



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE  
Monday, July 07, 2025  
5:30 PM

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**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by President James

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Members present: Connie Buesgens; Laurel Deneen; Lamin Dibba; Rachel James; Amáda Márquez-Simula; Justice Spriggs

Members absent: Marlaine Szurek

Staff present: Mitchell Forney, Community Development Director; Aaron Chirpich, City Manager; Sarah LaVoie, Administrative Assistant; Emilie Voight, Community Development Coordinator

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approve the minutes of the regular EDA Meeting of June 02, 2025.
2. Approve financial reports and payment of bills for May 2025 – Resolution No. 2025-15.

*Motion by Márquez-Simula, seconded by Buesgens, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-15**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2025 AND THE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2025.**

**WHEREAS**, the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “EDA”) is required by Minnesota Statutes Section 469.096, Subd. 9, to prepare a detailed financial statement which shows all receipts and disbursements, their nature, the money on hand, the purposes to which the money on hand is to be applied, the EDA's credits and assets, and its outstanding liabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, said Statute also requires the EDA to examine the statement and treasurer's vouchers or bills and if correct, to approve them by resolution and enter the resolution in its records; and

**WHEREAS**, the financial statements for the month of May 2025 have been reviewed by the EDA Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the EDA has examined the financial statements and finds them to be acceptable as to both form and accuracy; and

**WHEREAS**, the EDA Commission has other means to verify the intent of Section 469.096, Subd. 9, including but not limited to Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Annual City approved Budgets, Audits, and similar documentation; and

**WHEREAS**, financial statements are held by the City's Finance Department in a method outlined by the State of Minnesota's Records Retention Schedule,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority that it has examined the referenced financial statements including the check history, and they are found to be correct, as to form and content; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the financial statements are acknowledged and received and the check history as presented in writing is approved for payment out of proper funds; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** this resolution is made as part of the permanent records of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority.

**ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Passed this 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025

Offered by: Amáda Márquez-Simula  
Seconded by: Connie Buesgens  
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**3. Façade Improvement Grant Report for T5 Columbia Heights LLC (Take 5) located at 5126 Central Ave NE.**

Voight reported that the report pertains to the 2025 Façade Improvement Grant application for 5126 Central Ave NE. This building was formerly occupied by the Tanum Auto Shop. The new tenant is T5 Columbia Heights LLC, a Take 5 quick lube oil change service. The new tenant is completing substantial renovations to the entire property and is applying for grant funds to paint the new exterior siding that will be installed on the office portion of the structure.

Voight stated the applicant was able to receive two bids for the exterior painting, amounting to \$10,000 (Color Works Painting & Decorating) and \$14,000 (CMC Construction). This sets them up for a grant amount of \$5,000. Community Development staff recommend funding this project in full as the tenants are making an effort to renovate the entirety of the existing structure not solely

to make it more functional, but also to improve its curb appeal from Central Ave.

Voight noted that, thus far in 2025, the EDA has approved two Façade Improvement Grant applications for a total of \$6,749.25 approved, with an additional \$5,000.00 being requested at this meeting. This leaves \$68,250.75 in Façade Improvement Grant funds remaining from the initial annual budget of \$80,000.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Márquez-Simula asked if there would be a new sign. Voight pointed out where signage would be on a graphic of the proposed design. The applicant is not asking for funding for the signs. She added that she has not looked at the sign permits to see about new signage. Forney mentioned that the applicant would be changing the signs to be similar to the other chain stores.

Buesgens asked if there was a section being added to the back of the building. Chirpich replied that they reconfigured and added garage doors.

Buesgens asked if the applicant would be making improvements to the landscaping. Voight replied that they would be.

*Motion by Spriggs, seconded by Buesgens, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2025-16, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

*Motion by Spriggs, seconded by Deneen, to approve Resolution No. 2025-16, a Resolution of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority, approving the form and substance of the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement, and approving authority staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the authority into a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with T5 Columbia Heights LLC (Take 5). All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-16**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT, AND APPROVING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE AUTHORITY INTO A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH T5 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS LLC (TAKE 5)**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”) and the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “Authority”) have collaborated to create a certain Façade Improvement Grant Program (the “Program”); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to guidelines established for the Program, the Authority is to award and administer a series of grants to eligible commercial property owners and/or tenants for the purposes of revitalizing existing storefronts, increasing business vitality and economic performance, and decreasing criminal activity along Central Avenue Northeast and in the City’s Business districts,

pursuant to a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with various property owners and/or tenants;  
and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Program, the City is to coordinate a surveillance camera monitoring program by placing surveillance cameras on some of the storefronts that are part of the Program for the purposes of improving public safety in and around the Central Business District; and

**WHEREAS**, the Authority has thoroughly reviewed copies of the proposed form of the Grant Agreement.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that, after appropriate examination and due consideration, the Authority

1. approves the form and substance of the Grant Agreement, and approves the Authority entering into the Agreement with T5 Columbia Heights LLC (Take 5).
2. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed for and on behalf of the Authority to enter into the Grant Agreement.
3. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized and directed to execute and take such action as they deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose of the foregoing resolution.

**ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Adopted this 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025

Offered by: Justice Spriggs  
Seconded by: Laurel Deneen  
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:  
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Secretary

**BUSINESS UPDATES**

**a. Art & Info Fair**

Voight updated the Commission about the Art & Info Fair. She showed responses from community members regarding where they would like to see art in the City.

Buesgens asked if the City would have an Art Commission. Forney replied that Voight is working on that and researching what other cities are doing in the realm of public art. He added that they would bring the item to a future Council work session.

Dibba asked if there were particular areas that community members identified as wanting art. Voight replied that many people suggested art along Central Avenue and in parks.

Deneen asked if staff had thought about doing a program with the high school art classes where they could paint on utility boxes. Voight replied that she has not looked into that. She added that throughout her research on what other cities are doing, she has not seen cities collaborating with high schools. She mentioned she has seen a lot of cities have painted utility boxes or storm drains.

Buesgens mentioned that there is a city that puts poetry on the sidewalks. She suggested that the Public Works Department look into which sidewalks would be a good candidate, since sidewalks and roads are getting redone.

**b. Other Updates**

James asked if staff were still working on the business directory information. Forney replied that the Community Development Department intern was working on the project and has a collection of all of the data. Staff are determining how to use the data. Buesgens suggested including the information in a welcome packet for new residents and renters.

Buesgens expressed her concern that internet service workers are not putting out cones around their vehicles while working in neighborhoods.

Dibba asked if there was an update regarding the entrepreneurship class that would be held at Murzyn Hall. Forney replied that the County has been pushing the program, and registration is higher than in years past already.

James mentioned that the Golden Nuts would be celebrating their one-year anniversary on July 18<sup>th</sup>. She added that the Maple Grove and Robbinsdale City Council informally challenged the City to see which city has the best restaurants. She explained that it could be an online campaign.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Márquez-Simula, seconded by Deneen, to adjourn the meeting at 5:51 pm. All ayes.  
MOTION PASSED.*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah LaVoie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and last name "LaVoie" clearly distinguishable.

—  
Sarah LaVoie, Recording Secretary