

MINUTES
Regular GEBAC Meeting of the
Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission
Wednesday, January 21, 2026

The Regular GEBAC Meeting Notice and Agenda of the Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission of the City of Gardena, California, was called to order at 11:30 AM on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, in the Nakaoka Community Center, 2nd Floor, Room D at 1670 W. 162nd Street, Gardena, California.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:34 AM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Joshua Bettencourt; Vice-Chair Paul Giuliano; Commissioner Gene Hale, Commissioner Jules Laross Kanhan; Commissioner Kale Morita; Commissioner Christyna Giles Washington; and Commissioner Donald Penegar. Employees present: Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi; Assistant City Attorney Ivy Tsai and Administrative Analyst I Georgina Placido.

Commissioner Moe Shemirani, and Commissioner Naresh Solanki were absent during roll call.

Commissioner Gilbert Bernal Jr. was absent.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Joshua Bettencourt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Bettencourt noted that no members of the public were present, and no member of the public wished to speak to the Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.A. Gardena Economic Business Advisory Commission Approval of Minutes for September 17, 2025.

MOTION: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Paul Giuliano and seconded by Commissioner Kanhan to approve the minutes of the meeting on September 17, 2025:

Ayes: Bettencourt, Giuliano, Hale, Kanhan, Morita and Penegar

Noes: None

Absent: Bernal, Shemirani, Solanki

Abstain: Washington

6. **NEW BUSINESS / MEMBER INITIATIVES**

6.A. Discussion on Imposing Local Hiring Goals

Chair Bettencourt inquired if anyone had any input regarding the Local Hiring Goals.

Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi provided a brief overview to the Commissioners who were not present at the last meeting, summarizing the discussions that took place. She outlined the goals that were discussed: first, the commission aims to establish an inspiring goal and good faith effort for local hiring to be considered by the City Council; second, they need to decide whether these goals should apply only to private development, public development, or both. The intention is to document these goals in a memorandum for the City Council's consideration.

Vice-Chair Giuliano recommended that Commissioner Hale present his recommendations since he originated the initiative for local hiring.

Commissioner Hale stated that his objective is to enhance the City of Gardena by advocating for good faith efforts to support local businesses within the city. He elaborated on his perspective and recommendations regarding this matter.

Commissioners Moe Shemirani and Naresh Solanki announced their late arrival at the meeting.

Chair Bettencourt added that his recommendations would apply to both private and public development, and Commissioner Hale concurred.

Ms. Choi introduced Ivy Tsai, the new Assistant City Attorney from Jones and Mayer. She was available to provide any necessary legal advice and answer questions.

Commissioner Washington sought confirmation on the matter and requested clarification regarding the proposed policy. Commissioner Hale addressed her inquiry, emphasizing the importance of enforcing local hiring for new developments in Gardena.

Chair Bettencourt noted that this matter represents a significant change for the city. He confirmed that the commission agreed to move forward with the recommendations and take action on the item. He stressed the importance of considering the legal aspects, ensuring the recommendations are documented, and that contractors follow the goals of local hiring and good faith efforts.

Commissioner Hale provided his perspective and an example of how potential contractors can bid on projects while adhering to the city's established goals and reporting requirements.

Assistant City Attorney Tsai provided her recommendations to ensure that the Commission effectively captures the policy objective to present to the City Council for their consideration.

Chair Bettencourt inquired whether city staff had examples of best practices from other cities that have successfully implemented similar goals. Ms. Choi responded to his questions and provided information on various local hiring programs, including the City of Los Angeles Local Hiring Program, the City of Pasadena First Source Hiring Program, and the City of Rancho Cucamonga for local businesses. She noted that while these programs have been implemented, they lack a monitoring system and rely on good faith efforts from the participants.

Ms. Choi emphasized that the cities she mentioned operate as charter cities, whereas Gardena is a general law city. She also pointed out that no city in the South Bay currently has a program or policy in place related to local hiring. Additionally, she informed the commission about ongoing efforts by the City Council regarding development agreements for projects in Gardena. She highlighted that developers are required to provide the city with quarterly reports detailing the amounts spent both within and outside of Gardena.

Chair Bettencourt had questions about the legal aspects of monitoring and non-monitoring within the program to ensure its effectiveness. Assistant City Attorney Tsai responded with detailed answers to his inquiries.

Chair Bettencourt asked if it was possible to adopt an existing policy that has proven successful in other cities. Assistant City Attorney Tsai provided an informative response.

Commissioner Washington shared her perspective and asked Ms. Choi if she could provide the goal percentage achieved from current development agreements. Ms. Choi mentioned that she did not have the latest statistical information available, but she provided an approximate percentage, noting that it varies month to month.

Commissioner Hale stepped in to clarify that local hiring, and development goals are two separate issues. He recommended that city staff examine agreements from the City of Los Angeles to gain a better understanding. Assistant City Attorney Tsai inquired whether his focus was on local small businesses, local hiring, or both. Commissioner Hale confirmed that he was focused on both.

Chair Bettencourt requested that City Attorney Tsai or Ms. Choi summarize the differences between what was discussed and what is currently being imposed by the city. Ms. Choi responded with a detailed explanation.

There was a discussion about establishing an affirmative policy goal statement to enforce local hiring for public and private development in the city. This discussion included Assistant City Attorney Tsai, Ms. Choi, Chair Bettencourt, and Commissioners Hale, Washington, and Kanhan. The proposed policy goal will be presented to the City Council for their consideration. Assistant City Attorney Tsai went over the proposed policy goal to ensure that the commission was in agreement.

Chair Bettencourt asked if all Commissioners agreed with the proposed policy goal and if anyone had any additional suggestions. All Commissioners expressed their agreement.

Ms. Choi informed the Commission that once the memorandum is drafted, the draft will be shared with the Commission.

Ms. Choi also reminded the Commissioners that GEBAC will be giving a presentation at the next City Council Meeting, during which the Council will receive an update on the proposed policy goal statement.

7. CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS

No reportable items by the City Manager.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Economic Development Manager Jackie Choi reported on the actions taken by the city council.

- 1) Updates provided regarding the Gardena Boulevard Façade Improvement Program, including:
 - The awarded contract to Willdan Engineering for professional services to manage the Gardena Boulevard Revitalization Program;
 - Details about the application process; and
 - Information on two community meetings.

Chair Bettencourt requested that staff keep the Commission updated as the program progresses, and Ms. Choi agreed to do so.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

- 1) COMMISSIONER HALE – He announced that this would be his last GEBAC meeting and expressed his appreciation to the Commission and all the Commissioners. He stated that he would be available to answer any questions regarding the proposed policy goal statement related to local hiring.

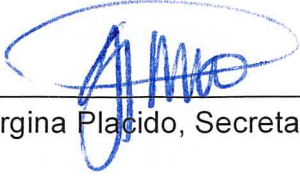
The Commission responded by thanking Commissioner Hale for his dedication and expressing their gratitude.

- 2) CHAIR BETTENCOURT – No items to report.
- 3) VICE-CHAIR GIULIANO – No items to report.
- 4) COMMISSIONER KANHAN – No items to report.
- 5) COMMISSIONER SOLANKI – No items to report.
- 6) COMMISSIONER SHEMIRANI – No items to report.
- 7) COMMISSIONER MORITA – No items to report.
- 8) COMMISSIONER WASHINGTON – No items to report.
- 9) COMMISSIONER PENEGAR – No items to report.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bettencourt adjourned the meeting at 12:19 PM.

SUBMITTED:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G Placido', written over a horizontal line.

Georgina Placido, Secretary

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Joshua Bettencourt', written over a horizontal line.

Joshua Bettencourt, Chair