



THURSDAY, MAY 15, 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/ohSXseAimpE>

Attendees: Chair Christine Turner, Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker, Committee Member Brian Rosenthal, Committee Member George Hafeman, Committee Member Paul Fidrych, Alternate Committee Member Brenda Michael, City Councilor Jeannet Santiago, Columbia County Commissioner Casey Garrett, Port of Columbia County Commissioner Nancy Ward, Columbia River PUD Administration/Public Relations Manager Gina Sisco, Scappoose Public Library Director Jeff Weiss, City Manager Ben Burgener, Assistant to City Manager/City Planner N.J. Johnson, Mayor Joe Backus

Committee Members Absent: Sean Findon, David Sideras, Judy Isaman

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm by Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker (in chair).

1.1 Meeting Agenda

Paul made a motion to approve the May 15, 2025 agenda. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.2 Meeting Minutes

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

1.3 Public comment

No public comment.

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.1 Economic Development Strategic Plan Workshop

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: We'd like to put a bow on this plan and have it be completed. NJ, what are next steps after this conversation?

NJ: I envision you all discussing and making any last changes, finalizing it at the next EDC meeting, and then presenting it to Council. As we've discussed from the impetus of this, this is not a master plan in the way the City typically uses that phrase; it's more of a document to bring everyone to a common understanding of what the City's goals and strategies are on a very broad level. After this will likely be a Downtown Strategic Plan



that Laurie is currently seeking grants for.

Paul: Brian, you say in Appendix B that you have vacant buildings. Why is that?

Brian: A lot of business types that used to need physical spaces in a town like Scappoose no longer do because of changes in technology and the economy. I used to rent to a photography studio and I don't expect I ever will again. When people say that we need more commercial retail spaces, what they really need is a 500-square-foot unit for \$800 a month. That doesn't exist because you can't make any money off that. We can develop downtown if there are more food options there. Another element to retail is that there needs to also be a service component to it like a frame shop. If it's just retail, people are going to think of Fred Meyer, Walmart, and Amazon more often than they think of a new small business that's just has the product. I've had a lot of retail tenants over the years, none of them have succeeded, and they're all disappointed at how few people utilize small local businesses.

Paul: It would be great to have commercial and industrial structures that allow you to expand as your business grows. It could be mixed use with residential, office, and retail.

Brian: I think that's a really good point. A consistent problem with Columbia County in general is that we devote all our attention to big fish businesses and just let medium and small fish swim by. I'd like to make sure we're maintaining an adequate amount of industrial land to accommodate all sizes of industrial development.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: I can put that in.

Brian: I would remove "Eliminate or reduce SDCs" from Programs, Actions, and Levers because it's just not viable for the City to do that.

NJ: You could replace it with "defer SDCs" so that developers have their financing in place before paying them.

Brian: That's a good idea. I also don't like public-private partnerships. It tends to be they split the work but the private side runs away with all the money.

NJ: You have to be careful with them. In addition to financing, a city our size can't drop everything and do a ton of work to support a single project.

Ben: It of course depends on how you structure it. Gresham is really proud of theirs and seems to work for developers, the City, and the community.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: These are great suggestions. I'm going to take these and make some edits. If you have any other redline comments, let me know well before the next meeting and I will get those in. Next meeting, we can do a final thumbs up on this.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT MEETINGS

- Next meetings
 - June 26, 2025 at 12:00 pm



SCAPPOOSE
Oregon

- July 17, 2025 at 12:00 pm
- August 21, 2025 at 12:00 pm
- Scappoose Outdoor Fun Festival
 - Saturday, May 31, 2025 from 10:00-8:00 at Heritage Park
- Scappoose Farmers Market
 - Every Saturday from 9:00-2:00 on SE 2nd Street

4. Meeting adjourned at 12:46 pm.