

**City of Columbus
Economic Development Authority**

DATE: April 15, 2025

PLEASE PRINT

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**City of Columbus
Regular Economic Development Authority (EDA) Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statute, Section 13D.021
04.15.2025**

The April 15, 2025 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 6:44 p.m. by President Ron Hanegraaf at City Hall. Present were Commissioners Janet Hegland, Judy Huntosh, Karen Fleming, and Ron Hanegraaf; Executive Director Jack Davis and Secretary Aaron Berg.

Members Absent: Jennifer Lattin, Rob Busch, and Scott Wendell

1. Call to Order – 6:30 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hegland initially moved to approve the meeting agenda and the April 2, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes in error, referencing the wrong agenda. Upon clarification, Commissioner Hegland restated the motion to approve the April 15, 2025 EDA agenda as written.

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

4. Annual Organizational Meeting

Executive Director Davis reviewed the EDA Bylaws regarding annual appointments and discussed required positions: Vice President and Treasurer. The Mayor serves as President by default. Discussion included past appointment attempts and attendance issues that delayed elections.

Vice President Election

Motion by Huntosh to nominate Fleming as Vice President. Fleming declined, expressing interest in Treasurer role. Huntosh amended the motion to nominate Janet Hegland as Vice President. Seconded by Fleming. Roll call vote: Fleming – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Hanegraaf – aye. Motion carries.

Treasurer Election

Motion by Hegland to nominate Karen Fleming as Treasurer. Seconded by Huntosh. Roll call vote: Fleming – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Hanegraaf – aye. Motion carries.

Davis confirmed no additional appointments were required at this time, though the Executive Director may appoint an Assistant Secretary. Davis declined to appoint one at this time.

5. Approval of January 16, 2025 EDA Meeting Minutes

Motion by Hegland to approve the January 16, 2025 minutes with previously submitted editorial corrections. Seconded by Huntosh.

Discussion: Commissioners Fleming and Hanegraaf were absent at the January meeting but confirmed they read and approved the minutes. Davis provided clarification that those not in attendance may vote if they reviewed the material.

Roll call vote: Fleming – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Hanegraaf – aye. Motion carries.

6. Bylaw Amendments

Motion by Hegland to direct staff to research and incorporate bylaw amendments as discussed during the preceding workshop meeting. Seconded by Hanegraaf.

Discussion included a desire to ensure conformance with State Statutes and to allow for clearer delegation of duties in the future.

Roll call vote: Fleming – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Hanegraaf – aye. Motion carries.

7. Business Development and Transportation Report

Executive Director Davis reviewed the Q1 2025 development report including: MTW Truck Wash (Hornsby St.): CUP approved; permit pending Rice Creek Watershed comments and Met Council SAC issues, Electric Go-Kart Facility: Concept plan approved; awaiting preliminary plat. Unclear whether project is still active, Minnesota Veterinary Neurology: Currently under construction; targeted summer 2025 completion.

Executive Director Davis reviewed the Permits YTD: 49 total permits issued; lower than 2024 YTD, though April shows a potential uptick. City-Owned Land Sales: 7.7 acres (north of Hy-Vee): Purchase agreement signed; closing by November 2025. Developer has begun site preparation, 5.5 acres (north of Caribou): Market-rate apartment developer has shown interest, West Freeway Drive site: 5.5-acre parcel receiving limited but growing interest. Shell Building Inquiry: Staff expressed concern about lack of detail from the developer and potential cannabis-related use.

Executive Director Davis reviewed the Transportation Project Updates: Hornsby/Eureka, Hwy 97, Potomac St., Lake Drive, and Lexington Ave improvements.

8. Columbus EDA – Workshop Topics

Executive Director Davis reviewed concerns regarding declining business participation in Columbiz. Attendance of these meetings has experienced a trend of a decreasing number of 10 attendees from the business community. The mix at Columbiz business breakfast on March 20, 2025 was approximately 26 attendees from the business and 18 from the public sector. There were 70 invitations mailed and the same number of emails sent and follow up calls were made to all the invitees. If you go behind this number of the 26 attendees from the business community, there were only 14 businesses represented there, nine of those 14 had more than one person from their company present. So, in terms of total number of businesses attending approximately 20% attended from the total we had sent out an invitation to.

Suggestions to improve the event format and publicity, engage Nannette from the Forest Lake Chamber, survey businesses for topics of interest, and explore alternate event timing.

Fall Columbiz Date: Staff will coordinate with Running Aces and the Forest Lake Chamber for a date before the MEA break.

Survey Development: Berg to draft survey for business input and distribute to EDA Members in advance of the next meeting so it can be sent to businesses and results can be brought back to the next EDA Meeting for discussion.

EDA Board Reorganization Discussion: Hegland explained that the reorganization suggestion partially came from her. She thinks other people had the same notion, which is, that it is frustrating to be on a board where you are constantly questioning what we do at the last meeting as nothing seems to move forward. Hegland asked if there a more effective organizational structure than what the city has now. It was suggested that the EDA hold more meetings. Flemming suggested having 6 meetings would be meeting every other month. Huntosh suggested meeting monthly or every other month. Flemming suggested that old business be reflected on the agendas for reminders of unfinished items. Huntosh suggested identifying and setting goals for 2025 and 2026. Hegland recalled setting yearly goals in past years however the goals remained the same each year as none were accomplished. The idea of dissolving the EDA or reducing the size of the board was discussed. Hegland thinks that Fleming and Huntosh bring a lot of value to the EDA so she's not looking to get them off the board. Hegland suggested, "we could have five members with two council members and two citizens and leave room for one business." Hegland suggested getting advice from the City attorney on the process to make a change. Davis stated that the council approved the creation of the EDA and then the bylaws were approved after this was formed as an authority, but the

council could amend that resolution to reflect the change in the structure and the membership.

Further discussion and direction were provided to staff to explore how the HRA can be part of the EDA and how the County's HRA interacts with the city.

The concluding suggestion was to reduce from a 7 - member board to a 5 - members (2 Council, 3 At-Large), increase meeting frequency to every other month, and figure out how HRA planning can fit under the EDA and explore how a tourism board fits.

Special Meeting Scheduled: Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

9. Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Berg, Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Berg', with a stylized, cursive script.

Disclaimer:

Portions of these meeting minutes were generated using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to assist with drafting. All content has been thoroughly reviewed and verified by a human for accuracy and completeness. In accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, Section 13.03 – Data Practices, a full, unedited written transcript, video, and audio recordings are considered public data and can be made available to the public upon request.