CITY OF FREEPORT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

430 North Brazosport Boulevard, Freeport, TX

Tuesday, August 12th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

FEDC BOARD MEMBERS: Quorum Present

Directors:	
Mark Parker	President
Sandra Loeza	Vice President
Ken Tyner	Treasurer
David McGinty *(a)*	Secretary
Ronnie Martin	
Ron Bachman	
Gary Guerrieri	

Robert Johnson: Executive Director

Jerry Cain: City Liaison

Dan Pennington: City Manager

Loren Smith: EDC Attorney

Rachael Cohen: EDC Staff

I. Call to Order

Robert Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge

Ron Bachman led the invocation, and Ken Tyner led the pledge.

III. Citizens' Comments

(This is an opportunity for citizens and visitors to make a public statement before the Board relating to only agenda items. Speakers are not allowed to make a statement regarding specific agenda items at the time the agenda item is being considered by the Board and must wait until the Citizen Comments section of the agenda to speak. Speakers are required to register in advance and must limit comments to a total of two (2) minutes for the duration of the meeting. (Reference to HB 2840 Section 551.007)

IV. Consent Agenda

1. **Approve Meeting Minutes for July 8, 2025**

   Ken Tyner made a motion to approve the minutes on July 8, 2025 as presented. Ronnie Martin seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. **Approve correction to Meeting Minutes for May 13, 2025**

   Ronnie Martin made a motion to approve the correction to the May 13,2025 minutes as presented. Ken Tyner seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

3. **Approve Financials**

Ron Bachman made a motion to approve the minutes on July 8, 2025 as presented. Sandra Loenza seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. Discussion and Action Items

1. Discuss and take possible action on investment pool signatures. (Ashlee Hurst)

The first action item concerned updating investment pool and bank account signatures. Mrs. Hurst explained that since a new president was in place, the accounts at Texas Gulf Bank needed updated signatories. The resolution would replace former president Josh Mitchell with current president Mark Parker

The motion was voted on by all board members in attendance. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

2. Discuss and update on Terracon. (Hurst/Johnson)

The board received an update on the $500,000 EPA grant and work with Terracon. Ms. Hurst reported that a kickoff [phone]call had been held, noting Terracon's expertise and that they would handle all reporting requirements. She said logins were being set up and quarterly reports prepared, with an action plan to follow.

Mr. Johnson added that he and former City Manager Tim Kelty had written the application and that Terracon's familiarity with it was a major advantage. The properties listed in the grant included the Walker Royal property and the old train depot, though other parcels could be substituted if needed.
Mr. Bachman asked whether this could include the Superfund site on Marlin Road near Bridge Harbor. Discussion followed about visible signs and recent dirt movement in the area. Mr. Gary Guerrieri, drawing on his background as a state-certified geoscientist, explained that barrels had been buried near Bridge Harbor but covered with clay, and testing showed no concerning levels of PCBs, pesticides, or heavy metals in the canals south of Marlin Road. He stated the north side contamination was still severe, but the south side was more viable for development.

Both Ms. Hurst and Mr. Johnson concluded by expressing optimism, noting that the project was officially underway and that Terracon was moving things forward

3. Discuss and update: Main Street Updates: Coordinator. (Silbas/Ocañas)

Mr. Johnson introduced Maria Lopez as the new Main Street Manager. Irene Ocañas, Freeport Main Street Chairman, praised Mrs. Lopez's communication skills, bilingual ability, and background in vendor markets and volunteer training. Maria expressed enthusiasm for enhancing the image of downtown Freeport. No action was taken, but the board formally welcomed her.

4. **Discuss and update on technology improvements to security. (Toby Cohen)**

Mr. Toby Cohen reported upcoming IT changes, including migration to a more secure email tenant and software replacements at no added cost. He highlighted improvements such as correcting geo-data for Bryan Beach, which has now received over 500,000 online views. Board members commended the work, noting its positive effect on public visibility of Freeport.

5. **Discuss and take possible action: Business Improvement Grant: Brazosport Cares. (Christy Frey)**

Christy Frey, Executive Director of Brazosport Cares, presented alongside **Emily Frey**, who manages fundraising. She explained that Brazosport Cares has been operating for 40 years, with 30 years in Freeport, and last year distributed **1.8 million meals**, serving more families than during COVID. She noted that the organization had effectively outgrown its facilities **five to six years ago**, prompting the decision to expand.

The expansion project is budgeted at **$2.7 million**, with over **$2.5 million already pledged** by major industry supporters (Freeport LNG, Dow, Phillips 66, BASF, among others). A construction loan has been secured through **First National Bank of Lake Jackson**, to be converted into a mortgage as pledges are collected over a 3–5-year schedule, with payoff expected by **2028**.

The request to the EDC was for targeted support of improvements connected to the expansion:

- **Façade improvements** (storefront windows, doors, motion-sensing sliding doors) – **$113,688**, projected completion November 2025.
- **Signage** – **$15,000**, projected completion January 2026.
- **Parking lot construction** around both the expanded and existing facilities – **$155,310**, projected completion late August or early September 2025.

Christy Frey emphasized that these improvements would increase accessibility for clients and visibility for the facility. She closed by thanking the board for considering the request. Mr. Johnson also noted because of the size of the project, that he recommended to extend the finished project requirements from six months to nine months.

Ken Tyner made the motion to approve the business improvement grant for Brazosport Cares [with the work extension] as presented. Ronnie Martin seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

6. **Discuss and take possible action on staff Wayfinding efforts. (Robert Johnson)**

Robert Johnson presented the item, reminding the board that the next year fiscal budget included $150,000 for wayfinding, signage, and city marketing. He explained that several companies had been researched, and the firm Clark Condon emerged as the best option, given their experience with similar projects in Angleton, Pearland, Texas City, and Port Arthur. This option allows for evaluation of all aspects of wayfinding, from logo, marketing, slogan, and more options that could be paid for over a several year process.

Johnson described deliverables such as thoroughfare gateway signs, directional destination signs, pedestrian wayfinding, and monument signage, as well as a phased project approach that could begin with branding and extend into physical installations. He noted that Freeport's current logo, particularly as used on the water tower, was too busy to be effective for drivers at highway speed. Several board members agreed, pointing out that Angleton's simple "A" design was more effective in catching attention.

Board members stressed that signs need to be clear and eye-catching at 70 mph**.** Mr. Guerrieri agreed the city's branding was difficult to read on smaller signs and supported bringing in outside expertise. Mark Parker requested if a representative could make the next board meeting to discuss the process further. The overall consensus was to move forward with inviting Clark Condon to present their design concepts at the next board meeting.

No formal motion was made and a directive to request Mr. Miller from Clark Condon to present at the next board meeting before making a decision.

7. Discuss and take possible action on a Freeport Entry Sign. (Robert Johnson)

At a previous council meeting, Councilman Winston Rosso noted concerns over the entryway sign on SH-288 and observed that the existing landscape-style sign blends in with the background and is hard to notice when coming into town. To help with the wayfinding efforts, this was tied to the broader wayfinding and signage effort already underway. The suggestion was to have an architect evaluate the sign and potentially the same architect who designed the beach sign drawings for the Freeport EDC—and provide renderings of options for improvement with ideas ranging from redesign to lighting additions.

Specific quick-fix concepts were floated, including repositioning the "Freeport" figure/logo higher on the structure to improve visibility, subject to signage constraints. Budget-wise, staff proposed using already-approved professional services to fund the architect's evaluation and renderings. Board members also reminisced about older bridge lighting that "really looked good," asking what happened to it—another cue that lighting enhancements might be part of the solution. It was also noted that we could have Clark Condon propose this in their report as part of the wayfinding efforts.

No motion was made until after reviewing possible options to fix the sign.

VI. Board and Executive Director Comments

VII. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

It is now 6:52 p.m., and I hereby recess the regular session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation meeting and do hereby convene into executive session in compliance with Texas Government Code: Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters), and 551.087 (Economic and Community Development Matters).

1. Discuss and update on possible upcoming projects related to Economic and Community Development Matters.

2. Discuss and take possible action regarding legal matters related to a Public Information Request (PIR).
3. Discuss and take possible action regarding the renewal of the employment contract for the Executive Director.
4. Update on ongoing litigation: Realty World and A&T.

Reconvene into an Open Session

Board President's statement:
It is now 8:14 p.m., and I hereby close the executive session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation and do hereby reconvene the regular open session and take possible action on items mentioned in the executive session.

Executive Item #4

Ron Bachman made a motion to authorize the addition of $15,000 to the approved previous amount of $85,000 for the settlement of the Realty World contract and authorize Robert Johnson, Executive Director, to finalize negotiations and execute the contract. Ronnie Martin seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Executive Item #3
Ken Tyner made a motion that we, as a board**,** approve the renewal of the employment contract for the Executive Director with an automatic 3 year renewal, and a cost of living raise each year, per federal guidelines, and if he is terminated without cause, he receives the remainder of his contract. The first years pay will be $148,000.00. This is to take effect as of November 1, 2025. Ron Bachman seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

VIII. Adjourn

Ronnie Martin made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Sandra Loezna seconded.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker adjourned the board meeting at 8:25 p.m.