

**Minutes  
Columbus Community and Industrial Development Corporation  
Board of Directors Meeting**

The Columbus Community & Industrial Development Corporation met in Regular session on Monday, **February 18, 2019** at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 605 Spring Street, Columbus, Texas. The following CCIDC Members were present:

President	-	Bruce Tesch
Vice President	-	Andy Nunmaker
Treasurer	-	Ryan Thomas
Secretary	-	Joel Usher
Board Member	-	Larry Solansky
Board Member	-	Chuck Hall
Board Member	-	Dwain Dungen (absent)
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
Assistant City Secretary	-	Dinah Jacobs

**1. Call to Order.**

President Bruce Tesch called the CCIDC meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.**

The Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were led by President Bruce Tesch.

**3. Consent Agenda:**

- a) Approval of Invoices.
- b) Approval of January 2019 Financial Statements.
- c) Approval of regular meeting minutes for January 22, 2019.

Andy Nunmaker made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Larry Solansky seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Nunmaker, Solansky, Hall, Thomas, Usher, and Tesch  
Absent: Dungen

The motion passed.

**4. Citizens' Presentations and Comments.**

There were no Citizen presentations or comments.

**5. City Manager's Report: Sales Tax.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave the report on sales tax, stating sales tax was up compared to this time period last year. Sales tax portion for CCIDC was \$52,721 compared to \$43,594 the same time last year. The County saw an increase as well, but both the City of Weimar and the City of Eagle Lake saw decreases. Warschak stated this was reflective of December collections.

**6. Discussion and Action, if necessary, to award the Mowing/Maintenance Bid for the Crossroads Business Park.**

There were two bids submitted and opened at the meeting. John Maertz bid was turned in on 2.14.19 at 8:10am. Brushline turned a bid in on 2.14.19 at 4:34pm.

Tesch opened the Maertz bid which was \$2500 x 4 mowings/year = \$10,000.00 without tract D1 being previously plowed; \$1700 x 4 mowings/year = \$6,800.00 with tract D1 having been plowed; \$1,000.00 x 4 mowings/year = \$4,000.00 without tract D1 entirely. Tesch stated that tract D1 (previously the E'Kabel property), was recently cleared and hydro axed, but needed to be plowed. Tesch and Warschak had discussed possibly getting a separate plowing bid for that property.

Nunmaker opened and read the Brushline bid which was \$1,100.00 x 4 mowings/year = \$4,400.00.

Tesch stated the bid request was for 4 mowings/year unless additional mows from the Board are requested. There was discussion on the two bids and their differences. Tesch stated they both bid on the same properties, Maertz just broke his bid down. Nunmaker questioned if we had done business with Brushline before. Tesch stated that Maertz currently had the maintenance contract, but Brushline had it two years ago. Larry Solansky stated that the spread between the two bids concerned him. With further discussion, it was noted the properties to be mowed were in the bid packet, and that it clearly stated, "Bidder has examined the site and locality of where work is to be done". All tracts to be mowed were listed on the bid request.

Andy Nunmaker made a motion to accept Brushline's bid of \$4,400.00 for 4 mowings/year and award them the mowing maintenance contract. Ryan Thomas seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Nunmaker, Solansky, Hall, Thomas, Usher, and Tesch  
Absent: Dungen

The motion passed.

## **7. Discussion and Action, if necessary, regarding Acornseekers.**

Nunmaker stated he has not heard from Acornseekers but he did hear from a couple of the farmers and ranchers that are affected by this whole situation, and they are not happy. Acornseeker's new CEO made a proposal to them which Nunmaker said is not hearsay; this is how he understands it. Acornseekers made an offer on the existing livestock that does not even come close to covering their costs, so for them to accept the offer, it would be a loss situation; and then going forward, there would be a new contract. Nunmaker said that he would like to invite and have the farmers affected by this come to the next meeting for the Board to hear their side of things. Nunmaker proceeded in saying that we have heard from Acornseekers, and what we heard from them, sounded really good. Now we are hearing another part of the story. These are taxpaying citizens of the community and we should give them an opportunity to tell us how they feel. Solansky stated he had visited the Flatonia area and talked to an owner over there. That owner told of horrendous stories including pigs being starved. Solansky checked out Acornseeker's website and pointed out they have a 658 "something" Road in Louise listed as one of their locations in addition to the Flatonia location. Upon visiting the Louise location, Solansky found there to only be a vacant building with grass grown up everywhere. Solansky stated he had talked to the gentleman who had leased the building for storage and that the building had been built by someone in Florida, which Solansky assumed, but not confirmed to have been Sergio. With still more research at the appraisal district, Solansky found the property now belongs to a Chinese guy. It appears the deal fell through for storage for Acornseekers. Solansky continued that he had heard stories from three Colorado county residents who state they cannot stand to do business with them after Acornseekers broke promise after promise to them. One of the residents even held the pigs hostage in order to get his money. Another merchant in town stated he would not do business with them for cash. Solansky went on to say he still wants to visit the processing plant in Brookshire. Nunmaker said it has been around forever. Solansky wondered if they were owed any money. Acornseeker's kill plant is in East Bernard, but there was question as to where they are holding their inventory, because Acornseekers is not allowed back in Flatonia, and there is nothing in Louise.

Discussion continued in regards to hogs that were to be picked up and paid for when they became of age and weight to finish out on acorns. Acornseekers kept pushing the farmer back month by month and when they were picked up, the farmer was told he would be paid tomorrow, but payment was never made. There was discussion on Acornseeker's advertising and marketing campaigns. Solansky put it in country boy terms of "all flash and no powder". Nunmaker stated he had seen a very good article on them in the *Rock & Vine* Hill Country magazine, but for the Board to make a more informed decision he felt that the people who live here and deal with them should be invited to come and have their voices heard.

Nunmaker went on to say no application or financials had been submitted when Thomas inquired about their application. Tesch said they have all of the paperwork to complete. Usher remarked it had been four years now, right. Tesch stated yes, but with the new investors, no application had been completed or submitted. From further discussion, it was pretty clear from Acornseeker's new investors that funds were not an issue and Nunmaker confirmed they are a huge European company, but it has more to do with how they are going to come into the community and treat the residents currently living here. Solansky indicated they are large, large, large money, with Nunmaker replying, yes in seven figures.

No action on this item at this time.

**8. Discussion and Action, if necessary, regarding any prospective companies interested in land at the Crossroads Business Park.**

Tesch reported that Premier Concrete had contacted Assistant City Secretary Jacobs for information at the Industrial Park. They are a company based out of Louisiana and Houston, Texas, and they build cement blocks. Their specialty and biggest product is erosion control blocks. They are looking in this area because the sand and gravel is in this area and trucking the materials is driving up costs. In speaking with them, they are looking to spend \$6-10 million in infrastructure; initially hire 12 employees and then increase that number to 80 within a year. Jacobs has sent them the application. They need 15-20 acres. Their inquiry about the price of land included only conversation and communication, with no negotiations. Tesch stated he had done business with them in the past and they are a strong company.

Tesch stated he was expecting a call from Colorado Materials, but had not heard back from them. They had previously indicated they were interested in talking, but Tesch did not know their feelings. "I just don't know". Usher inquired if Tesch had reached back out to them again. Tesch replied they had indicated they were coming in January; then February; but I don't know if this is going to happen after the last episode, saying I don't know if they are hesitant, depressed, upset, or don't care.

Thomas then interjected, with your permission Mr. President; I would like the floor to speak for a few minutes on what I have witnessed recently with my time on this board. I want to be clear I have not spoken with any board members about these views. These are my views and my views alone. I haven't spoken much while sitting on this board, but now I feel I must.

- These comments are not specifically about Colorado Materials, but about how the entire "Process" was handled. I feel (in this instance) And let me be clear- this has nothing to do with Colorado Materials- it has to do with the process and guidelines we are to follow as potential companies contact CCIDC with interest in the land
- This is a bit personal- my father in law was one of the key people long ago who had the vision as mayor, to purchase this land for future development to help the city grow its tax base and create jobs and commerce.
- I feel like what has happened over the past few months has been a bit of an opinionated op-ed takeover by the local news media in regards to prospective customers.
- And let me be clear- I (and we the board) have no clue how we stand with Colorado Materials or for that matter- any future prospective company.
- But I know this- We were in no way trusted to do our jobs, and fully vet and investigate this company. We were not allowed to use our own judgment, be able to council, and weigh the pros and cons, to go visit existing sites, or use our best judgment of this or any potential company that shows interest. Instead, what has seemed like an almost personal vendetta of sorts from our local newspaper has put a roadblock into this company potentially purchasing this land with funds this city could dearly use. Going forward, like for this concrete company, do we need to get the newspapers approval of companies before we can move forward with our process? I don't want you to make relations and then find, oh, making concrete blocks creates some dust, and some noise. Need to figure that out going forward so we don't get hamstrung.
- We have a city manager that is doing everything in his power to modernize and clean up an archaic existing utility infrastructure. (we need funds for these improvements) He's using duct tape and band aids, and that money could have really helped out.
- From what I and other citizens read in the paper, the way it seems- the CCIDC is not trusted, and not smart enough to do their jobs to help this town and to decide what's best for this town and what they were appointed to do. It just really struck a nerve with me, every time I opened the paper, that is what I saw. I don't know the meaning of it. I just don't know why we didn't have a chance to do our job because we live in this community as well.
- People wonder why in today's media landscape, that news outlets can't be fully trusted anymore.
- In closing- I was asked and appointed to be on this board. I'll admit at first I had no idea what this board's job was and our true purpose. As a current citizen where I have a family and kids that are being educated and raised here, own a small business here, I want more for this town than just what this small board seat allows me to do. This town as of now (and again from my eyes) seems to be stuck in neutral. We have people in leadership that are doing their best, the former Mayor, the Mayor Pro-Tem, to help our downtown area- but compared to our neighbors in terms

of commerce/retail development we are failing. The Chamber of Commerce is doing everything it can to help promote our town. We have river frontage that seems to be completely forgotten. We look like we are pulling a stagecoach. Look at Fayetteville, Round Top, and La Grange, their town squares are booming. And I don't know the rules and the by-laws and Bruce can set me straight, but I feel like we could have used that money if we had sold to them, or any other future company to help revitalize downtown; to help Donald with water and sewage issues; to help get this community back on the fast track and possibly get some retail, restaurants, and other potential businesses going in this town.

- My plea to the news media is to stop scaring people unless it is truly legitimate. I see so many other issues that need to be addressed - as you drive around Columbus, you see run down trailer parks in plain view on major streets-current businesses with graffiti on them and a town square that seems to be "off limits" when it comes to retail development. And I have no idea, we may have investigated Colorado Materials and come to the conclusion that 'heck no' we do not want them here, but we never got a chance. And they were willing, from what I know, to pay quite a bit an acre for that land. This has to change if this is a place we want to see grow economically and attract businesses and families. I've been quiet six months and I can't help it every time I open the paper and read something. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

Tesch responded, my point of view, I support what you have to say 100%. You know we are here as a Board. Our job is to the Industrial Park and to get companies in there. That's why we put the website up. And yes, to answer your question, Premier Concrete is TCEQ qualified and they will be through here. They make noise, they have lights, there is dust, and they have traffic. But I don't understand the process either. If it is not in the guidelines, it should not go out to the Park. That's our job. Then we send it to the City letting them know what we've done and our conclusions and this is who we'd like to put out at the Industrial Park. Why it has to go to P & Z for the next step, I don't know. Nunmaker stated that we did our job and we hit a point where we could go no further. Tesch went on to say I'm supporting Thomas here, what we see and what we support is one thing. P & Z is just another panel of the same local people that are the same as we are, but now they see something different because of what the news media prints. That's all I've got to say.

Solansky spoke stating he did some background checking and everything he saw was positive. He visited Victoria and saw that plant. It was a model plant. Solansky believes that they have moved to just this side of Flatonia; all new equipment, just like they said it would be; no dust to see; it is a beautiful place. I too can't believe they were turned away by P & Z just because they did not fully understand the process of the business and the effects of the influences that caused it to stall at a time they could not afford it to stall. He had to move because the highway is going to be resurfaced – Thomas interjected, "whether we want it or not". Solansky said that he had to be ready. Thomas replied that we are going to just give those dollars to another community; Solansky replied, "Exactly".

Solansky continued saying he feels it is off the table. They have made up their mind that we are not going to make a deal with them. As a Board, we approved the sale of the land, but the process of P & Z with all of their same repeated questions upset them. Tesch responded that he did not blame them, and had the news media been different, in a positive way, P & Z would have approved them the first night. Just saying. Tesch then remarked, just as long as everyone is aware, Premier Concrete is basically the same thing. We do not know what they want, what they are offering, or if they will even turn in an application.

Thomas responded since it is water under the bridge now, and I just want to make sure that moving forward, we can handle things the way they are supposed to be handled. We all live here as well. There is no way anyone on this Board would allow someone in without being truly vetted and doing our research. Tesch responded he felt that way with the by-laws that our hands are somewhat tied on a lot of situations. There was discussion about the by-laws and possible changes that might be able to be proposed for the future.

There was no other discussion about any prospective companies for the Industrial Park.

Nunmaker asked when Premier would put their application in. Tesch replied that he spoke with them on February 7<sup>th</sup>, and Jacobs had emailed them the application that day.

**9. Executive Session: In accordance with Texas Government Code, Subchapter D, Section 551.071 consultations with attorney, Subchapter D, Section 551.072 deliberation regarding real property and Section 551.087 deliberation regarding economic development.**

This item was not needed.

**10. Reconvene into Regular Session and Consideration and Action, if any, regarding Executive Session, deliberations regarding real property and economic development.**

This item was not needed.

**11. Discussion of items to be placed on future agendas and announcements.<sup>2</sup>**

Bruce Tesch - announced that he had attended the Comedy Club at the Opera House Saturday night. They are doing good things to get people downtown. Casino Night will be Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Ryan Thomas – Billy Brown, owner of the Big Easy had contacted and spoke at length with him, not knowing he was on the Board. Brown indicated that he's got big plans for this City and wants to personally spend his own money to help revitalize it. Like creating a river walk, buying run down properties, promoting retail, restaurants; things to help wake this town up. Thomas urged members that if they see Brown out in the community to shake his hand and thank him. Thomas thought Brown would want to come and speak to the Board in the future. It is exciting that someone like that with resources, power, and backing is looking to help the town.

Tesch asked if Acornseekers needed to be placed on the agenda. Nunmaker said he'd talk to the folks and then let him know if they needed to be placed on the next agenda.

There were no other comments or suggestions of items for the next agenda.

**12. Adjournment.**

Bruce Tesch adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

President:  


Attest  
Secretary:  
