

Personnel Committee Report-2.22.23

The Personnel Committee, consisting of Councilmembers Wagamon and Hegland and City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, met on February 21st to interview a candidate interested in joining the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Authority (EDA). There were no other candidates pending interviews for either of these boards.

Planning Commissioner and EDA Commissioner Appointment

Background

Ms. Judy Huntosh submitted her application on February 15, 2023, to serve on the Columbus Planning Commission and Economic Development Authority. Ms. Huntosh recently moved to Columbus 9 months ago from Forest Lake, where she lived for 49 years, raised a family and owned and ran a business (Flyaways Gymnastics) for 25 years. She also served on the Forest Lake EDA for 18 years, from 2001-2022. She has a BS in education from the University of Minnesota and taught for 6 years in Chisago Lakes. She is currently retired and became interested in serving on the two Boards after seeing a posting in the city newsletter for openings and talking to neighbors and Mayor Preiner about the positions.

She has “fallen in love with Columbus” and likes the development that Columbus has attracted in the past 4-5 years. She wants to be part of continuing that positive trajectory. She has always been a person who believes that you need to have a solution to offer if you see something that you don’t like and she enjoys rolling her sleeves up and getting involved. She has deep economic development experience, having served on the Forest Lake EDA and was part of bringing the new City Center and YMCA to that community. She also has the perspective of being a long-time business owner.

While serving on the Forest Lake EDA was more of a visionary role, she noticed that members of the Forest Lake Planning Commission had deep knowledge of the city’s zoning laws, ordinances and always knew what businesses/developments were interested in coming to the city. When she saw that Columbus had openings on both boards, she felt the two roles would be complimentary and also felt that serving on the EDA alone would not quite meet the volunteer gap she was looking to fill. She understands the expectation for attending at least 80% of the 24 Planning Commission meetings/year in addition to the quarterly EDA meetings and workshops, and is committed to doing the preparatory work for the meetings. The Planning Commission opening for which she is applying was Mr. Ron Hanegraaf’s position, which would end December 31, 2025. The EDA opening she is applying for was Mr. Robert Beren’s position, which would end December 31, 2024. She is available to fill the vacancies beginning in mid-March.

Requested Action

The Personnel Committee recommends the appointment of Ms. Judy Huntosh to the Columbus Planning Commission, to fill the position vacated by Mr. Ron Hanegraaf and to the Columbus Economic Development Authority, to fill the position vacated by Mr. Bob Berens. We believe her professional and civic volunteer experience, desire to serve the community and commitment to maintaining careful and planned growth in Columbus will be a valuable addition to both boards.

Respectfully,

Janet Hegland

Columbus City Council and
Personnel Committee Member