

City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority
10.10.18

The 10.10.18 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 5:58 p.m. by President Dave Povolny at the City Hall. Present were EDA Commissioners Mark Daly, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, Bill Krebs and Jon Rausch, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, Attorney Bill Griffith, and Assistant Secretary Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Engineer Dennis Postler and Anoka County Economic Development Specialist Jacquell Hajder.

A. APPROVAL – 07.11.18 EDA Minutes

Motion by Daly to approve the 07.11.18 EDA minutes. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL – 10.10.18 EDA Agenda

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

C. OPEN BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

Presentation – Anoka County Economic Development Specialist Jacquell Hajder

Hajder began working with Anoka County this year as their Economic Development Specialist. Recently Anoka County, Connexus, and the Metro North Chamber of Commerce hired Ady Advantage to complete an assessment of the County's full economic potential. Their report identified goals and action steps to reach that potential, and Anoka County hired Hajder to execute the recommendations from the report.

Hajder presented a Power Point describing the economic development goals that she will be focusing on. The three goals are: Change the perception of Anoka County, clearly define roles among regional partners, and ensure the County is ready for development from a talent and product perspective. She added that the County would like to retain and grow industries such as manufacturing, distribution and trucking, and technology. Columbus would be an especially good location for a technology hub because of the amount of land available near the I-35 corridor. An additional goal for the County is to increase the number of people that commute to the area for work. Hajder continued by describing in detail the committees, subcommittees, and local partnerships that will be utilized for her work. She is hopeful that in the future there will be a larger budget to facilitate events to attract new businesses.

Hajder finished by encouraging the EDA and City Staff to use her as a resource. She noted that Columbus has a slight advantage over other Cities in Anoka County because of the amount of land that is available.

Daly asked if there is some type of priority list of Cities that she uses when a developer's inquiry comes through? Hajder said that there is not necessarily a priority list. Her approach is to find out the specific needs for each inquiry. Those needs will typically narrow the possible site locations to just a handful of options. Then she will submit applications for all possibilities.

Duraine asked how much she anticipates interacting with Washington County? Hajder said that Washington County has their own Economic Development Specialist, however she plans to work with them on the I-35 corridor initiative because of their proximity.

Mursko presented the EDA with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Voluntary Cost Sharing Agreement (VCSA) which was drafted by the County Attorney. She noted that the annual cost is based on population and is \$222 for the City of Columbus. Griffith said that he reviewed the documents and recommends approval. He noted that they are open ended documents with little commitment, and the City can cancel the VCSA with a 30-day notice.

Motion by Daly to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for Anoka County Economic Development. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Krebs to approve the Voluntary Cost Sharing Agreement for Anoka County Economic Development. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

Rausch suggested to Hajder that part of her position could be assisting with watershed permitting issues. He said that ensuring sites are prepared with valid delineations can be a big obstacle for developers and there is a need for assistance.

Krebs asked if it would be in the scope of this position to facilitate conversations with the different cities in Anoka County to see if there may be common concerns? Hajder replied that it would be within the scope as long as the conversations are related to development potential.

Daly noted that he would like to retain his seat on the EDA after his term as Council Member is complete at the end of the year.

F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

At this time Mursko went through the EDA's 2018 goals list.

The first 2018 goal was branding the City. The first initiative as part of this goal was to get a new message on the digital billboards in the City, which is yet to be completed.

The second initiative was to determine a name for the business park which will be located in the NE I-35 quadrant. This is being worked on with JAMP (the purchaser of NE quadrant land), who will be

suggesting three possible names.

The third initiative was to purchase new banners for the stretch of Kettle River Blvd near the City Hall and City Park. The current banners are 11 years old and are quite weathered. Mursko also noted that it could be good timing to freshen up the City's logo at the time new banners are purchased.

The fourth initiative was to develop concepts for the SW and NW I-35 quadrants. Steve Saunders addressed the Council at a previous EDA meeting about completing a wetland delineation and new survey for the property he purchased in the NW quadrant. Mursko updated the Council on the situation: the wetland delineation is complete, the new survey is in progress, and Saunders is preparing a concept and looking at partnerships for development on his land.

The fifth initiative was to install signage on the City's roundabouts. The Park Advisory Board has been discussing this and are requesting a budget from the EDA. Engineer Dennis Postler said that he has been researching designs, and there are no County regulations on what Cities can install on their roundabouts. President Povolny asked who technically owns the land in the center of the roundabout? Attorney Bill Griffith said that the City does not own the land but is required to maintain the center and street lights. President Povolny asked Daly to research what it would cost to install a design that is affordable to maintain. Daly replied that he would take the topic back to the board and come up with a few ideas.

The last initiative for branding the City of Columbus was adding "Columbus" to TH 97 and I-35 directional signage. President Povolny said that Ryan Coddington from MnDOT is bringing the topic to the correct individuals at MnDOT to determine if it would be feasible.

The second goal for 2018 was attracting new development and business while also retaining current businesses. Mursko said that having Hajder as a resource will be very helpful with this goal, and she envisions her being particularly useful for marketing efforts. Mursko noted that in a recent meeting Anoka County officials announced an initiative to market the I-35 corridor as a technology hub with potential for development of businesses like data centers. She said that the idea was well supported, but expressed concern because of how difficult it has been for businesses in that area to connect to the fiber line that runs through the area. She said that Ziegler, Gander Outdoors, and Running Aces are all unable to connect to the fiber line because Zayo will not extend it. Mursko said individuals from the meeting indicated they'd like to meet with City representatives and representatives from businesses in Columbus to understand how to utilize the fiber line better. She said she looks forward to the meeting because it would be difficult to market a technology corridor without access to fiber internet services.

A third goal for 2018 was to appoint an additional member to the EDA. She said this goal is still outstanding.

The last goal for 2018 was to release an electronic newsletter in place of the ColumBiz breakfast event. EDA members agreed they would like to continue this newsletter and release one quarterly.

G. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next EDA meeting is 01.09.19 at 6:00 p.m.

H. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator