

City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority
07.26.17

The 07.26.17 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by President Dave Povolny at the City Hall. Present were EDA Commissioners, Mark Daly, Tracie Wilson, Denny Peterson, and Bill Krebs, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, Attorney Bill Griffith, and Public Information Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: John Derus, Kent Peterson, Jon Rausch, Frank Frattalone, Mike Nelson, Peg Hoffman, John & Kim Taylor, and City Engineer Dennis Postler.

A. APPROVAL – 03.08.17 EDA Minutes

Motion by Daly to approve the 03.08.17 EDA minutes. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL – 07.26.17 EDA Agenda

Motion by Peterson to approve the agenda. Seconded by Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

C. NEW BUSINESS

Review Table Top Exercise, ColumBiz Comments

Mursko reported that the results from the Table Top Exercise are still being calculated, and will be ready to discuss at the next EDA meeting in November.

D. OPEN BUSINESS

2018 EDA-HRA Budget Levy Resolution

Mursko is recommending approval of the HRA/EDA levy this year. In 2016 the City levied roughly \$86,000, and in 2017 it was roughly the same amount as well. The recommendation is to raise that amount by \$5,000 in 2018. Wilson asked if that was the maximum that the City can levy in 2018? Mursko replied that it is very close to the maximum.

Motion by Wilson to approve Resolution 17-01, a resolution authorizing the final levy of a special benefit levy pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 469.033, subdivision 6 and approval of a budget for fiscal year 2018. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

At this time, Commissioner Wilson stepped down from the EDA to address Commissioners as the Chief Financial Officer of Running Aces, regarding the Bituminous Roadways' applications

that are being considered by the City. Wilson read a letter that she wrote, and submitted copies to the Commission for consideration.

Wilson's letter began by stating that Running Aces has historically had a good relationship with the City of Columbus, which they greatly appreciate. However, it is unfortunate that the situation has risen where Running Aces has found themselves at odds with the City.

Running Aces' position on the Bituminous Roadways' applications is that the location off W Freeway Drive is not suited for an asphalt plant, and they are against that parcel being rezoned from Light Industrial to Commercial Industrial (Heavy Industrial). As a member of the Columbus Economic Development Authority, Wilson has been part of planning for the freeway district, and noted that there has never been a plan for heavy industry in that area. The location they're proposing is the first thing people see when they drive north into Columbus from I-35, and with the new bridge at exit 129 and the relocation of CSAH 54, the entire area will be changing dramatically. Running Aces does not think that an asphalt plant will mesh with the new appearance of the intersection.

Part of the problem would be the heavy dump truck traffic that is proposed to travel down W Freeway Drive, through the retail district, in front of Running Aces, and through the Commercial Showroom district. Wilson argues that the type of traffic coming from an asphalt plant should not run through the entertainment and retail center of Columbus. In general, Running Aces feels that adding the asphalt plant will jeopardize everything they have built in the area.

Running Aces has worked hard to make Columbus a destination for hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. However, the effects of an asphalt plant on the number of visitors as well as the perception of horse trainers and owners, could put the 700+ employees that work for Running Aces at risk. This should be concerning to Columbus because of the impact that Running Aces has on the area; it is Columbus' largest tax payer, employer, and shows significant community support.

Overall, on behalf of Running Aces, Wilson asked that the City vote no on the change in zoning for the asphalt plant, and in the very minimum delay the vote to permit additional study of the environmental and business impact of the plant. That concluded Wilson's presentation to the Commission, and discussion was held afterwards.

Mursko started off by saying that the 2015 McCombs Freeway District Study said that the City should consider a lesser retail presence in the area than was previously suggested. Since then the City has been considering what would be a good fit for the area, and President Povolny asked Wilson what type of business Running Aces believes would be compatible with the racetrack? Wilson replied that it would be ideal to have a business that could have more synergy with the racetrack, and the entertainment/retail environment that it encourages. Mayor Povolny commented that the current zoning of the proposed Bituminous Roadways' parcel does not explicitly allow or disallow an asphalt plant, and clarified that the application for rezoning is solely related to the issue of extending utilities, not the proposed use of the land. The Economic Development Authority is tasked with determining what the ideal use would be for that district, and Mayor Povolny posed that question to the Commissioners. City Attorney Bill Griffith

commented that this is a good discussion to be having while the City is working on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The conversation then turned toward the type of traffic that an asphalt plant would create, because that is a big concern for Running Aces. Mayor Povolny commented that realistically, only half of the trucks will be filled with asphalt, while the other half would be aggregate, which should decrease the smell. Krebs asked Wilson how she felt about an asphalt plant in Shakopee which is located near Canterbury Park? Wilson said that situation is different because the traffic does not go directly past Canterbury, which is the same, she added, with the asphalt plant in Maple Grove. Similar to the Shakopee plant, the Maple Grove plant has easy access to highway 169 and truck traffic does not have very far to go before getting onto the highway.

President Povolny said that part of the big picture for future planning in Columbus should be the consideration of a new freeway exit near the proposed Bituminous Roadways facility. As a new exit in that area could alleviate concerns about traffic through the entertainment and retail center in Columbus. Krebs noted that such a plan would likely take years to come to fruition, and right now W Freeway Drive is the one County road that is built to carry heavy truck traffic in that area. In addition, with the trend moving away from big box retail stores, it is likely that any business coming into the Freeway District will significantly increase truck traffic. Wilson argued that the type of product being carried in trucks coming from Bituminous Roadways is what is fueling Running Aces' concerns, not any type of truck traffic.

Discussions concluded with Wilson urging the Commission to at least let the public speak during the City Council meeting that evening, when the Bituminous Roadways' applications are considered.

F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mursko reported that Public Works will be putting up the "Land for Sale" signs as soon as they are able, as the tornadoes that came through the City on July 12th pushed the schedule back significantly.

Treasurer's Report

100 EDA General Fund Loan
240 EDA Fund

\$(1,007,415.68)
\$ XX

G. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is November 8th, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Povolny to adjourn. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator