

**City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statutes 13D.021
04.08.20**

The 04.08.20 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by President Jesse Preiner at the City Hall. Present were EDA Commissioners Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, Mark Daly, Shelly Logren (via teleconference), and Janet Hegland; Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith (via teleconference), and Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes.

Also in Attendance were – Dennis Postler (via teleconference), and Robert Berens (via teleconference).

- 1. CALL TO ORDER – 6:02 p.m.**
- 2. APPROVAL – 01.08.20 EDA Minutes**

Motion by Peterson to approve the 01.08.20 EDA minutes. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

- 3. OPEN BUSINESS**

Hegland reported on a Personnel Committee interview with Robert Berens for an opening on the EDA. Hegland believes Berens would be a good asset to the Columbus EDA. He has been a resident of Columbus for three years and is the Director of Business Development at ProSource Technologies in Coon Rapids. Through his position, Berens has worked with several City Councils and Planning Commissions in different states. The Personnel Committee is recommending appointing him to the EDA, and ratification will be considered at tonight's City Council meeting. Hegland explained that Berens would be replacing Jon Rausch and completing the remainder of his term.

- 4. New business**

How to Assist Columbus Businesses During COVID-19

Mursko handed the current business list out to the EDA, and asked commissioners to send her any edits that need to be made.

President Preiner said that Anoka County has provided a list of business assistance programs to participate in during the COVID-19 pandemic. He asked what the City can do to assist further?

Hegland said that the Forest Lake Chamber of Commerce is working to be a resource for businesses. One thing they have noticed is that the available programs are under-resourced, and

businesses are experiencing long wait times, crashed websites, and complication applications. The Chamber encouraged Cities to communicate to businesses that it is best to get the applications completed even if they are unsure about the information requested.

Hegland suggested sending an email to Columbus businesses to share this information with them. Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes said that she will send out such an email by the end of the week.

5. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

Branding Committee Update

Logren provided an update on the Branding Committee to the EDA. The Committee recently had an informal ColumBiz meeting with business representatives at Running Aces Harness Park. At this meeting many questionnaires were filled out and information from those questionnaires is being compiled.

At the last City Council meeting, the ColumBiz Business Breakfast was canceled due to COVID-19. A meeting with Carlos Avery about possibly partnering with the City on branding efforts was also canceled.

Logren continued to say that Holly Benson from the Metro North Chamber of Commerce and Liz Otremba from Bare Home have both expressed interest in assisting the Branding Committee.

City Monument – NE I-35 Quadrant

Mursko referenced a PowerPoint presentation distributed to the EDA with monument sign examples and naming proposals. She said that the name does not need to be discussed tonight.

At the previous EDA meeting the commissioners determined that they liked the designs on slides three, five and six. Based on that feedback, City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht requested quotes for those designs. Gutknecht explained that larger signs such as the one in slide five would cost between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Smaller signs, such as in slide six would cost between \$18,000 and \$22,000. Mursko explained that the City will have to fund this project, but there may be an opportunity in the future for businesses to contribute to the cost of the sign. City Attorney Bill Griffith said that the City could fund the monument from the general fund, from donations, or from the public improvement package that will be assessed this fall.

Logren asked if it is necessary for the City to continue to pursue this as part of the Hornsby Street realignment project? Public Works Superintendent Jim Windingstad said that he would not recommend including the monument with the realignment project.

Duraine asked where the sign will be placed? Windingstad said it will be in the northeast corner of the intersection of Hornsby Street and TH 97, in between the road and the pond. He added that an engineer will need to find the proper location based on sight lines and recommended that TKDA stake it.

Windingstad continued by saying the lighting panel for the sign would be placed on the northwest side of the intersection, in the City's right-of-way. This would also be the location for the traffic signal light's power transformer. He would like to request Forest Lake Contracting add a conduit to the sign location to provide lighting and make provisions in the traffic signal's lighting panel for illuminating the monument sign. Daly recommended having the contractors for the traffic light supply fish tape to the location of the transformer.

Logren said that the price for the sign was concerning. Mursko asked the EDA to consider what price range might be more acceptable so that the sign company can propose other designs.

Motion by Daly to request that TKDA stake the proper location for a monument sign in the NE I-35 quadrant based on sight line requirements, and to request that Forest Lake Contracting bore a conduit to the location of the sign and make provisions in the lighting panel to light the sign. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

Windingstad asked if the EDA would like to have a fence surrounding ponds in the NE I-35 quadrant? He added that fencing is not included in the Forest Lake Contracting contract, and Anoka County will not be adding fencing around their property. His recommendation is not to add fencing because it would require additional maintenance from Public Works.

City Attorney Bill Griffith noted that at this time HyVee is required to fence the pond on their property based on the site's original design standards. Because the entire NE I-35 quadrant was under one purchase agreement, the design standards that apply to the HyVee site also apply to the entire quadrant. Therefore, if the City no longer wants to require fencing in the quadrant, there would have to be an agreement with HyVee to remove that requirement. The EDA agreed that was the direction they would prefer to move in.

2020 Goals List

Legislative Initiatives:

President Preiner and MnDOT Engineer Joe McPherson attended a hearing at the State House of Representatives and spoke in favor of an amendment that would secure funding for the W. Freeway Drive extension.

Marketing Efforts:

Mursko listed the marketing topics that were discussed at the 01.08.20 EDA meeting: a new City message on digital billboards, new banners near City Hall, a concept for the NW and SW I-35 quadrants, plantings for the W. Broadway Avenue and Kettle River Blvd. roundabout, the branding committee, and a landscape plan for plantings at the TH 97 and I-35 bridge. Mursko noted that the Park Board brought recommendations for the roundabout plantings to a previous City Council meeting. She also noted that she will invite MnDOT's landscape architect to join the next EDA meeting to discuss his plan. It is likely that the plantings will not be installed until

spring 2021.

Apartment Study:

Mursko reported that several weeks ago she and President Preiner met with a group considering developing an apartment building in Columbus. This group suggested that the City fund an apartment study, and Mursko asked the EDA if they felt this should be pursued. She noted that the previous apartment developer considering locating in Columbus produced such a study, but it was proprietary. An apartment study would typically cost between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Daly asked how serious the group was about the project? He is not comfortable with compromising high design standards for an apartment building. Mursko said she is not sure how serious they are but noted that they requested the study immediately and asked if there was going to be an opportunity for City incentives.

Hegland asked how long such a study would be relevant for? Mursko said that typically these studies have a shelf life of one year. Griffith suggested that the EDA consider an RFP project for when the COVID-19 situation has passed, and things are getting back to normal. In the meantime, the EDA could think about what kind of packages they might be comfortable offering to future developers. The EDA agreed that an apartment study would not be pursued at this time, and at the July meeting they would discuss what types of incentive packages they would be comfortable offering.

Bonding:

Mursko reported that Tammy Omdal is putting together an economic development model for a presentation on market value and income to compare different land uses in different districts. She believes this will help the City with the task of defining zoning districts and will ask Omdal to present the model at a future EDA meeting.

Duraine asked for an update on any businesses that may be locating in Columbus? Mursko said that there are three applications moving forward: Viking Industrial, Horticulture Services, and a business on Lake Drive manufacturing wood chips. She added that there is also someone interested in possibly taking over the Howard Lake development.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

100 EDA General Fund Loan	\$877,645.00
240 EDA Fund	\$ 80,928.52 as of 01.01.2020

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next EDA meeting is on 07.08.20 at 6:00 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Hegland to adjourn. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator