



**City of Columbus**  
**Regular Economic Development Authority (EDA) Meeting**  
**Alternative Meeting Format**  
**MN Statute, Section 13D.021**  
**04.12.2023**

The 04.12.23 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by President Jesse Preiner at City Hall. Present were Commissioners Karen Fleming, Ron Hanegraaf, Janet Hegland, Judy Huntosh (via teleconference) and Sue Wagamon; Assistant Secretary Connor Keith, City Attorney Bill Griffith, City Engineer Kevin Bittner, Executive Director Elizabeth Mursko and Public Works Director Jim Windingstad.

Also in attendance: Matt Weiland

Not in attendance: Commissioner Rob Busch

1. Call to Order Regular Meeting – 5:02 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Agenda

**Motion by Preiner to approve the agenda. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Fleming – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

4. Approval of the 10-12-2022 EDA Meeting Minutes

**Motion by Wagamon to approve the minutes from October 12, 2022. Seconded by Preiner. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – abstained; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Fleming – abstained; Huntosh – abstained; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

5. Approval of the 01-11-2023 EDA Meeting Minutes

**Motion by Wagamon to approve the January 11, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Hanegraaf. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Fleming – aye; Huntosh – abstain; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

6. New Business
  - i) Review of ColumBiz Event

Mursko opened the floor to a round-table discussion about the ColumBiz event in March. Preiner said while attendance was lower than events before the pandemic, he received good reviews and fielded requests for an evening iteration in the fall. Wagamon thought more would attend, but that the event went well and she had a good time. Wagamon expressed optimism that businessowners had the opportunity to share their opinions and network with neighboring businesses. Hanegraaf agreed with Wagamon, but said his group struggled to answer the “tougher” questions. Preiner expressed optimism for building off this attendance in the future as the EDA continues to return from the pandemic. Hegland wondered if turnout was down because the City was in competition with Spring Breaks. Fleming felt the

event went well and liked that the businesses were willing to interact and offered their space for future events, but wished the presenters had used the projector or provided handouts. Griffith said his table also had positive discussions. Mursko said that March has proved to be a difficult month for events and vacations and suggested the EDA consider February instead for early-year dates.

Preiner asked the EDA if it wanted to consider an autumn date. Hegland said Running Aces expressed interest in hosting outside if weather allowed in the fall. Preiner encouraged setting an evening date before deer hunting season opened, but not scheduling a conflict with Fall Fest. Fleming felt early October would be best. Huntosh liked the idea of a 4-6 p.m. time, but not a Friday night. The EDA decided to plan another ColumBiz event on October 19, 2023, from 4-6 p.m. Huntosh advocated for inviting the Forest Lake Chamber of Commerce to present at the next ColumBiz.

## 7. Open Business

### i) 2023 EDA Goals

Griffith shared that before the State Congress recessed, the Small Cities Transportation Bill was amended into the Senate's transportation finance omnibus bill. Next steps for the bill include recruiting other small cities in the state to help advocate for its passage.

Mursko shared that the EDA and City Council have the opportunity to take advantage of public time on the digital billboards. All the EDA needs to do is develop a theme for the advert, and the company will design the screen's artwork for a fee. Preiner directed Keith to brainstorm copy for a City announcement.

Designing new banners for light posts in the City Hall parking lot has been scheduled for the 2024 budget.

Turning to concept plans for the northeastern and northwestern quads in the Freeway District, Mursko said she is requesting direction from Gregory Frahm-Giles, Anoka County Director of Economic Development, to determine if concept plans are still a good investment in the area due to the City owning only 15 total acres in the area across three separated lots. Wagamon shared that one business had suggested a desire for office space in the City during ColumBiz, but wondered aloud at how the City would attract that type of development. Griffith said the City could develop an RFP to share with developers, or reach out to office building developers directly as the owners of the land.

### ii) Business Visits Program

Hegland felt the best way for the EDA to move forward with business visits is for members to call ahead to schedule them and avoid showing up at properties unexpected, and asked if a list had been prepared for this purpose. Mursko said the list does exist, but cautioned that its current format lists the City's contacts for legal business which is not always the right contact for these types of business visits. Hegland and Huntosh said determining the intent of these visits will determine who the EDA needs to talk to. Griffith proposed the City adopting an EDA Toolkit similar to other Cities that provides City and County resources and contacts. Wagamon said one of the ColumBiz attendees expressed interest in the

EDA touring their facility to learn what the business is doing at its Columbus site. The EDA decided to start by generating its own EDA Toolkit.

- iii) Updated Business List
- 8. Commission Open Discussion
- 9. Executive Director's Report
  - i) May Workshop Meeting Agenda
  - ii) Treasurer's Report
- 10. Next Meeting Date: August 9, 2023, at 5 p.m.  
Next Workshop Date: May 9, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

11. Adjournment

**Motion by Preiner to adjourn. Seconded by Wagamon. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Fleming – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectively submitted:

*Connor Keith*

Connor Keith, Assistant Secretary