



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

The Columbia Economic and Community Development Committee met on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Joe E. Taylor, Jr., Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and The Honorable Will Brennan and The Honorable Tina N. Herbert were present.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Review of Economic Development Partners

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director explained that our economic development partners are third party agencies that help us with various priorities and tasks around the city generally from an economic development perspective. They help with our mission to grow the community, improve livability, and recruit and retain businesses in the city. We have partner contracts with various agencies. In 2018, we had a much larger budget. We have gradually scaled down the partner deliverables to ensure that they are concentrating on items that council is prioritizing, they are helping improve the community, and they are providing the services we need. We have a list of groups that we continue to fund for a total amount of \$308,000.

Councilor Taylor said over the course of the year, we would like to have each partner attend one of our scheduled meetings to brief us on what they expect for the next year. Our relationships and how we work together is going to be very important as we grow the economy of Columbia.

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said we funded the City Center Partnership \$70,000 each year as a 10-year contract based on the property that the city owns. That contract lapsed this past year.

Councilor Taylor said Mr. Palen and staff can decide if that goes to the committee first or to Council in the budget process.

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said the Columbia Chamber of Commerce is funded out of the general fund. We manage that but the funds do not come out of our budget.

Councilor Taylor asked if that includes BRAC support. We appreciate what the Chamber has done for our relationship with Fort Jackson.



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Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said yes.

Councilor Herbert said we are no longer funding EngenuitySC. Did we phase out any other groups?

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said it was a couple of the subsidiaries like the Fuel Cell Collaborative and NuHub.

Councilor Herbert asked if Ryan anticipates any new partners for the next budget year.

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said we haven't been approached with any requests. That would be for the committee to decide.

Councilor Taylor said over the next two months, we should look at GrowCo and what they are doing with USC at Bull Street and what we have over here.

Councilor Brennan asked if we are providing our partners with what they need to be successful in their recruiting efforts. This is something to keep in mind as we talk about metrics and whether we are successful with our new economic development plan. It is a two-way street, we need to give them the tools to recruit and retain small businesses.

2. Creation of a 5-Year Real Estate Plan

Councilor Taylor said we need to look at a five year plan for real estate. We are talking about assets owned by the city. We have a lot of non-performing assets meaning there is no building, they are not paying taxes, and they are costing us money for cleanup. The first step is to inventory everything we have and work with staff to develop a plan to convert non-performing assets to performing assets. We may have to look at putting assets like the post office back into the private sector. There are lots that will make great little new neighborhoods, affordable housing, attainable housing, rental and homeownership. As we build out our economic development department, we might be looking to get those things back into the market and recruit developers for them. I think we will come back on the market with 2221 Devine Street while maintaining the parking and using the office building to bring daytime traffic to Five Points.



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Councilor Brennan asked if we have the inventory already. The quickest path to smart growth is looking within to see what we can bring to the table and finding good partners to develop it. I am a big believer in leasing back our office space. What are our space needs? How can we leverage our finances to get the best space for our employees?

Councilor Herbert said from a residential standpoint, staff is looking at all of the lots that we have because we can partner with developers for infill development to get rid of the empty spaces and get them back on the tax roll.

Councilor Taylor said an empty space is a non-performing asset. Nothing good happens on empty lots in neighborhoods. New construction and new activity creates interest. The more residences we can bring and the more we can show possible investors that we are growing the inner-city population, the better off we will be.

Councilor Herbert said we will be increasing our density to become competitive.

Councilor Taylor said there are some city assets that we need to look at replacing. How do we get them budgeted in? How do we pay for them? How do we disposition the property that may have been used for a certain purpose beforehand. The logical first step is to review the inventory of what we have. We need pertinent information like the age and use. We can possibly convert these non-performing assets into cash for our capital program. If we were to build a new police headquarters, I don't think it would be in the same place. Some of this land may be with our development corporations. I am not sure that when college students graduate they will have something nice to move into within the city center.

Councilor Herbert said that is important because we want to keep our young and knowledge economy. Not everyone wants a 90-year old house; they want something new with tons of amenities and we need more options for them.

Councilor Taylor said density is key. People want to live downtown and walk to dinner and work.



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3. Update on Positions for the Economic Development Office

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said we have made a verbal offer to a candidate and we are waiting on a response for the recruiter position. We just got back from the Urban Land Institute's fall conference and I think some folks are coming to visit Columbia.

4. Establishing Quarterly Reporting Based on the Measures within the 2022 Economic Development Plan

Councilor Taylor said we included measures in the economic development plan. We will begin to track business license number growth year over year with quarterly updates. We will announce the number of new jobs and capital investment and we will not include non-profits. We will increase our city center population growth year over year with quarterly updates and counted by new living units announced. We may want to divide that into different territories like North Main and City Center. We will measure the increased city revenue streams, property tax, accommodations tax, hospitality tax, water and sewer revenue increase based on taps and consumption from within city projects only. What are we projecting on increases? We should benchmark this from December 31, 2022. If the committee agrees, we will track these on a calendar year basis instead of a fiscal year basis. We can get a quarterly report from our economic development department.

Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director said we also want to look at outreach and engagement with existing businesses. As the recruiters come in, we want to consider leads we are generating and how they are translating into active projects.

Councilor Taylor said you cannot spend leads and outreach but you can spend business license increases. Let's shoot to establish our benchmarks after the first of the year using December 31, 2022 as our start date.

Councilor Herbert asked if the committee is meeting next month. It would be good to know what we are going to use. I am concerned about tracking people.

Councilor Taylor said it is a tracking mechanism and we should decide how many people to allocate to a unit. Then we can look at building permits to see how many new units are being built and multiply it by whatever the census tells us the average household population is in that area. We should be fine as long as we are consistent with the multiplier.



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Councilor Herbert said I want to add an area of opportunity.

Councilor Brennan said our parking is a big part of our assets. When will the parking study be rolled out for review?

Councilor Taylor said in December.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Ms. Herbert, committee members voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 1:30 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 5 and 6**.

5. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to §30-4-70(a)(5)
 - *GSM of North Main/Peak Drift Beverages*
 - *Golden Eagle*
 - *2222 Main View Apartments*

6. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - *1225 Laurel Street*

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk