacich welcomed Natch Greyes and  
4 gave a brief introduction to the committee members. Mr. Greyes reported BIA is the statewide Chamber  
5 of Commerce and the majority of the work done at BIA is to advocate at the state legislature. BIA has  
6 recently begun to tackled non-legislative issues such as workforce development, housing and childcare.  
7 He reported there is a shortage in child care, and in Concord, there is currently a waitlist of about one  
8 year to get childcare services. This is problematic for employers that are trying to attract or retain  
9 employees with families that require childcare services in order to work.

10  
11 Mr. Greyes reported there are a number of organizations working on solving this issue and further  
12 reports there is a combination of things that need to happen in order to begin solving this issue that  
13 include state policy shifts, and better partnerships to increase childcare options. He further reported  
14 another struggle for the childcare industry is that it relies almost solely on what a parent can pay for the  
15 cost of childcare. Unlike other industries, childcare has restriction on staff to child(ren) ratios. Mr. Greyes  
16 reported when the cost to operate is taken into consideration, a parent is likely to pay approximately  
17 \$400 per week for childcare and that becomes a greater challenge for low income families that  
18 subsequently drop out of the workforce.

19  
20 Mr. Greyes reported that because of the government funding structure in the State of NH (no sales or  
21 income tax), most childcare initiatives rely on philanthropic/charitable initiatives. Several organizations  
22 are looking toward forming pilot childcare programs around that state but other childcare facilities  
23 expressed concern over pilot programs paying higher wages resulting in more turnover for them.

24  
25 Mr. Greyes reported BIA is working with GCCC and a few other local organizations to reach out to local  
26 businesses to gather insight on this issue. He further stated BIA would like input from the City as well and  
27 recommended EDAC make a recommendation to City Council for an appointment of a liaison to work  
28 with BIA on this issue.

29  
30 Mr. Prizio inquired what the average wage of a childcare employee is and if there is any data that  
31 indicates how much childcare is holding back business growth. Mr. Greyes reported the average wage  
32 falls around \$16.00 per hour and competes with the fast food industry. Additionally, he reported the NH  
33 Fiscal Policy Institute did an analysis and the findings reported it does impact business growth  
34 significantly.

35  
36 Chair Vlacich inquired who is currently serving as the lead childcare policy maker for the State of New  
37 Hampshire and locally how can Concord be more hospitable to the childcare industry. Mr. Greyes  
38 reported there is no one currently in the position however Governor Ayotte is interested in this issue and  
39 her office has reached out to BIA. He further reported locally Concord can support smaller childcare  
40 facilities through solving facility costs as they do not typically have the investment/donor pool of the  
41 large facilities such as the Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA.

42  
43 Mr. Walsh reported the City has a long history of taking direct, proactive steps to address childcare in  
44 Concord. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Department provides summer childcare programs  
45 (summer camps) which serve approximately 1,500 children at the City-Wide Community Center which  
46 opened in 2018. Mr. Walsh also noted that the City has supported private childcare providers in the City  
47 via public-private partnerships using a variety of tools and programs, including, but not limited to, the  
48 City's Community Development Block Grant Program, as well as low interest loans through the City's  
49 Revolving Loan Fund Program. Mr. Walsh noted the City has also supported childcare providers through  
50 low cost leases of City owned real estate, or past sale of real estate to support providers. Providers which  
51 the City has directly supported using these tools and programs have included, but are not limited to:  
52 Merrimack Valley Daycare, the Boys and Girls Club (Bradley Street and Community Drive), Second Start,  
53 the Concord YMCA, and The Children's Place on Burns Avenue. He noted that he had provided a  
54 presentation about this subject and these partnerships at a Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce  
55 forum a few years ago, and would be happy to share the presentation with EDAC.

56  
57 Mr. Walsh reported at the upcoming November meeting, City Council will be having a public hearing on  
58 zoning amendments that will bring the City's childcare land use ordinance in line with state law that  
59 passed two years ago, making it easier to do in home childcare for small providers.

1  
2 Mr. Thompson reported that childcare facilities supported by the Community Development Block Grant  
3 program must, in accordance with State and Federal grant requirements, provide services that  
4 predominantly benefit low to moderate income households, however, the City's Revolving Loan Fund has  
5 guidelines that are a bit more flexible.

6  
7 Mr. Walsh noted that Community Development Block Grant funds have typically been used to support  
8 renovation of not-for-profit childcare facilities. However, he noted that for-profit childcare providers  
9 might be able to access Community Development Block Grant funds if they were creating childcare jobs  
10 which would be filled by low to moderate income persons.

11  
12 Dr. Tompkins reported the state is funding scholarships for students completing early childhood  
13 education programs and reported it has been wildly successful. He further inquired about challenges  
14 other than staffing that may be inhibiting childcare provider growth.

15  
16 Mr. Greyes reported competitive wages remains the biggest challenge and the other barrier is capital into  
17 the system. He recognized the City has done a great deal with grants and other tools to make it possible  
18 for these programs to grow and expand however the facilities need more teachers and staff and, that  
19 could be solved through higher wages.

20  
21 Mr. Gilboy reported some of the state's Regional Development Corporations have received subgrants  
22 from the NH Charitable Foundation specifically to target home based childcare.

23  
24 A brief discussion ensued around innovative approaches to childcare that have been successful or failed  
25 in other states, insurance issues and options regarding childcare facilities, and recognizing childcare is  
26 also a workforce issue.

## 27 28 **6. Social District Ballot Question (HB 467)**

29  
30 Chair Vlacich requested Mr. Walsh summarized the question before the committee regarding Social  
31 District (HB467). Mr. Walsh reported the question on the ballot "shall we allow the operation of social  
32 districts within the city?" He reported the state adopted HB467 in July which allowed for the creation of  
33 social district. Social districts would allow a designated alcoholic beverage consumption area that is  
34 shared by multiple establishments that are licensed to sell alcohol. It appears that districts can be  
35 established on a temporary basis with limitations on hours or days of operation.

36  
37 Mr. Thompson reported across the state, there has not seen any specific requests presented to those in  
38 the municipal economic development community. He reported a key component to the keep in mind,  
39 would be the Council would have the ability to create a social district but if it so desires but it does not  
40 have to. It gives the City the option to be flexible in to create something that is conducive to the wants and  
41 desires of the City if it passes. If it fails to pass, the City can learn from other communities that may  
42 choose to model the operation of social districts, and maybe bring it back up at a future date.

43  
44 Mr. Bouley reported the position of the Local Government Committee of the Greater Concord Chamber of  
45 Commerce (GCCC) is taking a "wait and see" approach. He reported GCCC and the local government  
46 committee would like to be a voice in the process if the Council decides to move forward with this. Mr.  
47 Bouley further stated Salem's Tuscan Village was the reason this bill was brought forth and signed into  
48 law. Tuscan Village was designed around the social district.

49  
50 Mr. Thompson added Tuscan Village was established under a very unique zoning ordinance that allow for  
51 outdoor consumption of alcohol in that private development. The key difference is that Tuscan Village is a  
52 private development with no public streets.

53  
54 Mr. Stoye reported Concord is becoming more known for its Main Street events. He is interested in  
55 supporting implementation a social district and utilizing this tool for this Main Street events.

56  
57 Chair Vlacich reiterated placing this on the ballot does not create a social district but allows for a  
58 conversation about creating a social district, if at all.  
59

1 Mr. Thompson reported another piece to consider is that Concord is a city form of government with an  
2 election every two years. Therefore, had the Council decided not to place this on the ballot for the voters  
3 now, it would not have been able to be considered/voted on for two years (2027) at the next municipal  
4 election.

5  
6 Councilor Kurtz reported EDAC could make an argument that the committee wants the City to have the  
7 opportunity to consider a social district in between election cycles, and EDAC could recommend voters  
8 support it in so that as we learn more about state regulations City Council, GCCC, and EDAC have the  
9 opportunity to have a robust conversation how this could be beneficial.

10  
11 Councilor Sekou arrived at 6:27 due to attendance at a campaign interview for a local media outlet. He  
12 reported it is important to understand how this is communicated to the public. Public perception around  
13 social districts may be that citizens view this as public intoxication and partying in the streets of Concord.  
14 He reported educating the public about social districts and how it can be a useful economic development  
15 tool would be beneficial.

16  
17 A brief discussion ensued around time frames for formulating regulations for Social Districts, Council  
18 desire to bring this topic to the voters, and the current use of beer tents at Market Days, and having the  
19 ability to have the conversation around Social Districts in the future.

20  
21 **7. Other Business**

22 None  
23

24 **8. Next meeting**

25 The next meetings are scheduled for December 9, 2025 at 5:00 PM and January 27, 2026 at 5:00 PM.  
26

27 A motion to adjourn was made by Chair Vlacich and duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz.  
28

29 **9. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:42 PM.  
30

31 Respectfully Submitted,  
32

33 Stephanie McKim

34 Administrative Coordinator - Development