

**MINUTES
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) MEETING
MAY 3, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Szurek.

Members present: Connie Buesgens, Gerry Herringer, Kt Jacobs, Amada Márquez-Simula, John Murzyn Jr, Nick Novitsky, Marlaine Szurek
Members absent: None

Staff Present: Aaron Chirpich (Community Development Director), Kelli Bourgeois (City Manager), Chris Osmundson (Alatus LLC), Ben Sandell (Communications Coordinator) and Alicia Apanah (Administrative Assistant)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the minutes from the meeting of February 1, 2021.
2. Approve Financial Report and Payment of Bills for January, February, and March 2021 – Resolution No. 2021-05.

*Motion by Jacobs, seconded by Murzyn Jr., to approve the consent agenda as presented. All ayes.
MOTION PASSED.*

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH 2021, AND THE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH 2021

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 months of January, February, and March 2021 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, financials 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 a part of the permanent records of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority.

ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Passed this 3rd day of May, 2021

Offered by: Jacobs

Seconded by: Murzyn Jr.

Roll Call: All ayes

President

Attest:

Assistant Secretary

BUSINESS ITEMS

3. Approve Hazardous Material Abatement Contract for 960 40th Avenue NE

Chirpich explained the memo enclosed in the agenda packet is in regard to approving bids for the removal of hazardous material and household items from 960 40th Avenue NE. In December 2020, the EDA purchased the property located at 960 40th Avenue NE. It was the ultimate goal of the EDA to demolish the blighted single-family residential house on the property and prepare the site for redevelopment.

In order to keep the price of demolition down, Community Development staff saw it necessary to bid out the removal of household items and hazardous materials separate from the demolition. The scope of work submitted in the bid request included the removal of asbestos-containing materials, appliances, and accessories containing hazardous materials, alongside with the removal of household items. In response to the request for bids, the EDA received three quotes. The quote submitted by Bergo Environmental Inc. was determined to be the low qualified bid for the abatement work at \$5,212.00. Bergo Environmental Inc. shall furnish the services and necessary equipment to complete all work specified in the scope of work. All work will be performed in accordance with OSHA regulations, Minnesota Department of Health Asbestos Abatement Rules, and other applicable Federal and State regulations. Bergo Environmental Inc. shall insure proper clean up, transport, and disposal of hazardous and asbestos-containing materials and household items.

Bid Spreadsheet

<u>Company</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bergo Environmental Inc.	\$ 5,212.00
Hummingbird Environmental, LLC.	\$ 9,150.00
Asbestos Abatement Associates	\$10,660.00

Staff recommends awarding the low bid for abatement at 960 40th Avenue NE to Bergo Environmental Inc, the lowest bid.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Buesgens asked whether the abatement company would be separating the material in an attempt to avoid dumping all of it into the landfill. Chirpich explained that sorting through material for recycling would add a significant cost to the company so, unfortunately, any household goods would be deposited into the traditional landfill.

Szurek asked if all of the paraphernalia in the building would be removed, and Chirpich confirmed so. She noted that Bergo was the lowest bid by a significant amount and asked whether the company was aware of the volume the work encompassed. Chirpich said Bergo had seen the photos associated with the building and had also toured the site and that Mitch Forney, Community Development Coordinator, had confirmed the required work with Bergo.

Szurek asked whether the City had worked with Bergo previously, and Chirpich said they had not. Szurek then asked whether the City had worked with another bidder, Hummingbird, and Chirpich said they had performed abatement for the property at 1002 40th. She said she hoped the abatement would go well because the difference in quotes is staggering. Chirpich offered reassurance that the signed contract would support the amount and hold Bergo accountable, adding that the hazardous amount for the property in question is not significant.

Motion by Jacobs, seconded by Buesgens, to accept the low bid of Bergo Environmental Inc. for the removal of all hazardous materials and household items located at 960 40th Avenue NE; and, furthermore, to authorize the President and Executive Director to enter into an agreement for the same. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

**EDA IN AND FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CONTRACT FOR
REMOVAL OF HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, ASBESTOS, AND OTHER HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS FROM 960 40th AVE NE, COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**

For valuable consideration as set forth below, this Contract dated the ___ day of May, 2021, is made and entered into between the Economic Development Authority in and for the City of Columbia Heights, a public body corporate and political created pursuant to the laws of the State of Minnesota ("EDA") and Bergo Environmental Inc. a Minnesota Limited Liability Company ("Contractor").

1. **CONTRACT DOCUMENTS**

Contractor hereby promises and agrees to perform and comply with all the provisions of this Contract and the Proposal dated February 15, 2021, prepared by Contractor attached hereto as **Exhibit A**

for the removal of household items, asbestos-containing materials, and removal of other hazardous materials in preparation for demolition of the residential property located at 960 40th Ave NE, Columbia Heights, Minnesota ("Property"). The survey prepared by Angstrom Analytical, Inc. dated February 15, 2021 ("Survey") identifies certain hazardous materials that shall be removed by Contractor from the Property and is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**. The Contract, Proposal and Survey shall comprise the total agreement of the parties hereto. No oral order, objection, or claim by any party to the other shall affect or modify any of the terms or obligations contained in this Contract.

2. **THE WORK**

The work to be performed by Contractor under this Contract (hereinafter the "Work"), is defined in the Proposal as removal of household items, asbestos-containing materials, and removal of hazardous and solid waste materials identified on the Survey, excluding the fuel tanks, in preparation for demolition of the residence located on the Property. As part of the Work, Contractor agrees to remove all excess material from the Property.

3. **CONTRACT PRICE**

The EDA agrees to pay Contractor the sum of \$5,212.00 in exchange for Contractor furnishing labor and materials for the Work at the Property, payable within 30 days of Contractor's completion of the Work.

Contractor may start work on this project upon its execution of this Contract.

4. **COMPLETION DATE/LIQUIDATED DAMAGES**

Contractor shall complete all Work on or before June 30th, 2021. ("Completion Date"). Due to the difficulty in ascertaining and establishing the actual damages which the EDA would sustain, liquidated damages are specified as follows for failure of Contractor to complete his performance under this Contract by the Completion Date: for every calendar day that the Contract shall remain uncompleted beyond the Completion Date of June 30th 2021, Contractor shall pay the EDA \$50.00 per day as liquidated damages.

5. **INSURANCE**

Before beginning actual work under this Contract, Contractor shall submit to the EDA and obtain the EDA's approval of a certificate of insurance on Standard Form C.I.C.C.-701 or ACORD 25 forms, showing the following insurance coverage, and listing the EDA and City as a loss payee under the policies:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. | General Contractor Liability: | \$1,000,000.00 |
| b. | Workman's Compensation: | Statutory Amounts |

This certificate must provide for the above coverages to be in effect from the date of the Contract until 30 days after the Completion Date, and must provide the insurance coverage will not be canceled by the insurance company without 30 day's written notice to the EDA of intent to cancel. The certificate must further provide that Contractor's insurance coverage is primary coverage notwithstanding any insurance coverage carried by the City or EDA that may apply to injury or damage relating to the maintenance or repair of the City streets or rights-of-way by either the City, EDA or any employee, agent, independent contractor or any other person or entity retained by the City or EDA to perform the services described herein. All insurance is subject to the review and approval of the Columbia Heights City Attorney.

6. **LAWS, REGULATIONS AND SAFETY**

Contractor shall give all notices and comply with all laws, ordinances, rules and regulations applicable to performance under this Contract. Contractor shall provide adequate signs and/or barricades, and will take all necessary precautions for the protection of the Work and the safety of the public.

7. **INDEMNIFICATION**

To the fullest extent permitted by law, Contractor shall indemnify and hold harmless the EDA, its agents and employees from and against all claims, damages, losses and expenses, including but not limited to attorney's fees, arising out of or resulting from the performance of Work, provided that any such claim, damage, loss or expense (1) is attributable to bodily injury, sickness, disease or death, or to injury or to destruction of tangible property (other than the Work itself) including the loss of use resulting therefrom, and (2) is caused in whole or in part by any negligent act or omission of Contractor, any Subcontractor, anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them or anyone for whose acts any of them may be liable, regardless of whether or not it is caused in part by a party indemnified hereunder.

8. **ASSIGNMENT**

Contractor shall not assign or transfer, whether by an assignment or novation or otherwise, any of its rights, duties, benefits, obligations, liabilities or responsibilities without prior written consent of the EDA.

9. **NOTICE**

The address and telephone number of Contractor for purposes of giving notices and any other purpose under this Contract shall be 522 Concord Street North, Suite 400, South St. Paul, MN 55075, 651-457-4699.

The address of the EDA for purposes of giving notices and any other purposes under this Contract shall be 590 40th Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties to this Contract have hereunto set their hands and seals as of the day and year first above written.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
IN AND FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**

By: _____
Kelli Bourgeois
Its: Executive Director

Bergo Environmental Inc.

By: _____

Its: _____

4. Approve Preliminary Development Agreement with Alatus, LLC for the Redevelopment of 4300 Central Avenue NE

Chirpich said he was excited to be able to share an update regarding the revitalization and/or redevelopment of the site located at 4300 Central Avenue NE, as it has long been a priority of the City. 4300 Central Avenue is currently owned by Hy-Vee, Inc., and the site contains a partially occupied 140,000 square-foot multi-tenant retail center. The site was acquired by Hy-Vee in 2016 and Hy-Vee secured site plan approvals in the same year to rehabilitate the vacant portion of the retail center into a 95,000 square-foot grocery store.

Due to factors unknown to the City, Hy-Vee has decided not to follow through with their plans for a new grocery store on the site and they intend to sell the property. In January 2021, staff was contacted by Alatus LLC to discuss the City's interest in a potential partnership to redevelop the site. Staff expressed support for the idea of redeveloping the site and encouraged Alatus to negotiate with Hy-Vee to reach favorable terms for the purchase of the property. Subsequently, Alatus was able to secure a purchase agreement for the property and create preliminary redevelopment plans for the site. The current Alatus concept plans include the following base elements:

- 400-600 multifamily on the east end of the site along Central Avenue
- 20,000-40,000 square feet of retail/commercial space beneath the multifamily housing
- Grocery store in the retail/commercial space
- Underground parking
- Sustainable design elements, including solar and high efficiency heating and cooling systems
- Substantial public open space, parkland with sustainable design elements
- Single-family housing on the west side of the site to be built on the current City-owned storm water pond (Jackson Pond).

During an executive session on February 1, 2021, the EDA discussed the preliminary Alatus vision for the site and debated acquisition strategies for of the property. It was determined by the EDA that the preferred route would be to have Alatus to acquire the site rather than the EDA. Following this determination, the EDA explored potential public funding options available to the EDA to assist Alatus with the financing necessary to acquire the site. Two primary options were presented by staff: financing with internal funds and borrowing through the issuance of general obligation tax increment financing (TIF) bonds. Both options would require the establishment of a new TIF district for the proposed project. Following discussion on the two options, the EDA directed staff to move forward with the borrowing option and take the steps necessary to create the new TIF district and issue the TIF bonds to fund the acquisition. Under this scenario, the City would issue the debt necessary for Alatus to purchase the property directly from Hy-Vee with the City acting as interim lender to start the project. Alatus would then pay off the City's loan when the project is ready to close with permanent financing. Under the current project schedule, Alatus will close on the purchase of the property in July of 2021 and seek land use approvals in late 2021 or early 2022, with an expected groundbreaking in the spring of 2022 for the first phase of the project.

Since the February 1, EDA meeting, staff has worked with the EDA's redevelopment council and Alatus to create a preliminary development agreement that is ready for approval by the EDA. The primary components of the agreement are as follows:

- Alatus is designated as the sole developer partner for the site during the term of the agreement.
- The agreement termination date is October 31, 2021.
- The concept plans and core elements of the project are established.
- The EDA agrees to explore the use of tax increment financing and TIF bonds to support the project.
- Alatus will reimburse the EDA for predevelopment planning costs incurred, including consultant costs for establishment of the new TIF district.

Ultimately, it is the goal of staff to work as quickly as possible towards a final redevelopment agreement that will allow for the acquisition of the property by Alatus. Due to the complex nature of this project, that goal will take several months to realize, adding that there is a lot of room for refinement and to sit down with the residents of the City to obtain their input. The objective of the preliminary development agreement is to formalize a working relationship and negotiation framework with Alatus. The agreement assures Alatus and the EDA that both parties are committed to working through the due diligence process to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome, and Chirpich also noted that the City is not taking title to the property.

Staff recommends that the EDA adopt Resolution No. 2021-06, approving preliminary development agreement between the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority and Alatus LLC.

Questions/Comments from Members

Buesgens asked for confirmation that the City owns the reservoir, and Chirpich confirmed so.

Buesgens asked what the property is worth, being a TIF would be established. Chirpich said a value has not been assigned to it but a structure of the transaction would be developed in the redevelopment agreement. Osmundson added that it would be 13 acres in total.

Buesgens then asked, as a long shot, whether it would be possible to turn it into a land trust so that it keeps the property value affordable for housing owners. Osmundson explained that it could be discussed, and the biggest investigated piece will be reconstituting the soil and figuring out how to build back there and reposition the stormwater and retention facilities; and the important piece would be to reestablish the grid, whether they are publicly dedicated back or private drive aisles. He said there a multitude of spectrums to consider depending on the economic levers the parties want to pull. Chirpich added that the biggest unknown is surrounding the lower density housing component. Osmundson said Alatus would like to break its work into phases, moving as fast as possible in the pieces that abut Central, and a land trust would add some more time.

Jacobs asked if the single family units would be owner occupied or rental. Osmundson responded that it has not yet been determined.

Jacobs asked about the expected timeline for work. Osmundson quoted phase one as the whole eastern side of the three components, with work to begin in the first quarter of the 2022; completion of the final phase, the western side, before the end of 2022; and an additional year if a land trust is incorporated.

Jacobs asked if the commercial component includes a grocery store, and Osmundson explained that the 40,000 square-foot space would be for “hybrid” grocer (described as a grocer between suburban and urban types). She then asked how the square footage compares with 95,000 square footage that Rainbow occupied in the space, and Osmundson said it would be half. Jacobs asked whether it would be similar to an expanded Aldi, and Osmundson agreed and said there would not be a “sea of parking” associated with the plan, that the building would be built up and any grocer would be on the same grade as Central, and discussions are in process with about five potential grocers.

Jacobs asked how the drainage issue would be addressed after the removal of the current pond, as there has been a history of flooding in that area. Osmundson explained that an underwater cistern is being considered, ideally a grey water trench would be in place in order to use the water for irrigation, but retention ponds could also be used along with native grasses. There will be less impervious surface than the huge parking area.

Buesgens commented that, regarding the sustainability re-use of the water, she had done a tour with the Mississippi Watershed Management organization south of Surdyk’s, where they have all the plumbing set up, and asked whether the same could be possibly used for the development. Osmundson responded that it could be considered by Engineering. Chirpich said the area suffers from an undersized stormwater pond and there is a regional sanitary sewer issue related to stormwater, creating backups in sewers. Hy-Vee’s projects would not have fixed either of those, he added, and this current project would be an opportunity to redevelop the entire site and solve both problems. Density is part of that equation but 400 to 600 units would be significantly less than 40th and Central site at 1,160 units.

Jacobs said she loved the prospectus, the architectural pieces in varying heights, the community park, incorporating the retail and single family homes but is absolutely against 400 to 600 rental units because rentals are at 50% of all addresses in the City and is an “astronomical” imbalance. Buesgens commented that it would not be a concern for her, as many cannot afford to buy houses.

Herringer asked for clarification, regarding the quoted 400 to 600 units, about what kind of housing is being considered. Osmundson explained that it would most likely be market-rate housing, similar to

40th and Central.

Chirpich notified the Commission that he would be coming back for a TIF and bond conversation with them in June and details can be worked out over the summer and into the fall, with land use entitlement approvals late 2021 or early 2022.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Novitsky, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-06, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Novitsky, to adopt Resolution No. 2021-06, a Resolution approving a preliminary development agreement between the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority and Alatus LLC. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-06
APPROVING PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND ALATUS LLC**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (“Authority”) as follows:

1. Background.

1.01. Alatus LLC (the “Developer”) desires to acquire certain property (the “Property”) within the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”), including certain property owned by the City (the “City-Owned Parcel”), which Property has been the subject of certain preliminary negotiations with the Authority for purposes of constructing a multi-use development on the Property (the “Development”).

1.02. The Authority and the Developer have determined to enter into a preliminary development agreement (the “PDA”), providing for negotiation of a definitive purchase and development contract that will address (among other things) terms under which the Developer will acquire the City-Owned Parcel and construct the Development on the Property, and the Authority or City may provide certain financial assistance if warranted, including without limitation the issuance of general obligation bonds, to make development by the Developer financially feasible.

1.03. The Board has reviewed the PDA and has determined that it is in the best interests of the Authority to approve and execute the PDA.

2. Approval of PDA.

2.01. The Authority hereby approves the PDA and authorizes and directs the President and Executive Director to execute same in substantially the form on file, subject to modifications that do not alter the substance of the transaction and are approved by the President and Executive Director, provided that execution of the PDA by such officials will be conclusive evidence of their approval.

2.02. Authority officials and consultants are authorized to take any other actions necessary to carry out the Authority’s obligations under the PDA, to bring any necessary loan documents in connection with the issuance of general obligation bonds before the Authority, and to bring a proposed definitive purchase and development contract before the Authority.

Approved this 3rd day of May, 2021, by the Board of Commissioners of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority.

President

ATTEST:

Secretary

OTHER BUSINESS

5. Fire Sprinkler Pilot Grant Program Discussion

Chirpich explained that the Community Development staff wished to discuss with the EDA the creation of a pilot grant program to provide assistance to small businesses that need to install fire suppression systems in existing commercial buildings. Due to the City's adoption of the standards outlined in Chapter 1306 of the Minnesota Administrative Rules (building code), many business owners that propose a change in use, expansion, and/or remodel, must meet modern day sprinkler requirements similar to those for new construction. On several occasions, Community Development staff has interacted with customers that are looking to bring new business ideas into Columbia Heights, but their projects stall out due to the high cost of installing fire suppression systems in the City's older commercial buildings.

To combat this situation and stimulate new business growth in the City, staff recommends that the EDA consider investing in a pilot grant program that will help share the cost of the sprinkler system upgrades for commercial buildings. Investing in sprinkler systems not only helps new business ideas enter the community, but it will also pave the way for the next owner/tenant that looks to occupy each space in the future, thereby lowering the frequency of vacant store fronts along the City's commercial corridors.

In researching options for grant program guidelines, staff became aware of a similar program that is operating in Blaine. Staff used the parameters of the Blaine program and experiences gained through the façade improvement grant program to establish the parameters listed below as a basis for discussion with the EDA.

- Eligible applicants must be an owner of a commercial property, a commercial tenant with approval from the property owner(s), or a 501 (c)(3) organization in the City of Columbia Heights located along Central Avenue NE between 37th and 47th Avenue NE., or along 40th Avenue between Central and University Avenues, or along University Avenue between 37th and 53rd Avenue NE.
- Applicants must be in good standing with the City, including but not limited to legally operating with proper licensure and current on property taxes, utility bills, and special assessments.
- Eligible improvements would include interior fire suppression systems, sprinkler monitoring and

water line connections.

- Applicants would be eligible for reimbursement for eligible improvements up to 50% of the total project cost, with a maximum reimbursement of \$15,000.00.
- Applicants would be required to submit two or more competitive proposals from licensed and bonded contractors, proof of final inspection by the Building Official, a copy of the final invoice received from the contractor, and proof of payment to the contractor (i.e., receipt, invoice).

Staff recommends establishing the pilot program by using existing funds from EDA redevelopment Fund 408. This fund currently serves as the revenue source for the Commercial Revitalization activities of the EDA, which includes the façade improvement grant program and the scattered site acquisition of single-family homes that are zoned commercially. Fund 408 is replenished with approximately \$250,000.00 each year by the City's special HRA levy. To fund the initial pilot program, staff recommends setting aside \$45,000.00 to get through the rest of 2021 and all of 2022. This number represents the unused portion of the façade improvement grant funds from the 2020 budget. In subsequent years, staff and the EDA can determine funding levels based upon the success of the program.

Staff does not recommend any EDA action at this time. If the EDA is amenable to the grant program concept, staff will work to prepare the program application materials and seek formal approval of the program at a later date. Chirpich explained that the greatest need for customers, as staff believes, is fire suppression and the waterline upgrades and provides an opportunity to put these improvements in the buildings even if a new tenant is unsuccessful, that they will be more inviting for a next tenant that would occupy the space and can bring smaller entrepreneurial ideas into the City.

Szurek asked if the City has lost businesses for certain spaces because they could not afford to sprinkle the building when informed they needed to do so. Chirpich confirmed so, that it has killed some projects and a lot of the smaller older buildings are where young entrepreneurial businesses do not have a lot of extra money to make upgrades. The threshold for the upgrade is 2,000 square feet.

Buesgens supports the program because density attracts new businesses, so they have enough people coming into the Central Avenue area.

Jacobs asked if the gym on 40th has moved forward, as she received information this past week that the owner did not get his financing. Chirpich said he was not aware of that same information, that the last time he spoke with him, about a month ago, he needed some help with the sprinkler barrier. Szurek asked where the owner was planning to put his "boutique" gym, and Jacobs said it was the little building directly at the end of Monroe on 40th.

Novitsky said he supports the program, thanked City staff for reaching out to try to get more businesses into the City, and asked whether the program would be something that would prevent the financing from a bank not having a sprinkler system. Chirpich said yes, that it could be a factor.

Novitsky asked whether current businesses will still be able to get grants even without transfer of uses. Chirpich said it is open for discussion, that expansion would be a definite trigger.

Buesgens said a sprinkler system would be investing in a building for future use and believed it could help with business owners' insurance rates. Chirpich said, long term, all of the improvements chip away

at insurance rating of the City but take a while to show up in savings for business owners.

Jacobs said it is important, even if not expanding, that if business owners want to incorporate that piece of safety, there needs to be a way to accommodate that. Szurek agreed. Novitsky agreed and said especially for businesses that have stayed in the City through the recent “downtime” and would keep the City safe. Buesgens agreed and said safety is huge. Márquez-Simula supports the program and said apartment tenants sometimes live above businesses too, so protecting the businesses and tenants is important, adding that the program shows an investment in the City and would be welcoming to newcomers.

Chirpich summarized their comments, that Commissioners would like to see a formal, refined proposal for the program. Novitsky said it should not be a barrier even if businesses have façade improvements.

Buesgens said she would like to see a landscape grant program in the future, and Chirpich said it could be an add-on to the façade system to consider that.

6. Electronic Packet Discussion

Chirpich asked whether the Commissioners are amenable to using tablets to utilize electronic information for their meetings, rather than using hard copies.

Herringer said he is “old school” and likes to use paper documents, and Szurek said she would also continue to use paper documents so that the distribution would not interfere with what the Planning Commission would be doing, as the EDA meeting falls on the first Monday of the month and the Planning Commission falls on the first Tuesday.

Chirpich asked Commissioners to contact the Community Development staff if they wish to obtain information electronically, that hard copies would continue to be distributed to those who do not.

The next regular EDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 7, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Murzyn Jr., seconded by Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 pm. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Apanah, Recording Secretary