



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

City Hall—Council Chambers, 3989 Central Ave NE

Monday, May 06, 2024

5:00 PM

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Members of the public who wish to attend may do so in-person, or by using Microsoft Teams and **entering meeting ID 212 740 385 445 and passcode 32jnSy** . For questions please call the Community Development Department at 763-706-3670.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by President Szurek.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Members present: Connie Buesgens; Lamin Dibba; Kt Jacobs; Rachel James; Justice Spriggs; Marlaine Szurek

Members absent: Amada Márquez-Simula

Staff Present: Kevin Hansen, Interim City Manager; Aaron Chirpich, Community Development Director; Alicia Howe, Administrative Assistant

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the minutes of the regular EDA Meeting of April 01, 2024.
2. Approve financial reports and payment of bills for March 2024 – Resolution No. 2024-12.

Motion by James, seconded by Jacobs, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2024, AND THE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2024.

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 March 2024 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 6th day of May 2024

Offered by: KT Jacobs

Seconded by: Connie Buesgens

Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

President

Attest:

Secretary

BUSINESS ITEMS

3. Façade Improvement Grant Report Heights Grand Ballroom, 2201 37th Ave

Forney reported that this item pertains to the Heights Grand Ballroom 2024 Façade Improvement grant application for 2201 37th Ave. The ballroom is looking to install a new sign for the new business. A rendering of the proposed sign was included in the packet. The lowest bid for the sign came in at \$10,385, which is above the amount needed for the full \$5,000 grant. Community

Development Staff recommend funding the project in full as it is a major upgrade to one of the City's vacant commercial spaces and assists bringing a new business to the City. He noted the EDA has approved 4 façade improvement grant applications, approving \$19,750 this year with \$10,000 being asked for at this meeting. This leaves \$20,250 in Façade Grant funds for the remainder of the year.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Jacobs asked if there has been any conversation with the Police Department about how it might affect where they want cameras this year. Forney updated that there has been no conversation with the Police Department yet, but typically they will wait until the end of the year to see how much funding is left, let them know that amount, then ask what their priorities are.

Motion by Jacobs, seconded by Buesgens, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2024-13, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Jacobs, seconded by Buesgens, to approve Resolution No. 2024-13, a resolution 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 Heights Grand Ballroom. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-13

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 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE HEIGHTS GRAND BALLROOM

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 store fronts, increasing business vitality and economic performance, and decreasing criminal activity along Central Avenue Northeast, 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 Heights Grand Ballroom
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

Passed this 6th day of May 2024

Offered by: Connie Buesgens
Seconded by: Lamin Dibba
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

President

Attest:

Secretary

4. Façade Improvement Grant Report for 4024-4026 Central Ave

Forney reported that this item pertains to 2024 Façade Improvement Grant application for 4024-4026 Central Avenue. The property owner/business owner is applying for the façade improvement grant to install an awning on the front of the building. A rendering of the proposed awning was included in the packet. The lowest bid for the awning came in at \$15,000, which is above the amount needed for the full \$5,000 grant. Community Development Staff recommend funding the project in full as the new awning would bring continuity to the front of the building, which is located within the city’s central business district. The EDA has approved 4 façade improvement grant applications, approving \$19,750 this year with \$10,000 being asked for at this meeting. This leaves \$20,250 in Façade Grant funds for the remainder of the year.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Buesgens commented that it will look very nice and the mosaic could be freshened up.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Dibba, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2024-14, there being

ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Dibba, to adopt Resolution No. 2024-14, 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 the owner of 4024-4026 Central Ave. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-14

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 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE OWNER OF 4026 CENTRAL AVE

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 store fronts, increasing business vitality and economic performance, and decreasing criminal activity along Central Avenue Northeast, 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 Darryl Tilden
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

Passed this 6th day of May 2024

Offered by: Lamin Dibba
Seconded by: Justice Spriggs
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

President

Attest:

Secretary

5. CEE Home Energy Squad Extension

Forney reported that in 2019 the EDA started its partnership with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE), buying down the Home Energy Squad program for the residents of Columbia Heights. The Home Energy Squad program provides a variety of visits from energy experts who inspect and assess how a home uses energy. As part of the inspection, experts will offer ways to create a more energy-efficient home. The EDA has budgeted \$5,000 per year to buy down the program costs so that residents pay \$35 for an Energy Saver visit and \$50 for an Energy Planner visit, rather than \$70 and \$100 respectively. The contract entered by the EDA recently expired so staff have brought an extension to the contract for the authority's consideration. In addition to the expiration of the contract, there has also been a change regarding the program's provider. Excel Energy and CenterPoint Energy offer the Home Energy Squad Program through the utilization of providers like CEE. CEE recently renewed their contract with Excel to execute the program for Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties. After Q3 2024 CEE will no longer be the provider for Anoka County and the City will need to work with the new unnamed provider to execute the program. It is unknown to CEE who the new provider will be but staff have reached out to Excel Energy to clarify the changes. Excel will remove their portion of funding at the end of Q3 so even if the City extended the contract beyond that period the program cost would increase due Excels share being removed and reestablished with the new provider. Via Resolution 2024-15, Community Development staff are recommending that the EDA extend the buydown until the end of Q3 of 2024 at which time we will shift to the new provider but the same contract.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Buesgens asked if they know why Anoka County got dropped or if other counties were also dropped. Forney updated that he believed every other county in the metro area also got dropped because the bid came in too high. Buesgens also asked how many people take advantage of this program. Forney updated that they recently received numbers, but he does not have them with him at the moment. Chirpich updated they are not spending the \$5,00 cost-share.

Szurek asked how they informed residents about doing this. Forney stated they put it in the newsletter and advertise it through all the City events. He also stated that CEE does a great job of providing marketing material so the Communications Team can push it out, and they do about \$2,000 in revenue on average.

Buesgens asked how much the EDA has every year for this program, and if that money carries over from year-to-year. Forney updated that they have \$5,000 each year, it does carry over, is used for general EDA administration, and the funds have been recycled in fund 204.

Dibba asked what feedback they have received from residents who used the program in the past. Forney stated they have not received much feedback from residents, but they will look into surveys to get more feedback.

James stated that she got the Energy Saver visit a few years ago, it was nice for her house, and she liked it.

Motion by Dibba, seconded by Spriggs, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2024-15, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Dibba, seconded by Spriggs, to adopt Resolution No. 2024-15, a Resolution of the Economic Development Authority of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, authorizing staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the authority into a Home Energy Squad extension agreement until the end of Q3 2024. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, AUTHORIZING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE AUTHORITY INTO A HOME ENERGY SQUAD EXTENSION AGREEMENT UNTIL THE END OF Q3 2024.

WHEREAS, the Center for Energy and Environment (“CEE”) administers the Home Energy Squad Program (“Program”) on behalf of Excel Energy; and

WHEREAS, the program offers a variety of inspections from energy experts meant to identify and provide advisement on the energy efficiency of an applicant’s home; and

WHEREAS, the goals and outcomes of the program increase the energy efficiency and quality of the housing stock within Columbia Heights; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Authority entered into a contract and established the parameters to buydown a share of the City’s residents’ costs to utilize the programs inspections; and

WHEREAS, in January of 2024 that contract expired.

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

1. 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 a home energy squad extension agreement with CEE, until the end of Quarter 3 2024.
2. 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

Passed this 6th day of May 2024

Offered by: Lamin Dibba
Seconded by: Justice Spriggs
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

President

Attest:

Secretary

BUSINESS UPDATES

Forney stated the house on 39th and Central Avenue was burnt down by the Fire Department. The Department was excited it was a 2-story training burn because they are not seen very often. He updated that many people were there, and Better Futures removed a lot of the paneling and flooring. It will be up for sale at their store and the EDA is invited if they are interested in touring the facility where they sell their materials. The EDA will have demolition bids coming up. Forney also stated they will be demolishing the two properties on 39th and one at 941. Buesgens stated it was very fun to watch.

Forney updated that City Council will be considering the Housing Trust Fund. The first reading of the ordinance for establishing the Housing Trust Fund will occur at the next Council meeting and it will be open for public hearing. He added that once the Housing Trust Fund gets started, the EDA will be receiving a resolution to accept the funds and administer the funds of that Housing Trust Fund.

Forney stated he went with the Mayor and Communications team to Pizza Man, gave him his plaque, and he was very grateful.

Forney added that the EDA will be considering putting the façade improvement grant funds towards public art. The current City Code does not allow for paintings to be on the outside of any building. The City Council will be receiving some code updates before moving forward.

Buesgens asked what happened to the old library that shut down during COVID. Forney updated that they are currently operating as a daycare, from what he knows. Buesgens also asked what happened to the funding for art. Chirpich stated the funds were assigned to the SACA side of the ledger and are now gone.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jacobs, seconded by Buesgens, to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 pm. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah LaVoie, Recording Secretary