

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBUS GEORGIA
April 8 , 2021
1017 Front Avenue and Via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alfred Blackmar, Russ Carreker, Selvin Hollingsworth, Jacki Lowe, Heath Schondelmayer, Lisa Smith, Chris Wightman

ALSO PRESENT:

Peter Bowden, Steve Davis, Austin Gibson, Pace Halter, Pam Hodge, Tom Horn, Sendreka Lakes, Jim Lovett, Rob McKenna, Jerald Mitchell, Joe Sanders, Brian Sillitto, Katherine Kelly

Russ Carreker, Chairman, noting that a quorum was present and proper notice had been given in accordance with the requirements of Georgia law, called the April 8, 2021 meeting to order.

MINUTES

Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Jacki Lowe, the Authority unanimously approved the minutes of the March 4, 2021 meeting attached as Exhibit "A".

FINANCIAL REPORT

Heath Schondelmayer reviewed the revenues and expenses and explained some variances. Year-to-date net income is ahead of budget. Joe Sanders spoke about slides which presented the comparison of the millage fund 2021 versus 2020, the YTD revenue by categories, and the YTD expenses by categories. He reported other development authorities are being contacted to get a comparison as requested. **Upon motion made by Chris Wightman and seconded by Selvin Hollingsworth, the Authority unanimously approved the March 2021 Financial Report attached as Exhibit "B".**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Brian Sillitto reported on global business attraction. He reviewed the 4 leads, 3 projects, 11 prospects and 24 suspects. He spoke about the InComm expansion announcement and reported the AC Marriott opens today with 125 rooms. A virtual engagement with about 20 state partners from GDEcD and Georgia Power took place. During the event there was a fun learning event with Kayla Davis from the Indigo rooftop bar overlooking the river where she led a Columbus-centered trivia game to introduce and educate them to things about Columbus. Jim Lovett reported there was great feedback from the attendees. He reported that they wanted to know about the status of a potential spec building. Some discussion took place. Something like this engagement should be done occasionally with other groups. Maybe we can begin doing some in-person. He spoke about the logistics/mobility infrastructure study with expectations of determining what needs to be done before going ahead so educated decisions can be made and not doing things which are not needed.
- Jerald Mitchell reported that the project managers from GDEcD and Georgia Power welcomed the interaction since not much had occurred during the epidemic. The state project managers are seeing projects requiring 500 – 2000 acres. The strategic planning workshop follows this meeting. He reported that Josh Beard continues to reach out to small businesses which make things then he will reach out to small businesses in the service industries. He has had conversations with the Ft. Benning leadership. Their focus is on the engagement of military spouses in the workforce and workforce development for soldiers exiting. He reported on the supply showcase Ft. Benning had recently. Follow-ups will be made with a number of the suppliers in attendance. He reported the following regional activities: visit with Kia to determine if can help in workforce area, continue to engage Valley Partnership, met with economic development group of Harris County, and met with Jim Livingston of River Valley Reginal Commission to re-engage.
- Sendreka Lakes reported that 30 companies were visited in February. She talked about the following workforce trends: increasing wages, "ghosting", shrinking talent pools, and creative incentives. In the

last year the civilian workforce has decreased by about 4,500 which the DOL stated this seemed to be an isolated issue as compared with other Georgia regions. She talked about short-term cohort training and reported that the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia is looking at putting a bootcamp here in October. She reported on military workforce development including assessing the talents of soldiers transitioning out of Ft. Benning and connecting them with potential employers, working with ACS to create a professional network of military spouses, and working with the US Chamber Hiring Our Heroes program. Discussion took place about the number of soldiers leaving Ft. Benning, the reasons they are leaving or deciding to stay in Columbus and how to market information. Russ Carreker would like a closer look at workforce data compared to housing data.

TOURISM RECOVERY PROGRAM

Due to the time, Peter Bowden will give his presentation at the May meeting.

CITY OF COLUMBUS REPORT

Pam Hodge reported that a presentation on T-SPLOST projects was made to City Council in March. She reported that the list of projects is being collected and that the criteria to evaluate proposals have been established. There are about 50 project proposals. She listed some of the projects. These will be prioritized and presented to the City Council again. The intent is to submit all projects received to the T-SPLOST regional commission. The T-SPLOST will be on the ballot in March 2022. In response to a question about I-14, she stated that T-SPLOST does not allow for a study which should be done and needs to be a state effort. Russ Carreker reported that I-14 is not on the radar for GDOT. The evaluation of the Government Center continues and plans continue for a SPLOST vote in November 2021.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

LEGAL ISSUES

- **Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Chris Wightman, the Authority unanimously approved the Bond Resolution and ratifies the Bond Allocation Application for the Highland Terrace II Project.** Documents are on file.
- **Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Chris Wightman, the Authority unanimously approved the execution of the Declaration of Easements for the RAM Hotel project.** Document is on file.
- **Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Jacki Lowe, the Authority approved, with Alfred Blackmar and Lisa Smith recusing themselves, the easement to Georgia Power by Aflac for a solar farm on Paul S. Amos Campus in Corporate Ridge Business Park.** Document is on file.
- **Upon motion made by Chris Wightman and seconded by Selvin Hollingsworth, the Authority unanimously approved the Loan Modification for Four JS.** Document is on file.
- **Upon motion made by Chris Wightman and seconded by Jacki Lowe, the Authority unanimously approved the execution of the documents to terminate the Columbus Park Crossing Project Bond Issue.** Document is on file.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SESSION

Additional Attendees:

Billy Blanchard, Rodney Close, Betsy Covington, Tabetha Getz, R. C. Gibbs, Thom Goff, Skip Henderson, Isaiah Hugley, Dan Kinkead, Teresa Lynch, Mat Swift

LEFT MEETING:

Peter Bowden, Steve Davis, Austin Gibson, Jim Lovett, Rob McKenna

The session began with comments by Russ Carreker and Jerald Mitchell. Attendees introduced themselves.

Greater Columbus in the post-COVID economy and models of economy and community for a post-COVID world were presented by the consultant groups. Brainstorming took place on opportunities, aspirations, and challenges.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Jacki Lowe, the Authority meeting was adjourned.

By: _____
Jacki W. Lowe, Secretary

Approved by:

Russell D. Carreker, Chair

NOTE: These minutes were approved at the May 6, 2021 meeting but not signed.