

**City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority Special Meeting
04.10.19**

The 04.10.19 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:01 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, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, Attorney Bill Griffith, and Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes.

Absent: Jon Rausch, EDA Commissioner

Also in Attendance were – Aaron Bedessem, and Jacquiel Hajder.

1. CALL TO ORDER – SPECIAL MEETING – 6:01 p.m.

2. APPROVAL – 01.09.19 EDA Minutes

Motion by Daly to approve the 01.09.19 EDA meeting minutes. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVAL – 02.27.19 EDA Minutes

Motion by Peterson to approve the 02.27.19 EDA meeting minutes. Seconded by Hegland. Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL – 04.10.19 Agenda

Motion by Duraine to approve the agenda for the 04.10.19 meeting. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OPEN BUSINESS

No report.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Anoka County Economic Development Program Update – Jacquiel Hajder, Anoka County Economic Specialist

Anoka County Economic Specialist Jacquiel Hajder presented Anoka County’s new website for economic development which was launched in February. The website will serve as a resource to attract businesses to the County and showcase assets that make the area a great place to live, work, and do business. Hajder highlighted an interactive map that highlights properties for sale or lease. This page is intended to help prospective buyers narrow down the selection of commercial properties in Anoka County. The website also has a “featured sites” page which highlights commercial properties that have an array of attributes such as a large number of acres.

In addition to the new website, Anoka County is also pursuing the development of the Minnesota Technology Corridor along I-35. There have been at least 3 proposals submitted for data centers in this area, so Anoka County wanted to understand the reason for interest in the corridor. The I-35 corridor in Anoka County has many benefits like fiber internet, power, water capacity, and a lot of vacant land. This is an ideal offering for technology companies and data centers, and the County plans to market it as such. Hajder showed the EDA a promotional video that was developed for the Technology Corridor, as well as a new website titled MinnesotaTechnologyCorridor.com.

Hajder noted that there are two sites in Columbus that are ideal for data centers. Data center developers are most concerned about infrastructure, partnerships, and timeliness of process'. She explained that having a company like Connexus be so active in the area is good for the regional power load. She added that Xcel Energy and Zayo have also been involved in discussions, in addition to County Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah and Anoka County engineers.

One question that was raised at these discussions is what future infrastructure improvements may be added to the 6-mile gap between exits on I-35E. She said that it is uncertain when a new interchange may be added, but it will likely happen in the future. At this time 180th Street N and 170th Street N have been named as possible locations for an interchange.

At this time Hajder took questions from the EDA.

Griffith commented that some developers have been surprised at how quickly the City can turn applications around because a number of uses are permitted which allows for faster processing. Hajder thanked Griffith for that information and noted that each City in Anoka County is quite unique so she has not seen traditional issues with competition in this area.

Mayor Preiner asked what the boundaries of the technology corridor would be? Hajder said it begins at Cedar Street, just south of County Road 14 in Lino Lakes. The easterly border is Highway 61 and the westerly border is 20th Avenue N.

With that, the EDA thanked Hajder for her presentation.

7. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

2019 Goals List – NE Quad Name Suggestions

Mursko reported that a goal for 2019 is to finalize a name for the development in the NE I-35 Quadrant. A marketing professional provided a list of suggestions for the EDA to consider. Mursko noted that the developers for the Quadrant were told that the EDA would consider any names they suggest as well.

Griffith said that at the last City Staff meeting there was discussion about adding a monument to a corner of the development. He explained that the relocated Hornsby Street will curve around a pond in the northeast corner, which could be a good location for a monument. Postler noted that before the installation of such a monument the Rice Creek Watershed District would have to be notified to understand stormwater pond requirements. Postler also noted that if the monument is to be part of

the road construction project then he will need to consult the contractor because it is not currently in the plans. The EDA expressed general support for this idea.

Duraine said that he would prefer to have “Columbus” included in the name of the development. Logren said that she does not like having “Lamprey” in the name. Hegland agreed, noting her favorite options are Columbus Crossing or Columbus Plaza.

Mayor Preiner asked Mursko when the name needs to be finalized by? Mursko said that because the developer is beginning to submit applications and plans for the area, it would be smart to get the name finalized quickly so that they are able to develop marketing materials for the area.

The EDA came to an agreement that Columbus Crossing is their first choice, with Columbus Plaza and Columbus Commons as secondary choices.

2019 Goals List – Billboard Ideas

Another goal for 2019 is to create a promotional design for a billboard in the City. ClearChannel has offered the City use of their design department to create something for their billboard in Columbus. Mursko explained that the ClearChannel requires a list of design ideas, and then the City will be charged for the vinyl needed. The last time Columbus used these services the vinyl cost roughly \$2,350. That design will remain on the billboard until the vinyl is in disrepair. Previously the vinyl lasted for two years. She added that the vinyl will be removed if they have paying customers but will be installed again when they do not. Duraine asked if there are any electronic billboards in the City that would offer such a service? Mursko said she is not sure as the electronic billboards are owned by different vendors.

Duraine continued by asking if the goal is to market toward families or toward businesses? Mursko noted that something highlighting the new Minnesota Technology Corridor may be good. Logren added that she envisions the billboard as marketing Columbus as an entertainment destination since the racetrack is located here and there are nice parks to use. President Preiner said that he does not think it would be a good idea to advertise for anything that is currently being constructed in the NE I-35 Quadrant. Daly said that the message should have a business angle, rather than entertainment, in an effort to spur development. President Preiner suggested finding a way to combine the entertainment and business angles into one design. Peterson suggested the phrase “Stop, Shop, and Play”.

Mursko thanked the EDA for their suggestions and said she would reach out to the ClearChannel team to have them put together a few ideas.

2019 Goals List – Freeway District Branding

At the previous EDA meeting discussion was had about branding the Freeway District and the rest of the community. The question was how the tagline Urban Access Rural Nature applies to the City. Mursko is asking the EDA members if they would prefer to address this now or wait until 2020?

Hegland said that the topic was raised because because the City Council was not clear on what type of businesses they would like to attract to the area. Mursko said that if the focus should be more on

the City's Freeway District, she can work with Hajder to coordinate a marketing campaign. Otherwise if the focus should be more on the residential community Mursko could work with LATV on a marketing campaign with students at Forest Lake High School. Hegland said that each campaign would have different audiences, so it would be ideal to have both. Mayor Preiner agreed, but said that the main focus should be on the Freeway District because the new interchange will be completed soon, adding a fresh look to the area.

2019 Goals List – Business Visit Program

Hegland said that she came up with an idea while campaigning for her City Council seat. When she spoke with businesses they said they felt disconnected from the City. Her idea to mitigate that is to create a business visit program where City representatives meet with businesses and discuss a limited number of pre-determined topics. She added that the person who would visit a particular business would then be their contact at the City. The EDA was generally in favor of this idea. Daly asked who would do the visits? Hegland replied that EDA members would. Mayor Preiner said that information for this program should be compiled for the next EDA meeting to begin the process. Hegland said she would take the lead on developing the program, using a business list provided by City Staff and business retention information provided by Hajder.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next EDA meeting is 07.10.19 at 6:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator