

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES**

**REAP Business Meeting**

January 13, 2022

12:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID# 615-031-3051

The monthly meeting of the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Executive Director Kip Cheroutes, who welcomed the attendees.

**The following Board Members were present:**

Lynn Baca	Jeff Baker	Wil Chase	Loretta Daniel
Michelle Gayeski	Kirk Holwell	Kevin Hougen	Frank Linnebur
Tom Turrell	Becky Zierer		

**Guests attending were:**

Nicci	Beauprez	Adams County
Tracy	Carter	RE/Max
Kip	Cheroutes	Reap
Marilyn	Cross	CDOT
Maxwell	Daffron	Adams County
Nichole	Harrell	I-70 Communities that Care
Steve	Hebert	Town of Bennett
Steve	Loeffler	CDOT
Kathy	Mahan	Rea[
Whitney	Oakley	Town of Bennett
Justin	Reyher	Beacon Real Estate
Ethan	Rouse	Adams County
Ferdinand	Rouse	ED Council of Colorado
Robbin	Schincke	Morgan Community College
Kathy	Smiley	I-70 Publishing

Libby	Tart	Adams County
Shanelle	Watts	Arapahoe County
Lynette	White	Town of Bennett
Dave	Wise	Dave Lynn Wise Architects

**Approval of November 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

Minutes were approved as submitted.

**Chairman Report:**

**Executive Director Report:**

We are off to a good start with the 2022 Reap brochure. We are working on a new strategy to reconnect to Directors and scout out new directors. Denver Airport has become a new member of Reap, they reached out to us. This leads me to the first project Kathy and I have underway. I think high school kids here are a part of an economic development solution, a future generation workforce. I want to make the connections between high school kids here and job centers in and around the Denver Metro Area. The first one we are nailing down is the airport, the airport and Byers High School. Yesterday Kathy and I talked to Byers Principle and Counselor . Rachel Gruber has arranged a bus to pick up kids from Byers in the spring for a day trip to the airport. They will tour airport city, what makes an airport run, the mechanics, engineering, traffic control, ground traffic control, what are those potential jobs in the future? We hope to make this a pilot project. If we can fill up a bus with Byers kids, we can also fill up a bus with kids from Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg and Deer Trail. Our hope is to make this a repeating field trip for kids. Also, there is Core Cooperative who is willing to host a show and tell for kids at their new office. Kathy and I will be working on this so kids can see what is going on in the electronic, transmission and the solar energy world. Core uses drones in their maintenance, inspection of power lines and power towers, opening kids eyes up to how drones play a part in power and electrical transmission. Project item #2 is transit. Colorado Department of Transportation(CDOT) has committed a little over \$1,000,000 to provide some kind of transit system from Limon to Denver, it will be a bus that CDOT are committing to. There is a lot of information needed to provide a sustainable bus service. Reap’s role in this will be one of a survey nature. Using communication tools, we are going to engage public interest in this service on who will use it and where they would use it to get to. The first will be to survey the interest in the I-70 Scout. Reap will place an ad in the Scout in the very near future for the people that read the Scout to send in their opinions. A co-sponsor with this ad is the Transportation Solutions for Arapahoe County, they are a non-profit in Arapahoe County that’s interest is in transit. In March we will have a guest speaker the CDOT guy that is in charge of this bus service. He is the guy that has committed the funding for this service. The 3<sup>rd</sup> priority is something I need to get feedback from the Reap Board Members and others, the electrical charging station. The State of Colorado has a new enterprise fund with a pot of money for electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations. This money will go to communities for

the planning and construction of EV charging stations. Priorities will be given to interstate highways; the other is what they refer to as range anxiety. In my opinion Deer Trail would be a location for an EV recharging station. Reap would go to CDOT and advocate for this recharging station. When you have an EV station you can wrap related businesses around that station. This funding comes from a .06 cent added fee that comes from home deliveries that goes to the State.

### Guest Speakers:

#### **Dave Wise, Principal of Dave Lynn Wise Architects**

As an architect and an architect who spends a large time of my work interacting with larger groups on issues beyond buildings. I do get involved in many cases with these bigger policy discussions, land use policy issues and design quality with bigger institutions and entities that control multiple buildings, districts and cities. I want to discuss in detail how people live and that relates to how they may want to do things differently. I think it's always helpful to discuss larger trends that may or may not sound familiar or relevant to any particular community. I will run through some of the topics I've been interested in that could be possibly relevant to your part of the State. I have been doing a couple of interesting projects in the eastern plains, one in Cope and one in Akron Colorado over the last year or more. Historic preservation had helped me keep in touch with broader issues in both of those communities. I did an addition to the school in Akron, which in an architect point it really opens up issues again that go beyond that particular project. It goes into how communities control their own destiny, how they set goals and how they avoid being ripped off. With transit many of are affected by whether we are in a rural area or a more urban area. I've highlighted five of these, I will list them off for you. Working remote whether you are working in a rural or urban area is an important factor in how business is run and how people want to live. The second which relates to that is the high cost of housing which means it may affect you personally, it may affect other people in a community and whether their situation is stable or whether that presents challenges to stay where they want to be and doing what the like to do in terms of everyday routines. The third topic is weather extremes, and this has showed up across the board in so many different ways and how we help people in need in terms of building. The fourth topic is alternative energy. In many cases means many different ways to use electricity. The fifth topic is focus of community in terms of public space, where we all have the opportunity to meet up and encounter each other, know each other, and exchange ideas. I will expand on those. On the remote topic some things we are seeing directly translate to policy changes in some communities. The urgency has come up in rural communities. I want to work from home and other people want to do that and how do I formalize that and made that a normal set up. I think a lot of the improvise has created limited success. It's actually not uncommon now with almost every home we work on there is pretty significant need for one or two office workspaces. I feel the configuration of a house has changed. Housing cost is the newly allowed to create additional living units in a house you already own which relates to the high housing cost which is number 2. The other thing about remote work is my wife and I escaped to a cabin we are building and we spend the last year and a half outside of our permanent house. Fortunately, in my work a lot of my clients never noticed. A young fella that works for me commented we haven't been in the same room in over 12 months. I didn't notice that we had been in regular contact with video

conferences and produced so much work. At first, I felt very uncomfortable not having my file cabinets and conference table, but I found out I could do 90% of my work without those things. Remote also means I won't be going into the office and could work somewhere else that may be much more fun. Many people have become huge fans of sitting in a public place like a coffee shop and knowing other people are in that space. Even though they are not affiliated, they are all working. I think it's become a new public space. I want to emphasize how attractive that has become as a workplace and something more civic like a typical office. With regard to high housing costs, I think the high cost of owning and the great allure of selling is upsetting the stability of communities and neighborhoods. It could be damaging, exciting, it could be a great upgrade, it could be gentrification. We used to praise people moving into neighborhoods and now we are worried they challenge the economic stability of a neighborhood. Even in Akron now housing is unaffordable. Now my relatives are refugees back in Akron where costs spiked. It was in fact a place to start over, a place to regroup, a dignified way to start at the bottom and work your way into a stable fulfilling life. I worry that the first rung of the ladder may be disappearing. I think it's important for communities to figure out, especially keep that wonderful aspect of accessibility and affordability. We all know that great neighbors, great friends, great people don't have to be high net worth people, yet they make very important contributions in any community especially in small communities. I worry in the case of my own hometown that ability to show up and start over in a complete community not segregated to a low-income area, not trapped in a low-income environment but to be a part of the community no matter what your status. Rural areas have been a great contributor to the high cost of housing. In regard to weather extremes, it is affecting us. The issue of cooling buildings and thinking in more terms of desert design is where I got my undergraduate study in Arizona State. In Colorado typically we are all more concerned in staying warm in the winter. I see trends now and of course fire mitigation as part of that I see architect, builders and code officials seeing more extremes with hot and dry temperatures. Schools are starting earlier, and heat is becoming more of an issue. We have built a generation of schools through mass state funding, and they may all have cooling deficiencies in spite the fact they may be newer buildings. To me that is a significant concern. The cost of fixing these buildings is becoming almost unaffordable. Especially in places like eastern Colorado we need to think how we build, plant shade trees, how we take advantage of breezes, do we do earth integrated buildings which was a strong trend in the 70's? We are seeing more and more building code changes in regard to energy. The topic of alternative energy relates almost directly to that and that's my item 4. When we look at electrical power, how it's generated and how it's used, I know that wind and solar on a massive scale have all sorts of controversial aspects to them. Some of these technologies make work more efficient, safer and ideally less expensive, and lower maintenance related to some of the electrical building systems. We have all seen a revolution in lighting costs in LEDs. It's not just the usage out of the lamp, we have discovered with the low temperature we can sneak lighting in all places. Lighting is not only a lighting fixture it's a little ribbon of light tucked up under a ledge or under a countertop. The building becomes the light fixture. Now we are able to target light wherever we need it. We don't need that stark light as in institutional buildings anymore. Building are much more comfortable now by these technologies. The final topic huge and worthy of discussion is civic space, communities and how we gather. There has been discussion for decades, is main street dying, does

main street exist and clearly main street is changing. Traditionally in the US, main street is a straight street, and we all know that has died out in many communities. In Akron main street is hanging in there and we are in the process of restoring the oldest building there. People are interested in this common space even if it's not clear what it's economic future is. The one place where we can get a lot of energy and dialogue about civic space in small towns through historic preservation and community. A lot of money comes from casino gambling in Colorado. The money is there and if you are willing to do the paperwork, I think it's an extremely good resource for communities large and small. I'm amazed the power of one building can be giving a town a sense of something in common. We restored the courthouse in Akron years ago but I think main street is more important, it has a commercial and daily aspect to it. High speed internet is my civic space topic because there are some things online now that are 3D environments that you can explore using virtual reality tools and now, they are selling real estate in virtual reality and does this make any sense? You can visit a shop and buy clothes, look at them and try them on and choose to buy. So clearly that could be a shared space. Certainly, even though I'm not fully onboard with it, virtual reality does become positive communities, whether it's Facebook or other forms that are available. I'm certain virtual reality does present an opportunity for communities remote and otherwise to form and actually become a meaningful place for people. Even though we know there are negative sides to this, with the right people they can become a meaningful space. I would be more than happy to answer questions or elaborate on them.

**Kip Cheroutes:** Thank you Dave. I'm going to put on the spot two commissioners that we have. Lynn Baca representing Adams County and Jeff Baker representing Arapahoe County and I would like to give them an opportunity to say hello and comment on what you hear from Dave and what you see in your respective counties?

**Lynn Baca:** Happy New Year and great to see you Kip. Lynn Baca Commissioner of Adams County and District 5 which is in the Reap geographical area. I really appreciate your presentation, Dave. These are things that we are working through here at the county and it also has to do with planning. Adams County is making a major plan update and it's called Advancing Adams. We hope to get it done by the first quarter or first part of the second quarter. Those are updates to parks, recreation and open space and transportation. We are going over the major zoning overlay mostly in central Adams County. What we are seeing is that as government we have a major influential part of how people travel, where people live, an entertainment centers, open space, where we put in employment centers because it plays into transportation. Transportation, needs, infrastructure assets, how we build out and how we will travel in the future and so I'm interested Kip in the work you are undertaking there at Reap. We are looking at planning being the baseline in government of what activities we put in place effect the future. The future is not tomorrow, it's 10, 20 years down the road. It's interesting as you dove tail electric vehicles, and recharging stations. I want to touch on housing. The crunch we see in housing is no fault of the builders because the demand is there. The trend back in the 80's was starter homes. You are new home buyers, a young couple or young professionals. Starter homes are very important for our retirees. What we have seen is double digit drops in builders building starter homes. The highest peak was in the

mid 80's. We have less than 10% of builders building starter homes. We see this crunch of retirees who may not see the benefit of downsizing because it's so expensive and we are seeing a bottle neck of young people that are not established. We have people working from home and buying investment properties in Colorado or other states so it's even a tighter pressure on the market. The Aurora City Council undertook a resolution regarding Habitat for Humanity, we got a "not in backyard" by some city councilmembers in Aurora. What annual salary do you think people make or need to make in order to qualify for housing? The "not in my backyard" people are making up to \$80,000 annually. I think we need to change our mentality to ask what does homelessness look like? Low income now is \$80,000 annually. If you have a family of three making \$80,000 annually, it's possible that they could qualify. I think we need a mentality switch to see what that looks like now because it is so expensive especially here in Colorado and in Adams County to buy real estate. A lot of that goes back to our planning.

**Kio Cheroutes:** Invited Jeff Baker to respond.

**Jeff Baker:** I appreciate the comments today and some of the lighting struck home to me and all the innovations. I do think that energy is big right now so is communication and connectivity. The most important thing in development is water in the eastern part of the county. The County's role in developing responsibly by putting requirements on developers for water is the biggest role in developing in the I-70 Corridor. I have two types of constituents that say we have to develop responsibly. We can build roads, fire stations, hospitals, all those things but we can't build is water. We need to make sure our water supplies are adequate and planned for before we allow additional development. I have the folks that embrace growth and folks that don't like growth. They say we moved out here to have the country lifestyle, we like the dirt roads, and we want to preserve that. It's those folks I have to disappoint and tell them growth is coming and your little community will change eventually. We know it will happen and there is very little we can do about that simply because of property rights. David thank you for your presentation you were very interesting.

**Kip Cheroutes:** The Reap meeting in April we will devote our speakers to the issue of water. We are going to have two speakers who have agreed to join us. One of them is our very own Mark Harding from Pure Cycle, developer of Sky Ranch. He is not a home developer he has decades of expertise in water technology and water use. Next month the Reap meeting will feature the school districts.

**Development Updates:**

**Other Business:**

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.