

Chair:

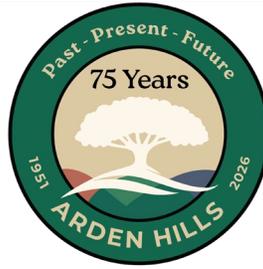
- Jud Murchie

Commissioners:

- Ted Brausen
- Bobby Bonine
- Jessica Daniels
- Kyle Sorenson
- Kristine Poelzer
- Ihsan Isak
- Kayleigh Shrom

Council Liaison:

Councilmember Emily
Rousseau



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**Arden Hills
Economic
Development
Commission Meeting
February 25, 2026**

City Vision

A strong community that values our unique environment, our fiscal soundness,
and our tradition as a desirable city in which to live, work, and play.

Agenda

Regular Economic Development Commission Convenes 7:30 AM

Call to Order

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. January 28, 2026

3. COMMENTS AND REPORTS

- A. Report from the City Council
- B. Economic Development Commission Comments

4. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. EDC Vice Chair
- B. EDC Work Plan
- C. 75th Anniversary Update

5. ADJOURNMENT

**A quorum of the City Council may be present at this meeting.
Some Commission Members may be participating in this meeting by interactive
technology/remotely.**

Meeting materials are available online at:
<http://www.cityofardenhills.org/agendacenter>



**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
Special ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2026
7:30 A.M. – ARDEN HILLS COMMUNITY ROOM**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jud Murchie, Commissioners Kristine Poelzer, Bobbie Bonine, Jess Daniels, and Youth Commissioner Kayleigh Shrom

Absent: Commissioners Ihsan Isak, Kyle Sorenson, Ted Brausen, Council Liaison Emily Rousseau

Also Present: Senior Planner Elena Fransen, Community Development Director Jake Reilly

Note: Commissioners Bonine and Shrom indicated at the beginning of the meeting that they would have to leave before 9 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Murchie called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Poelzer requested that in future agendas, the Council Report be first. She said PTRC does that and it ensures there is enough time for the commissioners to hear the information.

A motion was made by Commissioner Poelzer and seconded by Commissioner Bonine to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 17, 2025

Commissioner Poelzer said on page 4, second paragraph. Her comment about the branded clothing was intended to say branded with the new 75th Anniversary logo. She noted on page 6, EDC was typed where EDA should be.

A motion was made by Commissioner Daniels and seconded by Commissioner Poelzer to approve the minutes, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

A. 2026 Meeting Schedule

Chair Murchie said we have talked about making the meetings be the fourth Wednesday of every month.

Senior Planner Fransen said the agenda has the 2026 meeting dates laid out. We will have a scheduled meeting on the fourth Wednesday of each month. There can be changes including cancellation due to lack of agenda items or an alternate day, if external calendar items prevent a quorum. She said considerations will be made to ensure meetings won't coincide with the Arden Hills/Shoreview Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce business connect events. Those are scheduled quarterly on the third Wednesday of March, June, September and December. It is noted that December 16, which has been identified as a potential alternative date, would coincide with that Chamber event. We can discuss dates today or review them at a later date. The options before the EDC include adoption of the proposed meeting schedule or amending the meeting schedule.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bonine and seconded by Commissioner Daniels to approve the adoption of the proposed meeting schedule with the ability to change it, as needed. Motion passed unanimously.

B. EDC Vice Chair

Senior Planner Fransen said every year we have to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair for the commission. The mayor appoints the Chair, and the commission selects the Vice Chair. She said the Vice Chair fills in for the Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting. That would include facilitating the meeting and going through the agenda, seeking motions and moving through the different materials. There is also the opportunity to meet with Staff in advance of meeting to go through the agenda and prepare for the meetings. She asked if anyone was interested in volunteering.

Commissioner Poelzer said she could serve in the role but there are several members missing today. She said Chair Murchie is a resident member of our commission. She thinks it may be a good idea to have a businessperson be the Vice Chair.

Senior Planner Fransen said since we don't have the full group, commissioners can think about it and have further discussion at the February meeting.

Chair Murchie said he will send an email to the group to have everyone keep it on the radar for next month.

Discussion ensued regarding whether an email to the entire group may constitute a meeting. The recommendation is to send an email via BCC. That would prevent everyone from replying to all. The rule only applies if the email discusses topics the commissioners will have decision making authority over. Selecting a Vice Chair is a decision. Best practice would be any correspondence should be sent to yourself plus Staff with other recipients under BCC.

Chair Murchie said we will postpone the Vice Chair position discussion to February, and he will send an email, noting Commissioner Poelzer has indicated interest but also stating that it may make sense to have a business representative in the role.

C. 75th Anniversary Feedback Recap

Senior Planner Fransen said at the last meeting Councilmembers Holden and Monson attended. They both sit on the 75th Anniversary Committee. They asked the EDC about sponsorship policy and were hoping to get businesses involved with the Anniversary event. It will be July 17th and will follow the Penny Carnival. The event will feature a concert and drone show, along with kids activities. Staff consolidated the comments and shared them with the Staff contact that also works with that anniversary committee. The sponsorship levels were discussed. There was additional feedback about connecting with businesses. Some ideas included a poster that businesses can display at their location, creating a t-shirt that would include sponsor information. It could be a revenue generator, and we could have a pre-order to help manage cost and avoid excess inventory. There was discussion on coordinating with businesses to encourage attendees to visit Arden Hills businesses the weekend of the event. This could be a business passport that could be stamped. Other suggestions were to have additional bike corrals and encourage residents to bike there. Some discussion of a 5K walk or run was had, however it was noted that it was a large undertaking and would require additional coordination.

Senior Planner Fransen said the EDC is being asked to discuss and note any additional feedback that should be shared with the anniversary committee. It was noted that the EDC could help with connecting businesses with the city.

Commissioner Poelzer said she had a good discussion with Parks and Recreation Manager Skalicky. They took notes on their discussion and Staff was going to present it to the 75th Anniversary Committee. She has arranged for the Twin Cities Bicycling Club to lead an adult ride. They have 1,000 members around the area. They will be encouraged to stop at the 75th Anniversary. We would get free advertisement in their newsletter. That doesn't mean 1,000 people will show up, but they will all get the information. She said Bike MN is a wonderful non-profit. They offer a lot of events, including bike rodeos for kids. They barter for a table to inform people about what they do and in return they will bring their cones and set up a path for kids. It's a bicycle safety focused event and they do helmet fittings. EDC may want to consider doing this in an Arden Hills parking lot. That could lead to a bike/walk through downtown.

Commissioner Bonine said it could be a cool feature event. He participated in a car seat event that made sure your car seats were installed properly. He thinks that may be a good kick-off to summer event. Kids can have their helmets fitted. The community can come together for a couple of hours. He's not sure if it's EDC or PTRC.

Chair Murchie said it could be a joint effort between both groups, to bring the community together.

Discussion ensued regarding bike helmets and possible events to host a helmet fitting event.

Chair Murchie said it will be helpful to get feedback from the 75th Anniversary Committee on how the EDC can best support the planning. Commissioners will be happy to build awareness about the event by contacting businesses.

Commissioner Poelzer said when the 75th Anniversary web page is built commissioners can go through it and see what they have. She appreciates an idea from last meeting regarding a run/walk. She has been trying to get something like that for several years. It takes 3-4 years for an event like

that to build. We have to start somewhere. Having the route pass our businesses would be good for the businesses.

Chair Murchie said it can be informal. Maybe it's not a part of the 75th Anniversary weekend. Maybe it's a business passport and the passport program kicks off with a walk starting at Bethel and then walking up to Lexington. Maybe businesses offer discounts during a certain time frame. It can be an informal group of people who just decide to do it. It would help participants learn who the businesses in town are.

Commissioner Poelzer said it would also be a good way to get businesses involved that aren't located on County Road E.

Commissioner Daniels said Bethel's Anderson Center is right behind Brausen's. It has a huge parking lot that isn't used very often. That could be used at any time. She said the main campus is really quiet during the summer months so there are a lot of parking spaces that aren't used. She said dining services are open to anybody. If we know in advance, we can arrange for a discount.

Commissioner Poelzer said we should pass that opportunity along to the 75th Anniversary Committee. She thought a bike rodeo and a walk could be included during the Fire Station Open House. It could be sponsored by EDC and local businesses.

Chair Murchie said as part of the work plan and engaging the community, we should have some event that can bring community to the businesses. We can highlight the resources we are connected to.

Commissioner Daniels wonders if we can get feedback on the attendees of the business event to see what people are most interested in. We want to be effective in meeting their needs.

Chair Murchie said he and Commissioner Sorenson have been looking to do a monthly gathering at The Tavern. We will invite business owners to come together. There would be no formal meeting agenda. It would be a way to build a community with the businesses. We could gather feedback from them.

Commissioner Poelzer said if we can get buy in from businesses, she thinks we could bring in Bike MN for a bike rodeo, have an open house at the fire department, do a walk and have businesses do the passport thing. The support for that will come from the businesses.

Chair Murchie said we have to tie something like that into the work plan and can bring it to City Council and build awareness through that. If we get buy in, we can jump into planning what the event will be.

Commissioner Poelzer said we can get PTRC involved because it's a bike safety event.

Commissioner Bonine said we need to clarify if it is our mission to support the businesses or to have the businesses to support our mission. We need to be careful not to overextend ourselves. These are great ideas; however, we have the 75th Anniversary this year and a lot of resources will be going there. He said the Chamber of Commerce is a really good resource for the business community. It's good to have something that is just exclusively for Arden Hills Businesses, but the Chamber allows business owners to meet people from surrounding communities. That widens the support and wouldn't require any extra lift.

Discussion ensued regarding when the Chamber meetings are held. The next meeting will be on March 11th and will be held in Shoreview.

Senior Planner Fransen said we can lean into promoting that with businesses and sharing the information with the attendees of our business event.

Commissioner Bonine said they do a great job. They have bigger wallet share and more reach than we do. He said after the chamber meetings they can carve out 20 minutes for the Arden Hills businesses to touch base.

Commissioner Daniels said the last one was held at Bethel. She said there were about 35 people in attendance. There were 20 minutes held for networking beforehand. Arden Hills can do something specific to them.

Commissioner Bonine said he hosted one with about 20 people. That is not a lot of people, considering it represents 5 or 6 surrounding cities. The businesses have to drive it. To promote something within the city, recruiting to businesses can be built but the businesses may not come. He thinks the businesses have to want it. It's wasted effort, if they don't. We have to define what the EDC wants to do. We have to be careful not to get caught up with planning events that may not apply to what our mission is. There may be other committees that can do the walk or the bike rodeo. What is the EDC? What are we trying to do?

D. EDC Work Plan

Chair Murchie said any of these things have to be tied to the work plan. If we plan an event, we have to know how we will bridge residents and businesses. We have great ideas. We need to consider if we do an event how to get people from all of the businesses, up and down County Road E and Lexington, in the door. If we can get these ideas in the work plan and structure, in a way that we can stay on track. We all love our city, and we want to make it exciting, but we have to make sure there is value for the businesses and that's something they want.

Commissioner Bonine said he wants to make sure our efforts are aligned. He's here to support the mission but we need to make sure it's appreciated and wanted. If the businesses don't want it, it's not worth our time. We have twelve meetings, a couple of them will probably be used to support the 75th Anniversary. It looks like we have a busy year, but it will take time. We realized the visits weren't the best way to contact the businesses due to distance. It could be another few meetings before we figure out a better inventory of the businesses in the community. We still don't have a good process to define who our audience is.

Senior Planner Fransen said this group has tremendous ideas. She thinks it's the blend between resident and business owner perspectives. We can keep narrowing in on how we can bring businesses and residents together to create that community. The last discussion we reviewed a tentative drafted work plan. There were comments about the business license and registration process. This is the City's method of identifying what businesses are here. The EDC is the connector between the city and the businesses. She provided a visual for what the process is for the business license and registration. She noted the different ways that new businesses may be discovered by the city to let them know about the licensing/registration process. If the EDC wants to supplement this process by suggesting changes to the form. They can make those recommendations. The EDC can keep an eye open for new businesses. The EDC can make it part

of the work plan to check in in September and maybe the EDC talks to different businesses before the renewal process. There may be some opportunities for the EDC to be a part of that existing process beyond the process that happens in the City Clerk's office. She asked how EDC can help if a new business comes into town. She asked if there are steps the EDC can take to learn more about new businesses. How can EDC involvement amplify the impact of the current process? Are there handouts, documents or web pages that the EDC might suggest or offer ideas on content that could help with the process?

Commissioner Bonine thinks we should create a subcommittee. He knows there is a lot of information that will spark further discussion and conversation. We want to respect the existing process in place. We gather information every time a new business comes in. It would be a disservice to the city to nit-pick the process. We have to honor what is there and make subtle shifts.

Community Development Director Reilly said the EDC cannot change the city's process. We have an adopted standard operating procedure. We are asking EDC to help us understand how we can have a better understanding about who is here. We have a 96% response rate to the annual request for registrations.

Discussion ensued regarding how many businesses are on the list and how many of them are paying a license fee. Staff is asking EDC to help find all of the businesses we are missing.

Commissioner Bonine asked who controls the flow of information regarding who is operating in the city.

Community Development Director Reilly said typically cities have no idea how many businesses operate in the city.

Commissioner Bonine said that is what we're trying to figure out.

Community Development Director Reilly said the standard is that municipalities generally have no idea about the number of businesses operating in their cities. This city has a great list. A retailer can leave and a new retail business can move in. We have a system that requires them to talk to us.

Commissioner Bonine thought the process is that they have to apply for something.

Community Development Director Reilly said it could be. There are a large number of ways that the city learns about a new business. This registration process is fairly unique. Very few cities have a registration program.

Commissioner Bonine is sensing resistance to having the EDC involved in the standard process. He wondered why the city wouldn't be open to that. He asked when was the last time the process was reviewed. EDC tried in-person visits, which wound up being a lot of effort with little return. The way the city communicates with the businesses is different from how EDC is looking to. The city has a healthy inventory of the businesses we know of and there's a gap. We don't know what that number is. If there is an application, why can't we capture some of the things in the survey?

Community Development Director Reilly said he read the meeting minutes to understand the history of this conversation. He thinks the desired outcome is to have a more complete list of businesses.

Commissioner Bonine said that is why it would be helpful to have conversations with the people who handle the process. He asked what the resistance is to having a subcommittee that can ask the questions. No one is saying anything in the process should change. It feels like staff is defensive.

Community Development Director Reilly said SOP is the daily work that City Staff does. Those are adopted by the council.

Commissioner Bonine asked if they have changed over time.

Community Development Director Reilly said there are some that he has seen that need to change. He appreciates that concept. The process does not appear to be flawed to staff because the response rate to the renewal request is greater than 95%. There are businesses that don't need a license or a permit. Staff are seeking the EDC's help to find the businesses that aren't participating and find out why.

Commissioner Bonine said the form and the process are not clear. If we want to connect with the businesses, there has to be a way to capture that information. There may be some things that could improve the process. Is the Council open to us having a work plan that is applicable to our businesses.

Community Development Director Reilly asked what the problem is with the SOP.

Commissioner Bonine asked if Staff has tried to complete the form? There is an inconsistency in fairness on how fees are applied. The only way to have clarity is to have access to the team that handles the process every year. He's not understanding why asking to have conversations with Staff about this is a problem. He won't work towards an unknown goal. We are a community. Why is it a big deal to have a conversation and get some insight into the process? That resistance pushes him further away. There are other things he can spend his time on.

Chair Murchie said he hears Commissioner Bonine saying that in order for him to answer the question on why all businesses aren't participating, it's helpful to see what is being asked of me and have the opportunity to express what you don't like.

Commissioner Bonine said he spoke with a former Commission Member, and they would joke that she pays a fee, but he doesn't have to. Then someone new comes in and maybe they have a fee. The current system creates animosity and confusion among business owners.

Community Development Director Reilly said the difference between those two businesses is that one doesn't require a license to operate and the other does, in part because the state requires licenses for businesses where people touch other people.

Commissioner Bonine asked how he keeps track of all of that, as a business owner. If the EDC is trying to capture all of the businesses.

Chair Murchie said we have talked about this. There is a challenge about understanding. There is a disconnect and this inconsistency feels unfair to some businesses. He thinks this is a good topic for EDC to discuss. We aren't saying there is anything wrong with the process, but the city is saying we want to understand what the businesses are thinking. Right now, we're hearing feedback from business owners that there is a gap. This is the kind of topic EDC is designed for. Maybe we

can come to the next meeting and bring our thoughts. How do we answer the questions from the businesses, who are confused about why the fees are different? That's where there may be some gaps.

Community Development Director Reilly said he is hearing that the process works for what it works for, but the EDC membership doesn't have a complete understanding of what it is for.

Commissioner Bonine said Staff are the gatekeepers of the city. It has been said we have one of the best resources to know who is operating in the city. If we want to communicate with business owners, leveraging that will be key. We have a process in place that feels broken to the business owners. It's not broken for the City's purposes. If EDC is being asked to piggyback off of that information and combine our efforts, he doesn't understand why those clarifying discussions are being blocked.

Community Development Director Reilly said he's saying the SOP of sending out the registration and collecting the information is not in the EDC purview and it's not up for debate.

Commissioner Bonine left at 8:50.

Community Development Director Reilly said the internal process is not up for debate, until Council directs us to do so. He agrees we need to have transparency about who and what we're collecting information for.

Chair Murchie said the business community said there is a gap. The business community continues to say they don't understand the "why." People have joined this commission to help with that process, and it hasn't gone the direction they wanted. A barrier is created. Businesses have said they don't understand the process. They aren't filling out the form because they don't know what to do. EDC is trying to help the city. We need to figure out how we continue to build the bridge. He thinks this is something we need to talk about. No one is looking to step on City processes.

Community Development Director Reilly said he isn't sure everyone agrees that there is a lack of transparent communication. The city web page about businesses could be more helpful. Communication concerns and changing established city processes are different conversations.

Chair Murchie said he thinks Commissioner Bonine was explaining that he can't tell what will help us get more businesses to complete the process if we don't understand the process ourselves. There isn't clarity about why. One of the ways to get to the why is to better understand the process. He said the EDC isn't telling Staff what to do, we're saying the process is confusing to businesses.

Senior Planner Fransen said the City Staff manage the process. EDC is interested in gathering business information to connect the city and businesses. The EDC wants to be the bridge between the city and the business community. The EDC is trying to understand how to be a voice for businesses. If businesses engage with the city, we need to make sure we share resources. EDC can be that bridge. The intent of this conversation is to find out where the gap is. EDC can help with connection and information gathering. Is there an opportunity to say the business resources page isn't working? EDC can have some input on the content of that page, which can make City processes clearer.

Chair Murchie said he doesn't think Commissioner Bonine is thinking process vs. communications. He's thinking of it all as one. In reality, what is being presented is difficult to understand. It can be awesome to promote that 90-something percent of businesses participate. We should tell people we have one of the most comprehensive lists.

Community Development Director Reilly said the form seems clear, to him.

Chair Murchie thinks that's why a conversation is being requested. We see there are differences and we don't understand them. That puts the City in a negative light. When we have a bulk of businesses that don't understand, we should try to provide clarity.

Commissioner Poelzer said we were presented with the form at a meeting a few months ago. It combined licenses and registrations. The why is missing. If a massage business requires a license because they place hands on someone, that's the reason why. She said the second page it says, "Would it be helpful to create any new handouts or documents to aid in understanding the process?" Commissioner Bonine said yes but we don't know what forms or handouts we have, and we don't understand what the process is. She thinks Commissioner Bonine was thinking we can't learn about that at a regular EDC meeting, so he suggested a subcommittee.

Community Development Director Reilly said he thinks everyone on the committee needs to be part of that conversation.

Commissioner Poelzer said if a smaller group can gather the information, they can bring back information to help clarify the process and the why, as it pertains to EDC. Her guess is the "other" category captures most of them. Maybe we need more check boxes. Let the "other" businesses feel included. Incoming business will know they belong here. It helps people feel connected.

Chair Murchie said the subcommittee can compile the questions that we have come up with during this process. That can outline the FAQ. We can explain why some groups pay and some don't.

Community Development Director Reilly said the website that includes information about business registrations has more complete information. If he were a new business, he would visit the city's website, read the Comprehensive Plan and check out the registration/license page. The form only goes out when we learn there's a new business. He understands the form creates a problem about the why. The website is very transparent about the why. Businesses that don't require a city or state license don't require a fee. He said it is unclear to him what the problem Commissioner Bonine wants to solve is.

Chair Murchie said there are a couple of questions that have to be answered. Communication is one. People aren't going to scour the website. But when business owners get together, they talk about how the signs and fees are not equitable. We are stuck in the weeds. If the reality is that 95% of Arden Hills businesses are complying, are we spending too much time on this sliver of unknown? Maybe the focus should be engaging the businesses we do know about.

Senior Planner Fransen said the process is the process. It operates with or without the EDC. We have an engaged EDC that is looking to put together a work plan. Part of the work plan is a mission to connect the city to businesses. The EDC is that bridge. The city has a process of engaging with businesses through the collection of information about them. We have a successful process. How

do we support connections with businesses? What does that look like? The question is how do we capture the missing parts?

Chair Murchie thinks Commissioner Bonine is saying the subcommittee could be helpful for engagement. We should focus the next meeting on the work plan. We're engaging businesses. We're trying to make this a destination for businesses. We're trying to be a bridge between the City and the business community. Commissioner Bonine is saying he wants to be the bridge. It's important to remember things change over time. He thinks it's awesome we have a great business inventory. How can we leverage our success to create FAQs or get more engagement? He observed two people saying different things. Neither was hearing what the other was saying and it resulted in Commissioner Bonine's frustration.

Commissioner Poelzer said we can't have that. She isn't always able to leave other things at the door. She's not saying that's what happened today. However, she believes we do need a subcommittee to address some of the issues of inequality in the business licensing process. She doesn't think we need to be a part of every detail. Staff are professional. EDC understands Staff works with the City Council and Council appoints EDC members. Commissioner Bonine is trying to stay in his part of the triangle. She agrees a subcommittee can help flesh out some of the issues.

Chair Murchie said Commissioner Bonine volunteered to have conversations with people to help solve this issue. He was just told we don't need to have that. We don't want to create a space where we can't express our opinion or promote dialogue. He thinks we can say, we have a work plan, it sounds like the work plan has opportunity for subcommittee. We can discuss it at the next meeting.

Community Development Director Reilly said he was asked to state, very clearly, to this group that the standard operating procedure is an entirely internal process.

Commissioner Poelzer said he should have said that to Commissioner Bonine. She said Community Development Director Reilly didn't say he was tasked to say.

Community Development Director Reilly said he heard what Commissioner Bonine was saying. Feelings aren't facts but they are real and valid. He thinks the why is outlined very clearly on the website and it identifies that some businesses have licenses, and why. Other businesses are asked to register for no fee, and why. He thinks Commissioner Bonine is right that SOPs that don't work, don't work and agrees that sometimes cities are unsuccessful at effecting change in processes that don't work.

Chair Murchie said having the subcommittee can be the place to walk businesses through the website. Subcommittee members can ask business owners about the information on that page and ask what isn't connecting.

Community Development Director Reilly said he doesn't know that a subcommittee is effective for a group this small.

Chair Murchie said when he thinks of a subcommittee, it isn't a burden, it's just a few extra conversations.

Community Development Director Reilly said there are only 5 or 6 members on the EDC, plus the youth commissioners. Having a subcommittee that is 3 out of the 5 members doesn't make

sense. It makes more sense for all of the business owners and non-business owners in this group to be in that conversation.

Chair Murchie said it's too much to cover in our monthly meetings. It's better to have sidebar conversations to gather information to inform conversations at future meetings. He can be involved, but as a resident member, maybe his time would be better spent thinking about how to support the 75th anniversary.

Community Development Director Reilly said a subcommittee equals more staff time. This city has very few staff.

Chair Murchie said that's exactly the point. He thinks Commissioner Bonine was saying he wanted to sit with staff and have an hour of their time to help understand.

Senior Planner Fransen said when planning the in-person visits, there were three people meeting monthly, outside the regular meeting and she would have a one-hour conversation.

Community Development Director Reilly said a subcommittee needs to be effective.

Chair Murchie said he has two concerns. Maybe there's only three members on a subcommittee, but subcommittee members will bring that information into the dozens of conversations they have with people outside of this space. His second and bigger worry is what happened today created tension between the business community and the city. That cannot be allowed to grow. It's important to recognize the needs that the city has, including limited staff and limited resources. We have structures in place that tell us what we have to do. They are our baseline guiding principles. Given those constraints, how can we move forward together? Having a conversation can be helpful.

Senior Planner Fransen said this is a lot to chew on. Staff will have a conversation about next steps. Staff will also verify what supports we have in place to continue these conversations. If there are alternatives to conversations that need to take place outside of the EDC meetings. There have been some items identified to help continue the conversation.

4. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

A. Report from the City Council

None.

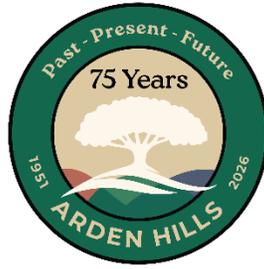
B. Economic Development Commission Comments

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Murchie adjourned the meeting at 9:19 a.m.

EDC AGENDA ITEM – 4A



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 25, 2026

TO: Economic Development Chair and Commission Members

FROM: Elena Fransen, AICP, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Appointment of Vice Chair

Requested Action

The Economic Development Commission discuss and appoint a Vice Chair for 2026.

Background

The Economic Development Commission must appoint a Vice Chair annually. The Chair facilitates the EDC meeting by working through the agenda and guiding Commission meetings. The Vice Chair is available to fill in if the Chair is absent. The Chair role is appointed by the City Council, and the Vice Chair is selected by members of the Commission. The term length for both roles is one year.

At the January 12, 2026, regular City Council meeting, Jud Murchie was reappointed to the role of Chair. The Economic Development Commission members are asked to consider nominating a member to be appointed as Vice Chair for the 2026 term.

At the January 28, 2026, regular EDC meeting, attendees discussed possible nominees. Commissioner Poelzer shared a willingness to be appointed and stated a preference for the role to go to a business representative. Several commissioners were absent when the item was discussed and the item was continued to this meeting.

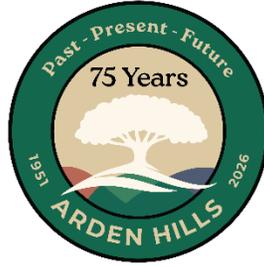
Next Steps

Not applicable

Attachment

None

EDC AGENDA ITEM – 4B



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 25, 2026

TO: Economic Development Commission Chair and Commission Members

FROM: Elena Fransen, AICP, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: EDC Work Plan

Requested Action

Review the City Strategic Planning Summary and the mission of the EDC. Discuss areas of alignment and possible strategies to prioritize on the work plan.

Background

The City Council's Strategic Plan includes the adoption of an Economic Development Commission work plan. A summary of the strategic plan is attached as Attachment A. The City Council is tentatively scheduled to review the work plan at an April 2026 work session and adopt the work plan at a City Council meeting in June 2026.

At the December EDC meeting, the work plan discussion focused on the business license and registration process. This process is managed by the City Clerk and Deputy City Clerk and is the main way the City collects information about businesses based in Arden Hills. The EDC has previously discussed wanting to know more about this process and to clarify the why behind it to ensure local businesses of all types can understand and participate.

The business license and registration process was discussed at the January EDC meeting, as well as the EDC's goal to be a bridge between the business community and the City. Following this discussion, the EDC should consider zooming out to a bigger picture of how the EDC's goals fit into the City Strategic Plan goals and how the collective goals drive work plan strategies for 2026 and 2027.

Discussion

Revisit the EDC objective and goals (Attachment B)

- Are the drafted EDC objective and goals accurate?

- Are there additional goals that should be added?
- Are there additional strategies to add?
- Are the drafted EDC roles and outcomes appropriately related to the objective and goals?
 - Do they accurately represent what the membership is interested in accomplishing?

Next Steps

Staff will incorporate feedback from the EDC into the work plan draft to be reviewed at the March meeting.

Timeline (tentative)

Meeting	Proposed Tasks	Tasks
February EDC Meeting	Review EDC objective and goals, and City goals	Discuss direction for draft work plan
March EDC Meeting	EDC reviews and confirms draft to be shared with the City Council	
April CC Work Session	EDC and City Council discuss draft EDC Work Plan	
April EDC Meeting	EDC reviews Council feedback about the Work Plan	
May EDC Meeting	EDC review updated Work Plan for consideration at Council	
June CC Meeting	City Council adopts EDC Work Plan	

Attachments

A – City of Arden Hills Strategic Planning Summary

B – Draft EDC Objective, Goals, and Strategies

C – 2026 EDC Related Programming

CITY OF ARDEN HILLS STRATEGIC PLANNING SUMMARY

Mission Statement

To serve Arden Hills residents and businesses by fostering a vibrant, connected and sustainable community.



Core Values

Community Vitality

We support thriving neighborhoods and a strong local economy through community-based planning.

Responsible Stewardship

We maintain assets, manage financial resources wisely and protect our natural environment.

Integrity in Service

We are committed to transparent, accountable and responsive governance.



3 Year Vision

Over the next three years, we envision Arden Hills operating sustainably and meeting the evolving needs of its community. The City Council and Staff have agreed to the following results to be in place by 2028:

- Defined Community Identity
- Effective and Productive Partnerships
- Parks System Plan is Actively Utilized as a Living Document
- Constructed Hwy 10 Trail and Johanna Blvd Trail
- Defined and Addressed Evolving Staff Needs
- Effective Financial Stewardship
- A High Standard of Critical Public Infrastructure Maintained
- Completed Proposed Plans for Development and Maintenance

2 Year Strategic Directions and First Year Actions

To achieve the three-year vision of success, the following focused areas of action, also referred to as strategic directions, were established along with specific priorities that will be implemented in year one.



Enhancing Our Identity & Strengthening Our Partnerships

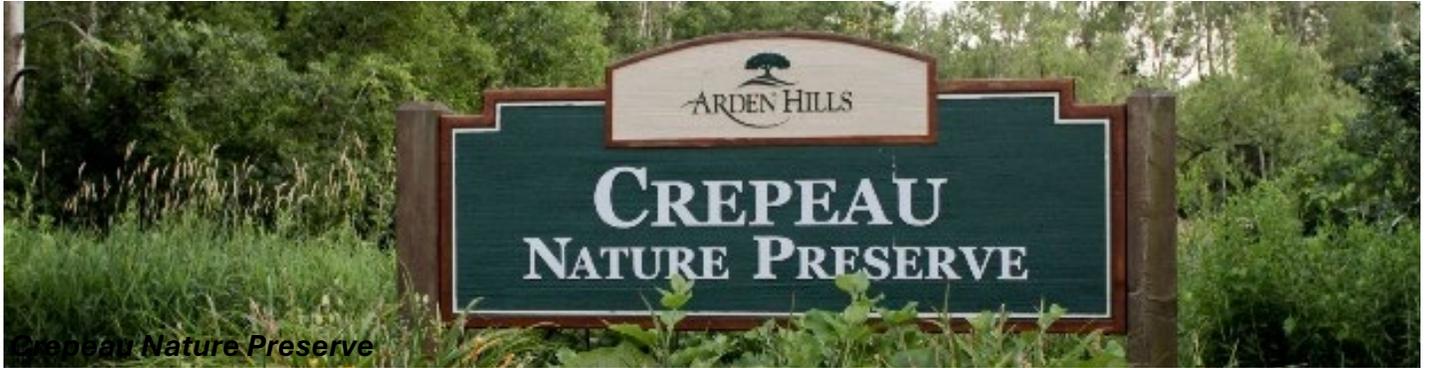
Goals

Clear city boundaries, increased business participation and improved communication reach

2026 Priorities

- Expand Adopt a Park (and sponsorship program)
- Communication assessment and improvement plan
- EDC approved work plan

Investing in Natural Environment, Parks, Trails and Recreational Opportunities



Goals

Hwy 10 Trail completed, 10-year parks implementation strategy, funding identified for Lake Johanna Blvd Trail, improved invasive species management

2026 Priorities

- Invasive species educational plan
- Complete Parks System Plan and project prioritization
- Identify parks plan funding opportunities

Preparing Our Organization for Potential Service Growth

Goals

Staff equipped with modern technology, increased operational efficiency

2026 Priorities

- Staff needs assessment complete
- Technology needs assessment
- Explore alternative funding sources



Reviewing and Updating Our Policies to Support Community Development Initiatives

Goals

Rice Creek Commons development underway, housing maintenance policy in place, vacant properties repurposed, data points available for major decisions

2026 Priorities

- Develop ADU policy
- Identify developers for Rice Creek Commons
- Complete Zoning ordinance overhaul
- Conduct City owned land discussion
- Redevelopment plan for vacant properties
- Rental review
- Implement encroachment policy



EDC Objective - *Be the bridge between Arden Hills businesses and the City of Arden Hills*

In order to achieve this objective, the following goals should be met:

1. The EDC is connected with businesses in Arden Hills and communicates with them to understand their needs
2. The EDC leverages the City's operations to support Arden Hills businesses with their needs

EDC goals tie back to the following goals identified in the City Strategic Plan Summary:

1. Increased business participation
2. Improved communication reach

1. Connection and Communication: Engage with AH businesses

Arden Hills/Shoreview Business Connect – Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce (TCNCC) hosts quarterly in-person events in Arden Hills and Shoreview. Desired outcome is to connect current businesses operating in both communities with each other, the chamber, and the municipalities.

Possible EDC role: promote event with businesses and attend as they are able; suggest speakers and locations for Arden Hills events

Desired EDC outcome: EDC is familiar with the Business Connect events and shares the information and opportunity with local businesses to increase their participation with the city and other local businesses

75th Anniversary Celebration – A community-wide celebration event on Friday, Jul. 17th. at Cummings Park from 4 to 10 p.m. Admission is free, and food and beverages will be available for purchase. The celebration kicks off with the much-loved Penny Carnival. Additional festivities include a car show, live music, food trucks, field games and activities for the entire family. The evening will culminate with a drone light show.

Possible EDC role: promote event with businesses and attend as they are able; connect with businesses about sponsorship opportunities

Desired EDC outcome: EDC shares the opportunity for businesses to participate in the community event and highlight the role businesses have played in the City's history

State of the City Address – annual fall/winter event, produced by City staff and City Council, updates relevant to residents and businesses

Possible EDC role: promote event with businesses and attend

Desired EDC outcome: EDC helps businesses get “in the know” about new and ongoing development and improvement projects at the city and be an active participant with the City

Sponsorships – opportunities for businesses to support the City’s mission and benefit the community

Possible EDC role: Share the sponsorship policy throughout the calendar year with specific emphasis leading up to City events such as the Spring Egg Hunt (April), Touch-a-Truck, Barks and Rec, Flashlight Pumpkin Hunt, Penny Carnival, and others

Desired EDC outcome: EDC connects businesses to opportunities to be in community with Arden Hills residents and participate in local events

2. City Engagement: Support City business operations

City Website – source of information, maintained by City Senior Communications Coordinator, available to all, includes links to other resources

Possible EDC role: review business-related webpages, make suggestions for handouts/guides to make processes easier to understand and follow

Desired EDC outcome: EDC adds business perspective to improve the City’s main source of communication and help businesses get the information they need about operating within the City

City Newsletter – timely source of information, produced by City Senior Communications Coordinator with contributions from other staff, reach is to current residents and businesses, also online

Possible EDC role: suggesting possible features, promoting with business community, participating in grand opening events

Desired EDC outcome: EDC helps the communications team improve outreach to businesses and to share up to date business highlights

Business License/Registrations – annual process led by city clerk’s office; renewal process begins each fall

Possible EDC role: Review and recommend updates to form; draft informational handouts and website information; connect with businesses before and/or after renewal process; put together a business inventory list to cross reference with the list of licensed and registered businesses

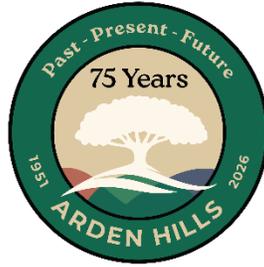
Desired EDC outcomes:

- EDC connects all businesses to the City’s process for engaging with businesses about resources and other opportunities to participate with the city
- All business types in Arden Hills are included in outreach and communication channels, including but not limited to businesses of the “new economy” such as independent contractors/consultants, sole proprietorships, home-based businesses, professional service providers, and other business models that may not rely on a brick and mortar location

2026 EDC Related Programming – Updated 2.19.26

January	
February	
March	TCNCC Arden Hills/Shoreview Business Connect – Shoreview March 11 th EDC Meeting – March 25 th
April	Arden Hills Spring Egg Hunt – April 11 th EDC Meeting – April 22 nd
May	Arden Hills Touch-A-Truck – May 16 th EDC Meeting – May 27 th
June	TCNCC Arden Hills/Shoreview Business Connect in Arden Hills – June 17 th EDC Meeting – June 24 th
July	Arden Hills Penny Carnival – July 17 th Arden Hills 75 th Anniversary Celebration – July 17 th EDC Meeting – July 22 nd
August	EDC Meeting – August 26 th
September	TCNCC Arden Hills/Shoreview Business Connect – Shoreview September 16 th EDC Meeting – September 23 rd
October	EDC Meeting – October 28 th
November	EDC Meeting – November 18 th
December	TCNCC Arden Hills/Shoreview Business Connect – Arden Hills December 16 th EDC Meeting – December 16 th (date to be rescheduled or cancelled)
To be scheduled	Summer Arden Hills Bark and Rec Day Fall Arden Hills Flashlight Pumpkin Hunt Winter State of the City Address

EDC AGENDA ITEM – 4C



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 25, 2026

TO: Economic Development Commission Chair and Commission Members

FROM: Elena Fransen, AICP, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: 75th Anniversary Celebration Update

Requested Action

Hear staff update on the 75th Anniversary Celebration and determine interest in volunteering to support the 75th Anniversary Celebration Committee with business visits.

Background

The City's 75th Anniversary Celebration is on July 17, 2026, at Cummings Park. The 75th Anniversary Committee is coordinating the event. At the December 17, 2025, EDC meeting, committee representatives asked for Commissioner's feedback on sponsorship and ways to involve local businesses in the event. The EDC reviewed a draft summary of the feedback at the January 2026 meeting. That summary was shared with staff to the 75th Anniversary committee in advance of that committee's meeting on February 17, 2026.

The 75th Anniversary Committee asked for the EDC to help spread the word about the event and related sponsorship opportunities with the business community. Staff will provide an update on how the Committee wants the EDC to be involved.

Discussion

Staff is looking for volunteers to visit businesses and share sponsorship opportunities starting in March. This is an opportunity for EDC members to commit to visiting businesses.

Next Steps

Staff will coordinate internally to share necessary details for business visits related to the 75th Anniversary Celebration, including business sponsorship and participation with the EDC membership.

Attachments

None