ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

19 Public Square, Suite 200
Belleville, IL 62220-1695
Phone: 618-825-3200
www.co.st-clair.il.us
Facebook: StClairCountyEconDev
Twitter: @SCCEconDev

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2026

Members Present:
Ken Sharkey, Chairman
Scott Greenwald, Assistant Chairman
Marty Crawford
Robert Trentman

Members Excused:
Robert Allen
Matt Smallheer
Rick Vernier

Staff Present:
Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

Others Present:
Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director
Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs Director
May Brown
Johnissia Stevenson

Call to Order:
Chairman Ken Sharkey called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Regarding the Agenda:
Chairman Sharkey asked if anyone present had a question or comment regarding the agenda. There were none.

Approval of September 9, 2026, Committee Minutes *(action required):*
Chairman Sharkey called for action on the September 9, 2026, Committee minutes. Mr. Greenwald made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Trentman. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (2027 Economic Development Committee Meeting Schedule):
Mr. Stubblefield presented the 2027 Economic Development Committee Meeting Schedule.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the schedule, and Mr. Trentman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):
Mr. Stubblefield stated several municipalities have expressed interest in extending, expanding, or establishing new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. While TIFs can be an effective economic development tool, they also impact general fund revenues. As a result, the County is generally cautious about participating unless there is a specific project that demonstrates a clear economic benefit and aligns with the County's priorities.

Since our last meeting, the NASCAR Cup Series returned to World Wide Technology Raceway (WWTR) for another sold-out and highly successful event. The race weekend continues to grow each year, attracting more attendees and expanding its overall impact on the region.

Terminal Railroad has been very active in marketing its properties, with several promising development projects currently under discussion. There may also be another prospective party interested in the former AVINA site in East St. Louis. The site appears to be an excellent fit for the potential project, which also aligns well with Terminal Railroad's overall vision for the property.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the Director's report, and Mr. Trentman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):
Mr. Darren James stated that September is traditionally a slower month for airport passenger traffic, and this year followed that trend. However, passenger traffic increased approximately 7% compared to September 2025. We also reached a significant milestone by surpassing 200,000 enplanements for the first time in the airport's history over a 12-month period.

Regarding construction, we continue working toward the terminal apron expansion, a project that has been underway since 2023. Unfortunately, bids have once again come in substantially higher than engineering estimates. We will need to reevaluate the project specifications and identify ways to reduce costs to make the project more attractive to contractors.

Another upcoming project is the removal of trees identified as obstructions to the runway approaches. A preconstruction meeting is scheduled soon, and we anticipate moving forward with the work following that meeting.

Finally, we had the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the MetroLink extension, which will provide a second access point to the airport and improve overall connectivity.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Trentman made a motion to approve the Director's report, and Mr. Greenwald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):
Ms. Huth stated that work has begun on several projects within the installation gates to mitigate flooding. We have requested to be included in these efforts to better understand the scope of the projects and assess their potential impact. We continue to explore solutions to address flooding issues outside the installation gates.

The 126th Air Refueling Wing is pursuing additional airfield infrastructure improvements through federal channels to address its operational needs and support future mission requirements.

The $19.8 million Child Development Center is scheduled to open in December and will provide care for up to 152 children, representing a significant benefit to military families and the surrounding community. However, staffing remains a major concern. Current staffing levels are insufficient to operate the facility, and there is not yet a projected staffing plan. The primary challenge is the disparity between locally competitive wages and the compensation offered through established federal hiring channels, making recruitment and retention difficult.

Additionally, we are working with Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton to develop a proposal that positions Illinois as a strong candidate for the Next Great American Base initiative. This effort is intended to highlight Illinois' strategic advantages, existing military infrastructure, and opportunities for future investment and mission growth.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Trentman made a motion to approve the Director's report, and Mr. Greenwald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Comments:

Adjournment:
Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Crawford so moved, and it was seconded by Mr. Greenwald. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:21 p.m.