

**City of Columbus**  
**Economic Development Authority**  
**01.09.19**

The 01.09.19 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by President Jesse Preiner at the City Hall. Present were EDA Commissioners Mark Daly, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, Shelly Logren, Janet Hegland, and Jon Rausch, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, Attorney Bill Griffith, and Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: City Engineer Dennis Postler, Tom & Gerrie Olson, Mary Preiner, and Pat Preiner.

City Attorney Bill Griffith said bylaws state that Mayor Preiner shall be elected as President of the EDA.

**Motion by Duraine to elect Mayor Preiner as president of the EDA. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

Bylaws also indicate that City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko shall serve as EDA Secretary. Griffith continued to say that EDA members should consider nominations for Vice President and Treasurer positions.

**Motion by Daly to nominate Duraine as Vice President. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Hegland to nominate Logren as Treasurer. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.**

**A. APPROVAL – 10.10.18 EDA Minutes**

**Motion by Rausch to approve the 10.10.18 EDA minutes. Seconded by Daly. Votes as follows; Rausch – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – abstain; Preiner – abstain; Duraine – aye; Logren – abstain.**

**B. APPROVAL – 01.09.19 EDA Agenda**

**Motion by Daly to approve the agenda. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. OPEN BUSINESS**

**D. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. 2019 Annual Report**

Mursko presented the 2017 EDA Annual Report to the EDA for consideration. She asked the EDA

members if they would like to see the 2018 Annual Report in a similar format? Hughes explained that the 2016 EDA Annual Report was a condensed one-page summary, while the report for 2017 was a longer format spanning four pages. The EDA agreed that they preferred the longer format. Drafts of the report will be circulated to the EDA for comment and final approval.

**Motion by Hegland to delegate drafting of 2018 Annual Report to City Staff with circulation for comments and final approval. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.**

## **2. Review 2019 Goals List**

Mursko reported that she will be working with the City's Senior Accountant to determine whether the budget can cover all goals for 2019. At the next EDA meeting she plans to prioritize goals that fit with the budget and set a schedule for completion.

### Advertising/Branding Columbus

Hegland asked what the City's efforts have been relating to branding? Mursko explained that when Columbus became a City, they hired a professional to create a logo for marketing purposes. At that time, they asked a marketing professional for a quote on a marketing package. The cost was around \$30,000, which was more than the City wanted to spend.

She continued to say that the EDA's previous goal of branding Columbus was intended to inform people of where Columbus is. Also, the banners along Kettle River Blvd near City Hall were intended to indicate the area which residents gather in the City.

Conversations were also had about erecting monument signs at City entrances. But cost was too prohibitive, so the City turned to using electronic billboards. The company ClearChannel gave the City some time on their electronic billboards and gave the City a billboard to install a vinyl advertisement on.

Hegland said that she thinks it is important that branding is done intentionally and that the messaging is agreed upon before any marketing assets are purchased. Mursko agreed and noted that the big question for the EDA to consider is what aspects of the City should be marketed and how messaging will convey that.

Rausch said that the most common question that developers have about Columbus is whether it is a City or a township. Because of that he thinks a good marketing message would be that Columbus has what businesses need; utilities, land, and access. He added that the term "Columbus interchange" could be good for the area.

Mursko asked if the intention is to solely market the Freeway District? If so, the EDA could shift its focus to developing the Freeway District. President Preiner said that developing the Freeway District is most advantageous to the City. The remaining EDA members agreed that the top marketing priority should be the Freeway District.

Hegland recommended that the City pay for a market analysis to understand the best way to market Columbus. She said this is an important first step because without a cohesive marketing strategy

the purchase of marketing assets could be misguided. Logren agreed and suggested hiring a marketing professional to assist in branding efforts. Her concern is that people move to Columbus to run businesses out of their homes. Mursko said that she and EDA Treasurer Logren could look at costs and put together a very preliminary budget to determine what the EDA could spend on hiring a marketing professional. They agreed to bring this information back to the April EDA meeting.

President Preiner said that he would like to take advantage of free marketing opportunities like the electronic billboards in the City. Mursko said that in the past Running Aces Harness Park (RAHP) has allowed the City to include a message on their rotating electronic billboard. They used to display a message such as “Welcome to Columbus” rotating on the billboard. Rausch suggested asking RAHP to put that messaging back on the billboard. Mursko said that she would talk to RAHP about that possibility. Mursko said another possible marketing option could be approaching Lakes Area Community Television (LATV) about creating a new video clip for the City (similar to the one they made in 2013).

Daly suggested adding a monument in the NE quadrant once it is developed. He followed up by asking how much the concept plan was for the NE quadrant? Mursko replied that she was not sure. Daly noted that he believes the best strategy to develop the freeway district is to let the NE and NW quadrants develop before looking at any property to the south.

Mursko reported that Steve Saunders, a landowner and developer in the NW quadrant came to a previous EDA meeting to talk about his concept for that land. She said that utilities have already been extended to the property. The difficult thing about that property is the access. Currently there is not a road and building one will be costly because there are wetlands which would have to be filled. The current concept is to extend the northern leg of the Lake Drive roundabout to this property.

Rausch asked if it would be possible to create a similar concept plan for the NW quadrant as was done in the NE quadrant? Griffith said that it would be possible, adding that it was the concept plan that got the NE quadrant buyer interested in the land.

Griffith said that the developer for the NE quadrant would like to come to a meeting to present concepts to the EDA. He added that it could be beneficial to hold off on branding decisions for the NE quadrant until after their presentation.

Rausch asked if the developer is hoping to break ground on their project this year? Griffith said that their timing will depend on the Hornsby Street relocation project and the other projects going on in the area. City Staff and EDA members agreed to hold a special EDA meeting at 6:00 pm the night of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 for this presentation

**Motion by Duraine to hold a special EDA meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Hegland. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### New Banners for Columbus City Hall, Park, and NE Quadrant

Mursko reported that the banners along Kettle River Blvd just outside of City Hall are old and

likely need to be replaced. They were installed in 2006. President Preiner suggested that when Mursko and Logren meet to discuss the marketing budget, they also discuss costs for new banners. Duraine suggested that the new EDA members take a close look at the banners to determine what they like or do not like about them.

President Preiner asked when the NE quadrant development would be ready for banners? Griffith replied that it would be two years at the earliest.

#### Signage for Roundabout

The City has been working on developing a design for some type of installment in the center of the roundabouts in the City. The Park Advisory Board was given a budget of roughly \$10,000 to begin the process.

#### Electronic Newsletter

President Preiner said that he would like to consider holding the ColumBiz breakfast again next year. EDA members agreed, saying the ColumBiz electronic newsletter should be continued in the interim.

#### **E. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION**

#### **F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **G. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next EDA meeting is a special meeting on January 23, 2019.

#### **H. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Duraine to adjourn. Seconded by Daly. Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator