

**City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority
11.08.17**

The 11.08.17 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, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, and Bill Krebs, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko, Attorney Jacob Steen, and Public Information Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Jesse Preiner, Mary Preiner, Pat Preiner, Jody Krebs, City Engineer Dennis Postler.

A. APPROVAL – 07.26.17 EDA Minutes

Motion by Daly to approve the 07.26.17 EDA minutes. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL – 11.08.17 EDA Agenda

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

C. OPEN BUSINESS

ColumBiz Table Top Exercise Results

Public Information Coordinator Jessica Hughes submitted results from the 2016 ColumBiz table top exercises to the Council. Attendees were asked what the City of Columbus can do to improve community identity, and the top five responses (in order) were as follows; continued media efforts for community identity, City entrance monument on southbound I -35, City entrance monument on northbound I-35E, City entrance monument on northbound I-35W, and coordinated banners/flags throughout the Freeway Corridor District.

2017 Goals List

Next, City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko began going through the 2017 Goals List to determine how well the EDA addressed those goals.

1. I-35/TH 97/CR 23 Bridge Funding/Legislative Project:

First on the list was the I-35/TH 97/CR 23 Bridge Funding/Legislative Project. The project was successful in acquiring \$9 million from the state for the bridge, however, there is an issue with how the LRIP funds will be allocated. As the bill has gone through different committees at the legislature, the language has been altered slightly, and now there is disagreement on the details.

There are also some issues with funding the CSAH 54 realignment that is associated with the

bridge project. There is confusion over what is included with the funds that are dedicated to this project, such as Right of Way acquisition and design. Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) is the official body which allocates dollars, and they indicated that their interpretation is that the funds in the bill cover only construction. Anoka County has hired an attorney to lobby that the funds should include Right of Way acquisition and design. This issue will likely delay the project from being let until May of 2018. The alternative solution to this problem is to go back to the Legislature and have the language amended. However, it does not seem likely that there would still be interest in bonding for the project.

Wilson asked if this will delay the bridge project? Postler replied that the bridge project itself is already paid for, so there should only be a minimal impact. He continued by saying that the larger impact is on the realignment of Hornsby Street, as the funds for that project are also included in the bill. There is a Cooperative Agreement in place for half of the cost to realign Hornsby Street however if the City uses LRIP funds for the project, the hope is that everything (engineering costs, Right of Way acquisition costs, and design costs) will be paid for with those funds. Postler said that if the decision on funding is not finalized in a timely manner, the City will have to decide if they want to wait for funding or just fund the project itself. This decision is further complicated by the fact that once the City begins the project, any funds that are spent cannot be reimbursed. It is for this same reason that Anoka County has stopped all Right of Way acquisition efforts relating to the realignment of Hornsby Street.

2. Columbiz Event (April 20, 2017 RAHP 8:00 a.m.)

Part of the 2017 Goals List was the ColumBiz event, which is held annually. Mursko asked the Council if they were interested in continuing the event? President Povolny and Duraine expressed interest in discontinuing the event, and Daly and Krebs agreed. Wilson commented that there will be a lot of information that could be disseminated at next year's ColumBiz, as the bridge and realignment projects will be going on. Peterson agreed with Wilson, adding that a large portion of this information could be disseminated at ColumBiz. President Povolny said that he would rather see the information relayed to businesses and residents in a different way. Members agreed that in place of ColumBiz should be an electronic newsletter that should be distributed at least once monthly. President Povolny added a suggestion that a paper mailer should be sent to businesses notifying them that ColumBiz will not be held going forward.

Motion by Daly to cancel the ColumBiz event and replace it with an electronic newsletter. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Advertise/Branding "Columbus"

Mursko noted that in the ColumBiz results, the top suggestions for how to brand Columbus were monument signs along the freeways that lead to the City.

4. Land Marketing

Another 2017 goal was to market land that the City has for sale. In order to do so, the City set a goal to purchase "Land for Sale" signage for the NE Quad I-35 land. Those signs were acquired

by the City and almost all of them have been installed. The second goal for marketing land was to purchase concept plans for all of the Quad 35 land. This goal is yet to be completed, as locating Right of Way in the parcels for sale has taken longer than expected.

5. Attracting New Development & Businesses – Retaining Current Businesses
(Concept Plan for Directional Signage, Freeway Business District Businesses)

Part of efforts the address this goal was directional signage in the City’s Freeway Business District. The push for this sign was initiated by a petition from business owners in the area. After some problems finding a vendor interested in building the sign, Mursko reported that the City is now working with a vendor to finalize a design and quote. She added that the petitioners are also asking for a streetlight at the intersection of Hornsby Street and TH 97. President Povolny noted that the City is also working on installing a traffic control device at that intersection and he is hopeful this device would include a streetlight.

6. Recruit EDA Member

The 2017 goal of recruiting an EDA member is still outstanding and the EDA would like to continue posting a vacancy for the seat.

D. NEW BUSINESS

2018 EDA Meeting Schedule

The proposed 2018 EDA Meeting Schedule is as follows: January 10, 2018, April 11, 2018, July 11, 2018, and November 7, 2018

Motion by Krebs to approve the 2018 Meeting Schedule. Seconded by Daly. Motion carried unanimously.

2018 Goals List

Next, EDA members considered their goals for 2018.

1. Legislative Project

The first recommended goal is to secure \$9 million at the Legislature for the realignment of CSAH 54 and Hornsby Street. Krebs agreed and suggested that this should be the most important goal for the EDA in 2018.

2. ColumBiz Event

Based on the discussion above, EDA members agreed to cancel the ColumBiz Event and replace it with an electronic newsletter with current news and happenings.

3. Advertise/Brand “Columbus”:

President Povolny suggested that part of this goal should be to add signage in the center of the roundabout at W Broadway Avenue and Kettle River Blvd. Duraine asked what type of signage he would like to see on the roundabout? President Povolny clarified that he would be satisfied with any type of barrier that would prevent people from driving over the top of the roundabout, and suggested maybe a concrete sign or a collection of large rocks.

Daly asked when the light next to the roundabout will be reinstalled? Mursko said there are a number of questions related to the issue of the lightpost near the roundabout. When the roundabout was built, it was the first of its kind in Anoka County. Because of this there have been some issues determining which entity, the City or the County, is responsible for replacement (as its unrepairable). Anoka County is claiming it is a maintenance issue, and therefore the City is responsible for replacing it. The City believes it should be an insurance issue, however the City did not insure this light. Peterson said that in a recent meeting Mr. Joe McPherson from Anoka County said that they may be able to replace it. City Engineer Dennis Postler agreed to ask Mr. McPherson about this at their next meeting.

Mursko then asked the EDA about the NE Quadrant specifically, which is being considered as a prime location development. She is considering naming the area something like “Columbus Commons” or “Columbus Corner”, and asked the EDA for their input. Overall the EDA said that this was a good idea, and would like to finalize a name in 2018.

4. Attracting New Development & Businesses – Retaining Current Businesses

Mursko suggested that attracting new development and retaining current businesses should remain a goal for 2018. President Povolny commented that part of the reason development is more likely to go to other communities is because they are giving away their land rather than selling it. He added that if Columbus wants to compete for the best new development in the area, giving away land should be considered. Daly disagreed, adding the in a few years’ time (when the bridge project is completed) development will certainly come to the area without giving land away for free. Duraine noted that he believes part of the issue is that there are too many small parcels of land for sale, and it would be more beneficial if those parcels were sold together as a large piece. Mursko added that another part of the issue is that homeowners in commercial districts are connected to their houses, and developers have no interest in keeping houses standing, so there is not a large incentive to sell to developers. This is why there are many legal non-conforming parcels of land in Columbus’ commercial districts. Such an issue can make it difficult for new development to flourish, and should be looked at critically in 2018.

Mursko then turned conversation toward a billboard in the City. She asked the EDA if they would like to pay for new vinyl and printing on a billboard in Columbus, as an added way to attract new businesses and development. The EDA agreed that they would.

Motion by Duraine to update the billboard by adding new vinyl and a picture. Seconded by Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Recruit EDA Member:

President Povolny agreed that recruiting a new EDA member should be a goal for 2018. He asked if the EDA vacancy is on the City's website? Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes replied that it was listed on the Jobs and Volunteering Page. President Povolny suggested adding the vacancy to the front page.

Motion by Wilson to adopt the 2018 Goals List. Seconded by Daly. Motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

Wilson came forward to present a report during open discussion. The report was in regard to the proposed asphalt plant in Columbus, which she argued is an important consideration for the EDA. President Povolny disagreed, saying that this discussion should be limited to the November 15th Public Hearing only, which is on the proposed text amendment to the Light Industrial District to allow and regulate an asphalt plant. City Attorney Jacob Steen added that he strongly encourages all conversation regarding the asphalt plant be considered during the Public Hearing. Wilson continued to say that the topic is an important one for the EDA, because they are tasked with influencing economic development in Columbus. In addition, as a representative of Running Aces Harness Park, Wilson wanted to emphasize what Running Aces has contributed economically to the City and what is at risk with an asphalt plant in the Light Industrial District. President Povolny said he understood the correlation and the desire to discuss the topic during an EDA meeting, however since the text amendment is set for a Public Hearing on November 15th, all discussion should be had on that date. In the end, the EDA agreed to receive copies of Wilson's report, but no further discussion was had.

F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

**100 EDA General Fund Loan
240 EDA Fund**

**\$(1,007,415.68)
\$ 33,983.00**

G. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is January 10th, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

H. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator