



THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING AT 12:00 PM

33568 E COLUMBIA AVE; SCAPPOOSE, OR 97056 & MICROSOFT TEAMS (HYBRID)

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended to summarize the conversations that took place in this meeting rather than provide a full transcript. Anyone wishing to view the full conversation can find a recording of this meeting on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/iXSLc6_yIY0

Attendees: Chair Christine Turner, Committee Member Brian Rosenthal, Committee Member Sean Findon, Committee Member David Sideras, Committee Member Judy Isaman, Columbia Economic Team Executive Director Paul Vogel, PCC OMIC Training Center Director Chelsey Lynne, Port of Columbia County Commissioner Nancy Ward, Columbia River PUD Administration/Public Relations Manager Heidi Ralls, Scappoose Public Library Director Jeff Weiss, Community Development Director Laurie Oliver Joseph, City Manager Ben Burgener, Assistant to City Manager/City Planner N.J. Johnson, JJ Duehren, Port of Columbia County Executive Director Sean Clark, Port of Columbia County Communications & External Affairs Manager Gina Sisco, Ralph Culpepper

Committee Members Absent: Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker, George Hafeman, Paul Fidrych

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm by Chair Christine Turner.

1.1 Meeting Agenda

Judy made a motion to approve the April 17, 2025 agenda. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.2 Meeting Minutes

Judy made a motion to approve the February 20, 2025 minutes. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.3 Public comment

JJ: The food drive we're doing here in Scappoose was featured on Fox 12 Oregon with several reruns in the evening news slots for days. You can donate around town until April 26th. Earth Day is next Saturday, April 26th and will include the Solve cleanup along the highway, planting lilacs along Crown Z Trail, community booths, free food courtesy of Grocery Outlet and Scappoose Police Department, and an electric bike giveaway.

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.1 Updates

- Columbia Economic Team - Paul



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- Project Spice has eliminated Texas so it's down to Scappoose and Quebec. We expect a decision by the end of May.
 - Two feasibility studies for power transmission are underway.
 - Small Business Administration loans are becoming harder to get and more expensive.
 - We have social media and marketing classes coming up as well as a Small Business Fair for folks who provide services to small businesses (e.g. law, accounting, graphic design, etc.).
 - Provided a presentation at the Governor's Tourism Conference. It was announced that this year's tourism grant will focus on access.
- Scappoose City Council - NJ
 - We held the Annual Town Meeting on April 5th.
- PCC OMIC - Chelsey
 - Internship program for youth is on the horizon.
 - Full academic enrollment in the current spring term.
 - Met with CC Rider to discuss improving public transit and having a spot here at PCC in their route.
- Columbia River PUD - Heidi
 - Starting a cost-of-service study soon.
 - We just completed a clean audit.
 - I will be retiring this month.
- Scappoose Public Library - Jeff
 - Scappoose Outdoor Fun Festival is on Saturday, May 31st from 10:00 am-8:00 pm.
- City of Scappoose - Laurie
 - Ofstad Self-Storage, Grace Lutheran Children's Center, and Addison Apartments are in completeness review.
 - We've been working through our UGB analysis and Transportation Planning Rule analysis as part of the 50-Year Plan. Our last Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be May 20, 2025 at 6:00 pm.
 - OXBO construction documents are almost ready for review.
 - Huser Estates and Buxton Ranch are under review.
 - Dutch Canyon IV and Keys Reservoir are under construction.

2.2 Update from Port of Columbia County

Sean C: The Port is responsible for 37 businesses, 480 jobs, \$30 million in labor income, \$90 million in total income, \$17.9 million in state tax revenue, and \$16.6 million in local tax revenue. The Port also has several liabilities including site cleanup, environmental liabilities, and grants we used to rely on that are in danger of being discontinued by the federal government. A recent bill passed that mandates retrofitting fuel stations within 10 years in preparation for the Cascadia earthquake. Our upcoming budget includes putting the tax back on the community. We haven't levied this tax since 2020 since the



Commission believed the Port was in a good place financially. Now, it could provide an additional \$500,000 in revenue.

Chair Christine Turner: Does this go to the voters?

Sean C: No, it comes as a recommendation from our Budget Committee and then it is a Commission decision.

Brian: When Next Renewable said they needed a rent reduction or they were out, the Port gave them a massive reduction in rent. If the Port held their fiduciary responsibility and negotiated with them, you wouldn't be in this financial situation.

Sean C: Would you want to pay full price for your house before it was built or do you think it makes more sense to pay earnest money and take out a loan? The Commission decided that \$15,000 a month was better than \$0 a month. The most important point is that the difference between \$15,000 and \$108,000 is being deferred with 18% interest so it's not like we're giving them a free pass. They're tied up in environmental studies and permitting so it's not like they could break ground and just aren't.

2.3 Introduction to Downtown Overlay

Laurie provided a presentation that can be viewed from 57:44-1:07:16 in the [meeting recording](#). The audio is absent from most of the presentation due to technical difficulties but the content is well covered in the slides presented.

2.4 Discuss Work Plan for Achieving 2025 EDC Goals

Chair Christine Turner: The goals we voted on were 1) Actively support hotel development; 2) Review Downtown Overlay; 3) Reach out to local businesses to better understand their needs; and 4) Complete the Economic Development Strategic Plan. On Goal 3, have we ever reached out to local businesses in an organized way?

NJ: As part of CET, we recently interviewed nearly 100 local businesses to learn about them, what their challenges are, and what they think of Columbia County as a place to do business. This will result in a report and actionable steps we can take to support businesses in response to their feedback.

Chair Christine Turner: I'd like to host businesses in a more informal way where we're mingling with them instead of sitting up here asking them questions. Tell me what's going on with the hotel development.

Laurie: Scappoose Hospitality Group is looking in town and made an offer on a Wagner Court property. They've been recently discussing acquiring a property from the Port. I could see this group writing a letter of support for the development as they go through land use but not much else.

Brian: We could also consider incentives such as a transient lodge tax deferral. Obviously, if they're going to move forward without incentives, we should save our money.



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3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT MEETINGS

- Next meetings
 - May 15, 2025 at 12:00 pm
 - June 26, 2025 at 12:00 pm
 - July 17, 2025 at 12:00 pm
- Earth Day Cleanup & Celebration
 - Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 7:30-3:30 at Heritage Park
- Scappoose Outdoor Fun Festival
 - Saturday, May 31, 2025 at Heritage Park

4. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.