

**City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statutes 13D.021
07.08.20**

The 07.08.20 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Jesse Preiner at the City Hall. Present were EDA Commissioners Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, Mark Daly, Bob Berens, Shelly Logren (via teleconference), and Janet Hegland; Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith, and Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes.

Also in Attendance were – Todd Carroll (via teleconference), Ryan Coddington (via teleconference), Jacquell Hajder (via teleconference), and Public Works Director Jim Windingstad.

- 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 Daly. Roll call vote; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; President Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye; Berens – aye. Motion carries.

- 3. APPROVAL – 07.08.20 EDA Meeting Agenda**

Motion by Daly to approve tonight’s EDA agenda. Seconded by Berens. Roll call vote; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; President Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye; Berens – aye. Motion carries.

- 4. OPEN BUSINESS**

Welcome – Bob Berens, New EDA Member

The newest member of the EDA, Bob Berens attended his first meeting tonight. He is currently the Director of Business Development at ProSource Technologies in Coon Rapids. Through his role there he has worked with Planning Commissions, City Councils, and other civic organizations before. Berens has lived in Columbus for three years.

- 5. New business**

Columbus Business List from Secretary of State Office

City Staff are recommending that the City purchase the Columbus business list from the Secretary of State’s office, in an effort to cross reference it with the City’s current business list. The list costs \$30 to purchase and will show all businesses in the City which have registered with the State of Minnesota. Hegland recommended that the City purchase this list annually to ensure

the City's list is updated accordingly.

Motion by Duraine to approve purchasing the Columbus Business List from the Secretary of State's office for \$30. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; President Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye; Daly – aye; Berens – aye. Motion carries.

MnDOT Landscape Plan – TH97 Bridge Project

Todd Carroll from MnDOT presented plans for landscaping around the I-35/TH-97 interchange, based on conversation with Mursko and Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht. There are trees lining the interchange and trickling down the highway. The four sides of the intersection are designed similarly.

Carroll added that his plans incorporate the new HyVee development and sidewalks. The landscaping project will likely take place next spring. Although there may be some site work completed this fall in preparation.

Berens said that the legend depicting the height of the trees is difficult to read. Carroll replied that evergreens are four to five feet tall, and other trees are five and a half feet to seven feet depending on the caliper. He added that the ornamental trees are roughly six feet tall, and shrubs are either twelve, fifteen, or eighteen inches depending on where they are placed.

Carroll added that the warranty period provided by MnDOT contractors is two years.

Daly asked where the funds for this project are coming from? Carroll replied that this project is included in the overall funding source for the greater interchange project.

Mursko asked what the time frame is for updates? She added that next week the state legislature is making decisions which will determine whether funds will be available to relocate a road where some trees are planned to be. Carroll replied that he has until spring of 2021 to change plans. If the City requires a change in plans due to the relocation of the road, it should not be a problem. The project likely will not be let for bids until next spring.

Duraine asked how far off the road the plantings are? He has concerns about road salt during the winter. Carroll replied that there is a twenty-five-foot zone without plantings and that the road salt will not affect the trees.

Daly asked if the City's monument sign would interfere with the trees or vice versa? Carroll replied that he envisions moving the trees back roughly ten feet off the sidewalk and placing the sign in front of them. Ryan Coddington from MnDOT added that the Hornsby Street project will be in process this fall.

Anoka County Economic Development Update

Anoka County Economic Development Specialist Jacquell Hajder offered to give an update on the County's economic development situation. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, her role has changed to focus more on helping Cities and businesses get through the situation. She said

that besides Running Aces being closed for some time, there have not been any COVID-19 related closures in Columbus. She recently spoke with the General Manager from Aces Hotel to understand how the closure has affected them. She will be aiding the hotel in various ways this year to ensure their success.

A question that Hajder had for Mursko is where the City of Columbus stands on CARES Act funding. She added that the County is considering spending some funding on internet access for residents, as fiber internet projects are available for CARES Act funding. If Columbus is interested in doing the same there may be an opportunity to request Anoka County use their funding for such improvements in Columbus' underserved or not served neighborhoods. Hajder added that all cities in Anoka County will be made aware of available funds next week. Funds must be expended by 11.15.20.

Minnesota Tech Corridor

Hajder continued by giving an update on the Minnesota Tech Corridor project. Overall since the COVID-19 pandemic began, things have been relatively quiet.

Later this fall Anoka County Economic Development is hosting a panel event for the Tech Corridor, which will include promotion of land for sale in Columbus. There will be real estate developers in attendance to discuss opportunities in Columbus. The date of the event is 11.13.20.

Hajder also reported that there is another event on 10.21.20 at Running Aces Harness Park titled "Up the River Bend". If a representative from Columbus would like to give a short introductory speech, they should reach out to Hajder to set that up.

6. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

Branding Committee

Logren reported that the branding committee is going to be suspended while the COVID-19 pandemic is occurring.

Monument Sign

Mursko continued discussion on a monument sign for the NE I-35 quadrant based on direction from the previous EDA meeting.

She reported that during the last visit to the area, it was determined that the pond is too close to the road for the sign to be placed between it and the road. City Staff worked with Todd Carroll from MnDOT to discuss where the sign could be placed instead.

The location they determined would work is the northwest quadrant of the Hornsby Street and TH 97 intersection. Mursko is asking the EDA if they would feel comfortable with this location.

Carroll commented that he has typically seen signs with dimensions of 6'x12' or 6'x15'. He noted that the lettering should be at least 12" tall to be visible. He offered assistance to the City for planning the landscaping surrounding the sign.

Berens said that he feels like the sign would be better suited for a spot near the off ramp heading north toward TH 97. Carroll said that signs cannot be located in the freeway's right-of-way, so that spot would not work. Daly commented that the location of the sign was chosen because it was meant to be an indication of the entrance to the NE I-35 quadrant business area. There are tentative plans to give a unique name to this business area, which would be added to the monument sign.

City Attorney Bill Griffith asked Carroll if MnDOT is able to assist with landscaping for development signs such as this? Carroll said that he was operating under the assumption that it was a municipal sign. If the sign is for a business development, there are additional regulations and MnDOT will be unable to assist in the landscaping.

Griffith continued to say the EDA and City Council should consider this nuance, and perhaps entertain the possibility of a municipal sign rather than a development sign. The EDA agreed they would take this into consideration and make a final decision at a later date.

Special Budget Meeting

Mursko proposed holding a special budget meeting for the EDA on 08.12.20 at 6:00 p.m. Some of the outstanding agenda items from this meeting can be discussed at the special meeting as well. This is being recommended because the levy portion of the budget must be completed by 09.30.20, which is before the next scheduled EDA meeting.

Motion by Daly to call a special budget meeting for the EDA on 08.12.20 at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Berens – aye; Daly – aye; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; President Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

100 EDA General Fund Loan	\$705,316.68 as of 12.31.2020
240 EDA Fund	\$ 88,655.00 as of 06.30.2020

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next special EDA budget meeting is on 08.12.20 at 6:00 p.m.

The next regular EDA meeting is on 10.14.20 at 6:00 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Daly to adjourn. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Berens – aye; Daly – aye;

**Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; President Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye.
Motion carries.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator