



June 4, 2026

401 E. Pratt Street, 17th Floor Conference Room, Baltimore Maryland 21202

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

Commissioners in attendance:

Paxton Baker	PKB Enterprises
Dr. Nia Banks	Beaux Arts Plastic Surgery, Art of Balance Spa
Nakeia Drummond	The Women Entrepreneur Leadership Lab
J. Russell Fugett, PMP	My Progress Coach
Elizabeth Georg	Deep Creek Title Group
Seth Goldman	Eat the Change
Reginald Hilton	Client Partnerships EZRA Coaching LHH
Israel “Izzy” Klein, Chair	Klein/Johnson Group
Ginger Noble	Business Operations & Tax Preparation
Leon Pinkett, III	Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation (BARCO)
Eben Smith, Co-Chair	Three E Consulting Group, LLC
Miguel Wilson	CEO, Miguel Wilson Collection, Inc.
Andrew Vickery	Daybreak
Scott Zakheim	Landmark Ventures

Ex Officio members in attendance:

Harry Coker (Secretary)	Department of Commerce
Troy LeMaile-Stovall	TEDCO
Tom Sadowski	MEDCO
Portia Wu (Ashley Sharp)	Department of Labor

Commerce staff in attendance:

Ricardo Benn
Afiya Bey
Rachel Cruse
Sherri Diehl
John Gilstrap
Cori Duggins
Mary Hanley
Carolyn Hammock
Mayank Kapur
Judy L. Smith

Guests

Tharwat Abouraya

Paul Tiburzi

I. Call to Order

Chair Israel “Izzy” Klein called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

II. Quorum Confirmation and Conflict of Interest

Following a quorum confirmation, the conflict of interest statement was read. No conflicts of interest were acknowledged.

III. Review and approval of February 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the February 5, 2026 meeting were approved.

IV. Action Item Review and status

Ms. Afiya Bey reviewed the status of action items from the February 5, 2026 meeting.

V. Chair’s Report

Newly appointed Chair Klein introduced his background, enthusiasm for stepping into the role as the Commission’s Chairman, and expressed gratitude to the Governor, Secretary Coker, and the Commerce team. Newly appointed Co-Chair Eben Smith remarked on the importance of the Commission's role in guiding the state through times of uncertainty and expressed excitement about continuing the work established by former Chair Stebbins.

VI. Secretary’s Report

Department of Commerce Secretary Coker provided the following updates:

- Maryland is facing significant economic headwinds including a significant macroeconomic transition for Maryland. While the state added nearly 90,000 jobs between January 2023 and January 2025, a shift in federal spending after January 2025 resulted in a loss of 53,000 jobs, including approximately 30,000 federal jobs. The state aims to reduce its historical dependence on federal spending and prioritize economic diversification.
- Key projects include a Nature Cell stem cell research facility in Baltimore City (500 jobs), a Samsung Biologics facility in Rockville (500 jobs), an LCO facility at Aberdeen Proving Grounds (120 jobs), a Clem Environmental Systems facility in Allegany County, a \$2 billion AstraZeneca expansion, the \$1.4 billion Sphere project in Prince George's County, and the \$1.2 billion Sparrows Point Container Terminal, which is expected to increase the Baltimore port’s container capacity by 70% by 2030.

- The department is modernizing how it operates, including the launch of a Loan Executive Program to bring business leaders into state agencies. The site is currently launched and accepting applications.
- The department completed tours of 24 jurisdictions across Maryland to understand local challenges such as affordable housing, energy, and workforce availability.
- Deputy Secretary Benn and the department are actively pursuing international investment. Recent successes include a bilateral agreement with Hitachi, meetings with delegations from Japan (JETRO), Singapore, the UAE, Australia, and Panama, and the signing of an MOU between TEDCO and Jordan.

VII. Commerce Procurement Request SOP

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the annual Commerce Procurement Request SOP was approved.

VIII. Economic Organizational Construct and Strategy Phase 2 Update

Ms. Judy L. Smith presented the two-phase plan to define roles and improve navigation of the state's economic organizations (TEDCO, MEDCO, DHCD, and Commerce). Phase One completed in 2025 mapped missions and incentive programs. Phase Two involves a consultant to examine agency programs and recommend organizational improvements to better align accountability and authority.

A procurement is underway to hire a consultant for the FY27 through FY29 implementation plan, with an award recommendation expected by June 18 and a project kickoff targeted for July 15.

IX. Maryland Consolidated Competitiveness Biannual Plan

Ms. Mary Hanley presented an update on the overview of the purpose of the Maryland Consolidated Competitiveness Biannual Plan (as outlined in EO 01.01.2024.39 that established the Governor's Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet (GECS)). Maryland has not had an integrated economic development strategy. The plan aims to integrate strategic goals across state agencies, focusing on business friendliness, R&D innovation, workforce development, infrastructure, and improved inter-agency coordination. The department is conducting a return-on-investment analysis of its 30 incentive programs and has utilized focus groups and a public survey to gather stakeholder feedback.

Key themes for the state's strategic plan, including legislative engagement, reducing the business tax rate, and addressing economic affordability and housing were discussed. The need to integrate existing departmental strategies, such as those from the Maryland Higher Education

Commission, into the broader biannual plan to improve outreach and communication were emphasized.

X. Summary of the Lighthouse Sectors

Deputy Secretary Benn introduced the Lighthouse Sectors strategy, which prioritizes specific areas to create a distinct competitive advantage rather than broadly supporting all industries. The identified lighthouse sectors include Technology (specifically quantum, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity), Life Sciences, and Aerospace and Defense. This approach moves beyond simply cataloging assets and establishes a concrete investment thesis for where the state will deploy resources.

XI. MarCom Strategy Update

Ms. Carolyn Hammock, Director of Marketing Strategy, Department of Commerce presented the "Maryland Business Growth Guide," a new resource tool designed to improve the user experience for businesses seeking state resources. The tool is user-centric, categorized by business needs, stages, and characteristics, rather than by agency structure. Phase one, launched in May, focuses on financial incentive programs and includes over 98 curated resources, including those from partner organizations like TEDCO and MEDCO.

CEO Troy LeMaile-Stovall provided feedback regarding the "Ecomap" entrepreneur hub, noting that while early versions were challenging, the tool has improved. It was discussed that TEDCO and Commerce should discuss how to leverage Ecomap.

XII. Legislative Session Update

Deputy Secretary April Doss shared a Legislative Update noting that the DECADE Act passed during the previous session. While the legislature did not approve all the administration's priorities, there were key wins for economic growth across the state.

XIII. Summary of Key Decisions and Actions

Ms. Smith summarized the following action items that resulted from the meeting.

Action Items for Department of Commerce:

- Discuss with TEDCO how to leverage EcoMap.
- Ms. Mary Hanley will share the Biannual Plan survey with members of the Commission.

Action items for Commissioners:

- Provide future suggestions for legislative input.
- Co-Chair Smith will provide perspective on Project Labor Agreements (PLAs).

XIV. Good of the Order

- There were no “Good of the Order” comments made.

XV. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.