City of Columbus
Regular Economic Development Authority (EDA) Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statute, Section 13D.021
01.10.2024

The 01.10.24 meeting of the City of Columbus Economic Development Authority was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by President Jesse Preiner at City Hall. Present were Commissioners Rob Busch, Karen Fleming, Ron Hanegraaf, Janet Hegland, Judy Huntosh and Sue Wagamon; City Attorney Bill Griffith, Code Compliance Inspector Sean Lessard, Interim Executive Director Jack Davis, Public Works Director Jim Windingstad, Secretary Connor Keith, and Special Projects Director Elizabeth Mursko.

Also in attendance: Cindy Angel, Myron Angel, unidentified attendee,

Not in attendance: Commissioner Karen Fleming

1. Call to Order Regular Meeting – 5:04 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Election of Officers and Appointment Recommendation of Citizen Member

Preiner detailed the previous year's EDA officers, indicating that he was the EDA President as required, Wagamon was Vice President, Busch was Treasurer, Mursko was Executive Director and Deputy Treasurer, and Keith was the Assistant Secretary. Davis will replace Mursko as Interim Executive Director and Deputy Treasurer.

Davis informed the EDA it needed to appoint a Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary for 2024, and recommended appointing Keith as Secretary.

Motion by Hegland to appoint Connor Keith as EDA Secretary. Seconded by Huntosh. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Preiner nominated Wagamon as Vice President and Busch as Treasurer.

Motion by Preiner to appoint Wagamon as EDA Vice President and Busch as Treasurer. Seconded by Wagamon. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Davis informed the EDA that Huntosh required reappointment to the EDA, as her term expired December 31, 2023. Huntosh's new term will last six years, ending December 31, 2029.

Motion by Preiner to appoint Huntosh as member at large. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

5. Approval of the 10-11-2023 EDA Meeting Minutes

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

6. Columbus EDA – Workshop Topics
   - **i)** 2022 Annual Report

Motion by Hegland to accept the 2022 Annual Report as presented. Seconded by Wagamon. Roll call vote: Hanegraaf – aye; Wagamon – aye; Hegland – aye; Huntosh – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

   - ~~**ii)** 2023 Annual Report~~

7. Open Business
   - **i)** 2024 Columbus Legislative Platform

Busch arrived during the Legislative Platform discussion.

Griffith presented the EDA with three proposed legislative programs the City could pursue at the state capitol. Griffith recommended the EDA pursue LRIP and capital bonding funding for (North) North Hornsby, fiscal disparities relief or amendment and the mayor advocating for sports gambling at non-tribal casinos. Griffith is encouraged that both of the City's state lawmakers approached the City to submit legislation to combat fiscal disparities' impact on Columbus.

Hegland asked Griffith how this year's fiscal disparities effort would be structured compared to years past since the City's legislators are initiating the process this year. Griffith said the process will be similar, but that the City is a step ahead by already having authors in both houses.

Hegland asked what role the City could take to be involved in the fiscal disparities work. Griffith suggested having a subset of the EDA appointed that would be prepared to stress the City's case to legislators in anticipation of important votes. That subset could be two named EDA members, or a pool of representatives.

Hegland asked about specific plans concerning the City's lobbying for permitting sports betting at non-tribal casinos. Griffith indicated that the current expectation is letters of support, as well as potential testimony of support. Hegland encouraged the City and Running Aces to coordinate their efforts.

Griffith estimated lobbying costs to be $50,000.

8. New Business
   - **i)** Review 2024 Goals

Hegland proposed adding all three legislative focuses Griffith detailed in his report to the first EDA goals.

Mursko explained the opportunities for the EDA to promote a message on digital and static billboards. In the case of digital billboards, the EDA can determine the theme or message it wants displayed, and the billboard company can design a final package. The EDA directed Keith to consult with digital billboard companies in the City to create "Welcome to Columbus" messaging.

For the static billboard covers, the EDA has tried in the past to determine a message that would be good for multiple years, which then gets submitted to the billboard company for them to draft a few designs for the body to choose from. The City must pay for the cover, which covers vacant, unrented static billboards. The EDA directed Davis to consult with the billboard companies to determine turnaround time and costs for billboard covers.

Concerning banners for City Hall, the Park and the NE Quad, Hegland suggested reviewing materials from the disbanded branding committee to guide new banner designs.

Concerning retaining existing businesses in the City, the EDA expressed interest in scheduling regular visits to each commercial entity. Preiner felt this could be a good opportunity for EDA members to invite business owners or managers to ColumBiz. Huntosh volunteered to draft a business visit program and agenda.

Two City newsletters were budgeted for 2024. Keith indicated the first is usually published before the April recycling events and the second is published before Fall Fest.

Concerning the City increasing involvement with the Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Hegland encouraged the Staff to send EDA agendas to the Chamber and invite its President and CEO, Nannette LaNasa, to attend.

Concerning a monument sign in the northwestern quadrant, Hegland said she'd seen a nice example in Eden Prairie. Griffith volunteered to take a picture for the EDA to see.

ii) Review ColumBiz Spring Event

Preiner reminded the EDA of a proposal to host ColumBiz at different locations with the EDA covering catering. Hegland proposed the breakfast be eligible for the ColumBiz tour, but keeping social hour formats at the hotel since it already has a liquor license. Preiner encouraged stressing a business applying to host the event must be able to coordinate breakfast catering. Davis proposed booking Running Aces' hotel as a contingency plan in case no Columbus business is able to accommodate the event with the two-months' notice.

9. Commission Open Discussion

No participation.

10. Interim Executive Director's Report

i) February Workshop Meeting Agenda Topics

ii) Next Meeting Date: April 10, 2024 at 5 p.m.

iii) Next Workshop Date: February 13, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

11. Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectively submitted:

Connor Keith, Secretary