



**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

The Columbia Economic and Community Development Committee met on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC. The Honorable Joe E. Taylor, Chair called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Joe E. Taylor	Chair	Present
Will Brennan	District III	Present
Tina N. Herbert	District I	Present

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Councilor Taylor said good questions have come up. As we talked about the business friendly initiatives, I have used examples of neighborhoods in this city. Several years ago, many of the initiatives derived from trying to figure out what to do in Five Points. Today, we are talking about doing this Business First initiative citywide, not just in Five Points and downtown. I want to make it clear that this is a citywide deal. We will have more impact in places where real estate might cost less than in places where real estate is more expensive.

Councilor Herbert said I appreciate that. After the meeting, I received questions about other areas. It is important to emphasize a community-wide approach. At times, we will need to make special emphasis.

Councilor Taylor said in the last meeting we talked about a recruiter. That would be citywide. We talk about food deserts, but Dr. Walters noted that there are doctor's office deserts and dentist office deserts. We want to attract eateries and grocery stores, but we want to make the soil conditions right for every kind of business that neighborhoods want to have. With the exception of grease traps, this initiative is non-discriminatory to any trade or business. It benefits the city as a whole.

1. Proactive Business Steps to Institute a Business First Environment

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Development said the first item on the agenda is the proactive business steps to institute a business first environment. We have several initiatives underway.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Sanitary Sewer Capacity Fee

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said our sewer expansion fee is charged to make sure our treatment and collections system has adequate capacity to convey waste. Every home that is built is assessed a fee based on an equivalent residential unit (ERU) of \$2,640. A new commercial establishment's sewer expansion fee is based on the anticipated flow of sewer from that business divided by the ERU. This can become large for businesses, particularly those that are being redeveloped. We wanted to look at modifications. We reduced the fee for large users in 2021. Because of this adjustment, we were able to get Mark Anthony Brewing as a customer. We looked at other utilities and best practices. If your water meter is less than 4", we will not charge an additional fee for redevelopment. We usually collect around \$2.5 million annually. We are looking at 5% in sewer expansion fees for redevelopments. It is a small economic impact for the enterprise fund, but it can be a substantial economic impact for the individual business. If they increase the meter size, the expansion fee will be reduced under a redevelopment scenario. We revised the ordinance and our legal team reviewed it. They asked for a definition of redevelopment and we provided that.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we are starting with items that may require action by the Council. We will separate the administrative changes. The committee can decide how to move forward.

Councilor Herbert asked if the 5% equals \$125,000. What does it look like for an individual business?

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said yes, out of a \$2.5 million sewer expansion fee budget. It will depend on the number of businesses. We may be looking at a delta of \$5,000 to \$10,000 instead of \$10,000 to \$25,000 if there is an upsize in meters. Most commercial establishments will not see an increase in meter size and the net effect may be zero for them.

Councilor Taylor said that is the worst-case scenario. We lose a lot of deals on lower income properties. People walk away when they have to pay a \$35,000 use fee. We hope that by giving up 5% of the tap fee, we gain a monthly customer like Mark Anthony Brewing. The cost benefit was very positive.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said the 5% impact is assuming that we do not pick up any additional business.

Councilor Taylor inquired about the meter size for a big apartment complex.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said 6" or 8". If a facility was a warehouse and then becomes a water heavy industry, that is good for us but it can also have significant impact on sewer discharge and the capacity of our pipes. We have the large user rate that can help in those instances.

Councilor Brennan asked if a 2,500 sq. ft. retail space is being renovated into a restaurant what would that tap fee be in comparison to a newly constructed restaurant.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said you might see a \$35,000 sewer expansion fee for a new development. If the meter size does not change, you would not have a fee increase for a redevelopment.

Councilor Brennan said this change encourages redevelopment.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said absolutely. The ordinance is titled sewer plant expansion fee. It is more appropriate for it to be a sewer capacity fee because it takes into account the collection system and the treatment facility. We requested that change as well.

There was consensus of the committee to move the revised sanitary sewer capacity fee ordinance forward and recommend that Council pass it.

Parking Requirements

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said Councilman Taylor challenged me to think about parking and how it affects businesses. We were initially looking at eliminating parking requirements for certain size buildings citywide. We started with 5,000 sq. ft. similar to what we had done in Five Points and around the country. In the new code, we expanded the area that has total exemptions from parking further into the core of the business district as well as into the Innovista District. The proposal reflects 7,500 sq. ft. or less citywide for any new or redevelopment. It takes into consideration further reductions for certain uses citywide. As seen in these articles about Fayetteville, Arkansas and Raleigh, North Carolina, the



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

proposal is to take that exemption of no parking requirements further and apply it to all of our mixed-use districts. This would extend this benefit to most of our major corridors in all of our districts. The impacts are business related. This does not mean that you cannot provide parking. It means that we will not be the ones to tell you how much parking to build. It impacts affordability and the environment. This is for non-residential. This would be coupled with a further reduction in requirements for some uses. It is not wholesale. It is not to anyone's detriment.

Councilor Herbert said I was in Raleigh last weekend. I do not like not being able to find parking in the commercial corridors. It may work better if you live there. I am going to do my research. Trying to find parking is a factor for me. The easier it is for me to park, the more likely I am to go. How does this change impact a person such as myself who is directionally challenged?

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said we are doing a parking study. Having appropriately priced parking is important to make sure you have an adequate supply of on-street parking. Parking Services has done a great job with wayfinding. We have to encourage the habit of parking in decks and walking.

Councilor Taylor said this would not impact the ability to find parking. We have become a downtown of vacant parking lots. These are current articles from university towns. I am discovering that Columbia has 3,000 people living in the city center. Greenville and Charleston have 9,000 people living in the city center. We need to replace some of these parking lots with buildings and tax base. We need to grow. Most people who develop buildings have to provide parking. Ben Arnold built The Palms without parking but it will help us cash flow and create nighttime demand at the garage across the street. We are eliminating the onsite-parking requirement for 7,500 sq. ft. buildings. Requiring businesses to provide parking only raises the cost of doing business in areas like North Main, Two Notch, Broad River and downtown. This is one way to encourage more locally owned and neighborhood driven businesses.

Councilor Brennan asked if this goes with the business or the entire development.

Councilor Taylor said it would go with the parcel of real estate.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said for Five Points, we interpreted it as each individual structure.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager inquired about Columbiana Drive in Harbison.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said because this is new, we can craft it as Council desires. In that case, I would interpret it as each business in a structure.

Councilor Taylor said six stores totaling 12,000 sq. ft. are not exempt. You cannot exempt one part or the other. It is not the City making the capital investment. The individual has to be the one compelled to create customers. We want to encourage more investment. Get the density of people that we need to attract businesses to that area. I support moving this forward to Council.

Councilor Brennan said I concur subject to further study of Councilwoman Herbert's concerns.

Councilor Herbert asked about the area.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said it would be all of the major corridors. I can send you a map and literature about the benefit of reducing parking minimums.

Councilor Taylor asked about the [approval] process.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said the Planning Commission for an advisory recommendation and then the City Council zoning public hearing.

Councilor Herbert said I would want to try it out somewhere to see how it works.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said we haven't had parking requirements on Main, Sumter and Assembly since the late 1970s. We expanded it in our new code to at least half of the remaining parts of downtown.

Councilor Brennan asked Krista to speak on the broader transportation picture of the intended consequences.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said by subsidizing free parking, you disincentivize the other behaviors we want to see to encourage a vital downtown. There are numerous benefits through rideshare, parking once and walking, reduced surface water and heat islands, and affordability.

Councilor Taylor said private developers would build their own parking decks because it is easier to cash flow them.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said it is lucrative. People are wondering about future decks and the ability to retrofit them.

Councilor Taylor said this might address the ability to go to more enterprise parking throughout the streets; the meters will go away. I did not see a single parking meter in New York. They had kiosks. When we do that, it will encourage greater turnover. We check meters from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We could do enterprise parking past 6:00 p.m. and compel people to park in garages. Are you in favor of moving forward?

Councilor Herbert said I am in favor of moving forward. I am going to do my research on it.

The consensus of the committee is to move forward with eliminating parking requirements across the city for developments less than 7,500 sq. ft. and to reduce or eliminate parking requirements for certain uses in mixed-use districts.

Landscape Requirements

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said somewhat related is the redevelopment of structures and the requirements with landscape buffers and street protective yards. We are looking to amend those requirements for redevelopment if those requirements result in the loss of parking. We are exempting those redevelopments to facilitate the redevelopment of buildings. We would allow the existing condition to remain.

Councilor Brennan asked if you purchase a building with a parking lot built in the 1970s without curb cuts and landscaping, would it carry forward in the same condition.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said yes.

Councilor Taylor said this derives from a project on Gervais Street. They had an existing parking lot and had to cut out multiple parking spaces to plant trees. This resulted in them having fewer parking spaces than required which then required them to rent offsite parking spaces.

Councilor Brennan asked if this would apply retroactively or prospectively.

Councilor Taylor said they could probably go back and take the landscaping out if they wanted to because of the exemptions on onsite parking requirements.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Development said they wouldn't be required to lease parking offsite if they fall under the 7,500 sq. ft. parameter.

Councilor Brennan asked if a building 7,500 sq. ft. or less with a large parking lot could be developed into something else without requirements. There are huge development opportunities if the parking lot is less than 7,500 sq. ft. There are a lot of buildings in our hospitality districts that could stand to have extra development on large lots.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said the amount of aggregated surface parking lots would astonish you.

There was a consensus of the committee to move forward with changes to the landscape requirements by eliminating buffer and street protective requirements for parking lots associated with the redevelopment of existing buildings.

Signage Requirements

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said we are reviewing our sign requirements.

Councilor Taylor said we are in the process of meeting with sign manufacturers to see what we can do to make our sign ordinance match up to other places and to provide faster and easier permitting. That will be discussed at one of our next meetings.

Overlay Districts

Councilor Taylor said we are deferring the discussion of overlay districts today.

Business Friendly Environment

Councilor Taylor reviewed the proposed actions that are underway that do not require code or ordinance changes. I want to make sure that we are not pro-business or pro-neighborhood; we are pro-city. We are making decisions that are best for the City of Columbia. That is something that City Manager Wilson is working through with staff. I went to Greenville to look at their streets. It is amazing. I found a parking space at a place (Sully's Steamers) that is getting ready to open five locations in Columbia. There are locally owned businesses everywhere. The permitting



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

process doesn't affect the code. How do we look for ways to give our prospective investors a window of time for when they can expect to receive a permit? We can create a reasonable time expectation for small, business, and large permits to be processed. The next one is to update the existing brochure that addresses grease traps.

Councilor Brennan asked if these items are coming back to the committee.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they do not have to. We are already taking these staff level steps. We just have to keep working at it and promote it.

Councilor Taylor said these are management initiatives.

Business Liaison

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said promoting and marketing the business liaison as the point of contact for assistance with project development, permitting and business needs for troubleshooting and identifying bottlenecks goes to the same thing.

Grease Trap Program

Councilor Taylor said our grease trap requirements should apply to everyone. It should apply to any hospitality business. The city gets a larger water bill, property tax, hospitality tax, some local options sales tax and water and sewer. We could do it as a rebate through the hospitality tax.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said the genesis of the program was geared towards small local businesses and not a large commercial franchise located near the interstate. We seeded it with an initial \$100,000. We can look at broadening that.

Councilor Herbert said giving capacity to franchisees who already have additional capacity is one of those considerations in determining who can benefit from the incentive.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said we didn't have as many issues with national franchises. They are used to dealing with regulatory issues. We initially saw the need with local folks.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Councilor Taylor said let's move forward and open it up for all restaurants. It is a \$5,000 cap. The Starbucks on Rosewood Drive was \$40,000. It is not a meaningful discount. We need new capital. He encouraged staff to do a cost benefit analysis.

Councilor Herbert said I am fine with moving it forward. It is fine to have the full discussion with the entire Council.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said we had an initial seed of \$100,000 from the water and sewer fund and we can look at what we might need to reseed it.

Councilor Taylor said West Columbia does a rebate of \$10,000 from the hospitality tax collected by the establishment. Look at that from a legal perspective. There is no upfront money.

Business License Improvements

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer said in the past we had a verification process for income and gross revenues that included bringing in all of your tax documents. We had a process to verify that your business and personal property tax bill was paid. You still have to tell us that you did this and give us the numbers, but we are not requiring all of the documents. This has had a huge impact on efficiency. Our new business license administrator had many complimentary discussions with customers. There were no lines out the door during our renewal period. It poses the question about having an audit process in place to verify numbers. If someone chooses to provide false information, state law has a penalty in place. I would encourage people to be accurate with their numbers.

Councilor Taylor asked when people would be able to get their initial business license application online.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer said our business license application is online as a fillable form that can be emailed to staff. We will be tracking that, too.

Councilor Taylor said we are looking at standardizing our charges in line with the county.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer said for manufacturing and retail, the county deducts revenue generated outside of the county from their gross revenue. We recognize all revenue and we are looking at allowing that same deduction. We will have to bring that back as an ordinance change.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Councilor Taylor asked the committee to support these positive changes to the business license program to include determining if the city and county are both charging only for the city/state and county/state sales taxes subject to a fiscal impact analysis. We are trying to standardize our fees and processes in an effort to eliminate any reason somebody has not to be in the city.

Councilor Herbert said it makes us more competitive.

Grease Trap Grant Program (continued)

Councilor Brennan said I want us to look at a structure like West Columbia's for a funding alternative. I am curious about how the rebate program could work in our municipality.

Councilor Taylor said our consensus is to make it a rebate program to recapture your grease interceptor expense at 50% of the cost or up to \$10,000, whichever is less.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we like that approach and would like to revisit it with our City Attorney.

There was consensus of the committee to open up the Grease Trap Grant Program to allow all businesses to recapture their grease interceptor expenses at 50% of the cost or up to \$10,000, whichever is less. This will be a rebate program funded by the hospitality tax. The remaining set aside goes back into the water and sewer fund.

2. Office of Business Opportunities Presentation - Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said we are committed to supporting those initiatives that benefit our small, minority, and women-owned businesses through commercial lending, contractor/supplier diversity, and technical assistance, education and advocacy. What we do in our office compliments the things that are taking place across the City. We have a staff of nine. We have four commercial revolving loan funds. We have made 20 loans through the Community Development Block Grant Program since its inception in 2011 and three are currently active. The Economic Development Administration legacy loan fund was established in 1988: 113 loans have been issued and 17 are currently active. We are awaiting de-federalization approval from EDA for these funds that will be used to continue our commercial revolving loan fund. The EDA Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act Fund was established in 2020: 33 loans were issued and one has been paid in full.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Councilor Taylor asked where the repaid money goes.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said it goes back into the specific fund it was made from. We accrue program income and we are able to make other loans from that same pot of money. The Columbia Economic Renaissance Fund was established in 2003 with general fund dollars: 30 loans have been issued and nine are currently active. As of February 2022, OBO had 61 performing loans totaling \$4.9 million and our default rate was at zero. Every dollar has generated \$3 in other sources of funding. The 196 loans created 1,304.5 jobs and retained 426 jobs. The Commercial Retention and Redevelopment Program target areas include Harden, Gervais, Millwood, and Taylor. We had 137 projects through the Commercial Retention and Redevelopment and Façade Programs with a public investment of \$2.24 million. We added a vacancy incentive two years ago.

Councilor Taylor asked if OBO could use CDBG and a combination of these funds to come up with a food service specialty loan program for the areas we have been discussing. It can be combined with the other initiatives. Think about the types of businesses needed in your areas and how we can target those businesses for recruitment. We can talk to the hospital about putting a combination doctor's office and pharmacy in a doctor's office desert.

Councilor Herbert said it sounds like a toolkit.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said I love the idea especially in the 29203 zip code where we do not have medical service providers.

Councilor Taylor said we have to figure out how to attract the services we need using these programs. Do we look for nurse practitioners and make the loan to buy a portable mobile clinic that we can take into the community? Be as entrepreneurial as you can.

Councilor Herbert said we are familiar with that model. CDBG funds have been used for this before.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said we used the Cares Act Fund to make a loan to a doctor in partnership with a private bank. We had a set of nurse practitioners who launched their business in 29203 and now they have a contract with Fort Jackson.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this sounds like a citywide effort that is more industry specific.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Councilor Taylor said it is very positive to target the needs of specific areas.

Councilor Herbert said the desert determines the geographic area. We have everything on Devine but not on North Main. We should create something to meet the need of what we are trying to address.

Councilor Taylor asked if we could make a loan from CDBG and bring the repaid funds back into a general loan fund that is not subject to CDBG requirements.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said our CDBG loan fund is administered in accordance with our overall commercial revolving loan fund plan. It is based on the statutory requirements of the federal programs that are the source for the funds. I can research the options. The Small Business Stabilization Forgivable Loan Program provided one-time funding to small businesses impacted by COVID. We made 322 forgivable loans totaling \$1,398,000. We have forgiven 78% of the loans and the rest will be forgiven this month. The Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Forgivable Loan Program is administered by OBO in partnership with Columbia Water. There is about \$69,000 remaining in that fund.

Councilor Taylor asked Ms. Wilson to decide who will administer the FOG Program. If they are doing a good job, there is no need to change the method.

Councilor Herbert asked if we needed to make a budgetary decision on that.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said no, particularly if we are changing course.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director reported that the 2006 Disparity Study showed that minority and women-owned businesses were underutilized in certain areas. We created other programs to help increase participation. The Mentor Protégé Program was created in 2008 and there are currently 14 construction teams and 58 professional services teams. There were 35 projects in fiscal year 2020/2021.

Councilor Herbert said that without the 20% minimum, they might only get 2% or 5%.

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said since 2018/2019, we ensure that the 20% requirement is maintained with change orders and amendments. We have 162 local business enterprises. There is discussion around changing how we define local.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Councilor Taylor said after budget season, I want to have a discussion with the Office of Business Opportunities about how we can develop more minority business participation. There is more we can do to create local small businesses and task Columbia Water with being a catalyst for the creation of small businesses. Can we create a city apprentice program to train young people on water connections straight out of high school?

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we tend to focus on water, sewer and construction. Councilman Taylor mentioned the percentages with professional services, too.

3. Marion Street High-rise - Ms. Missy Gentry, Assistant City Manager for Development

Councilor Taylor said the Housing Authority has put the Marion Street High rise up for bid. They have moved everybody into new structures somewhere else. It should have been a positive living experience. Having a boarded up high rise is not good for business. Do a memorandum today to all council members letting them know that the building is available and who to contact if they are interested in bidding.

Councilor Brennan asked about the new zoning and height restrictions.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Planning and Development Services Director said it is fifty feet.

4. Opportunities to Expand Partnership with GrowCo and Build the Fort - Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director

Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said at our last meeting, Councilman Taylor asked if we have remaining funds for special allocations. We have \$100,000 remaining in the current year. I have been talking with Chris Heivly and Joe Queenan about what the Build The Fort and GrowCo partnership looks like going forward. Where would they be interested in seeing us support them? They provided a couple of alternatives. The main thing they asked for is a new accelerator program called Builders and Backers. They would run as many small businesses through the cohort at \$5,000 per business.

Councilor Taylor said they are getting a \$25 million computer through a General Assembly appropriation. We want to make sure that the people of Columbia have access to that computer. I heard that the Boyd Foundation is looking at a significant deal and they are looking for gap funds. I recommend that we grant them \$20,000 per month for June, July and August then re-evaluate where they are. Is their work as worthwhile as it seems to be?



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said yes, sir. When they came in and we started looking at the ecosystem in Columbia, it was not driven by technology. This is meant to tap in and mine that talent in all of our local universities and put those kids in a position where they can start a technology-oriented business right out of college. We need the high growth, high wage paying, and cutting edge jobs here.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this is in line with moving our mission forward based on the level of discussions we had in trying to move forward with clarity on how to utilize the additional funds while getting away from any and every grant request. This is moving towards something transformational. I would love for this to be the first example if that is what the Council is going to support versus a pool of funds not tied to things that truly move us forward.

Councilor Brennan said we should fund things that create our innovation economy here and connect that bridge of talent to small businesses. I am excited to hear that this is floating out there for us to own along with Richland County. That is our contribution to connecting the talent from our technical schools and colleges to these small businesses, which grow into bigger businesses that will affect all hospitality districts eventually. That is the path forward.

Councilor Herbert said I am all for disruptive technology and keeping our young folks here.

Councilor Taylor asked if we are willing to pay \$20,000 per month starting on June 1, 2022.

Councilor Brennan asked what is it that we want to see from this.

Councilor Taylor said we are still in the infancy stage and I do not know what the metrics are.

Councilor Herbert suggested asking them what the investment will help them do.

There was consensus of the committee to recommend that City Council approve a \$60,000 grant at \$20,000 per month starting on June 1, 2022 to fund GrowCo and Build The Fort from the Economic Development fiscal year 2021/2022 special allocations, not fiscal year 2022/2023.

Councilor Taylor said at the next meeting, possibly in June, I want to discuss the Office of Business Opportunities and review what we pay into various economic development alliances. Let us control our own destiny with the funds we have spent before.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022**

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said many of the Business First initiatives are ready. Are you going to announce any of that today?

Councilor Taylor said let us announce all of the things that we are ready to implement today. In the next two weeks, I would love to do a breakfast with commercial realtors, developers, Mr. Brennan, Ms. Herbert, Mayor Rickenmann and key city staff at the Warmouth on North Main to make a public announcement. We can do this in June. We are ready to grow downtown and all corridors.

Councilor Herbert said I am agreeable.

Councilor Brennan said I am agreeable.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk