



MINUTES

Economic Development Commission
Regular Session Meeting
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 -- 6:00 PM
Jessie Mays Community Center
and also via Zoom

**COMMISSION
MEMBERS:**

Chair Eric Lawson, Vice-Chair Chris Barron, Lisa Fry, Jacquelyn Hunt, Michael Accuardi, Amy Gibson-Groat, David Amanor

**COMMISSION
MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

All members in attendance

STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Bill Reid, City Recorder Lori Lesmeister

OTHER:

Ex Officio Councilor Michele McCall-Wallace in attendance

1 LOGIN INFORMATION TO ATTEND VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89011732060?pwd=MEJlVUs5SjB4N3Z3akpZVknVUURXdz09>

Meeting ID: 890 1173 2060

Passcode: 798991

Call in (no internet)

253-205-0468

Meeting ID: 890 1173 2060

Passcode: 798991

2 CALL TO ORDER: 6:02 pm

3 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

4 ROLL CALL:

- a) All members in attendance.
Amy Gibson-Groat, David Amanor and Mike Accuardi attended via Zoom.
Ex Officio Councilor Michele McCall-Wallace in attendance.

5 PUBLIC COMMENT:

We encourage those wishing to comment to do so in advance of the meeting by emailing comments to info@northplains.org. Comments will be read into the record. Persons wishing to speak on matters not on the agenda may be recognized at this time.

- a) **No public comment**

6 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a) **Review and approval of March 5, 2025, Regular Session Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 5, 2025, Regular Session Economic Development Commission Minutes.

Moved by Jacquelyn Hung. Second by Lisa Fry.
Motion was approved unanimously.

7 UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a) **Review Survey Results**

Chair Lawson shared preliminary survey results from the chamber's survey platform. He noted that the response count was low, with only 13 total responses. The validity of some answers needed to be vetted, as they may have included test responses from chamber members. The group discussed the need to increase response rates and potentially extend the survey period.

The commission members suggested several ideas to improve survey participation:

- Redistribute the survey on a weekly basis
- Set a specific deadline for responses
- Include the survey in city announcements, press releases, Facebook pages, and newsletters
- Create a flyer with a QR code for physical distribution
- Work with Therese on broader communication strategies
- Include information about the survey in water bills

The commission decided to keep the survey open for the quarter and review the results in three months. They also discussed the possibility of conducting business walks with the chamber to gather more information and follow up on key responses. Linda Galas-Merten with Friends of North Plains Smart Growth, who lives outside of the North Plains city limits (on Zoom) asked who is responsible for the survey, who is responsible for analyzing the data and what is the final endgame of this survey.

Chair Lawson said that the members of the EDC created the questions and put this survey together. They did team with the Chamber of Commerce so that they could use the Chamber's survey platform and have access to all the contact information for the city businesses. Chair Lawson said that once the data has been collected the EDC will be looking at trends and focusing on the challenges that they are seeing in the responses so that they, along with the city, can partner with businesses to assist them with any of those challenges.

b) **Work on Q1 Council Update**

Chair Lawson proposed updating the previous quarterly report to include recent accomplishments and historical information for new city council members. The commission agreed to use the previous report as a template and update it with current information. Chris Barron volunteered to work on the update, using meeting minutes to gather relevant information.

The group discussed the importance of informing the new council about the EDC's purpose, expertise, and ongoing projects. They also noted that the update should align with the council's priorities based on business feedback from the survey.

c) **Budget Discussion - City Manager Bill Reid**

City Manager Bill Reid presented the budget discussion, covering three main areas:

- Community Development Department budget
- Economic Development Commission education and training budget
- Urban Renewal Agency budget

For the Community Development Department budget, Mr. Reid discussed the economic development planning line item, which the commission suggested renaming to "economic development professional services" for more flexibility. This budget could be used for marketing materials, consultants, or other economic development activities.

The EDC education and training budget was noted as underutilized, and Bill encouraged the commission to take advantage of seminars and training opportunities offered by organizations like Greater Portland Inc and Business Oregon.

For the Urban Renewal Agency budget, Bill highlighted several key items:

- A budget for extending the URA sunset date and updating the plan
- Property improvement grants, including the food service tenant improvement grant
- Downtown improvement projects
- Real property purchase funds

The commission discussed potential changes to the grant programs, including the possibility of creating separate categories for new businesses and existing businesses, such as facade improvement grants.

Mr. Reid also mentioned that DB Schenker would be occupying the new industrial building on West Union, bringing 64 employees to the area. Linda Galas-Merten with Friends of North Plains Smart Growth, who lives outside of the North Plains city limits (on Zoom) asked what the square footage of the DB Schenker building is. Mr. Reid stated that it is 210,000 square feet.

8 NEW BUSINESS:

9 PLANNING REPORTS & COMMENTS:

- a) **Land Use Applications - Year to Date**
- b) **Community Development Monthly Update Report**

10 STAFF COMMENTS

11 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION COMMENTS:

- a) Lisa Fry reminded the members that on the city-wide cleanup day the past two years, the members have chosen a business in town and done cleanup around that business. Last year the group planted trees on the corner where the food carts are. This year Clean-up Day is Saturday, May 12th, so that gives the group some time to

think about a business that the group would like to help. Please contact Lisa if you have suggestions.

Lisa Fry also reminder everyone that the volunteer appreciation event Noodles and Doodles is next Thursday, April 10th at Jessie Mays. It is a free spaghetti dinner for all, and she would love to see everyone there.

City Manager Reid said that the North Plains Events Association won the Oregon Ovation Award for the Elephant Garlic Festival as the best festival with a budget under \$150,000.

12 ADJOURNMENT: 7:17 pm

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 6:00 pm

Submitted by:

Lori Lesmeister

Lori Lesmeister, City Recorder

Date Minutes Approved May 5, 2025