



**Monthly Meeting Summary
Downtown Development Authority
Virtual Meeting**

Wednesday, January 18, 2023
East Point, GA 30344
5:00 pm

I. Call to order

The call to order was placed by Ms. Appleby at 5:07 pm.

Board Members Present:

Sonia Booker (Chairperson), Marc Hardy (Vice-Chairperson), Jeremy Farmer (Treasurer), Carl Semien, and Henry Adeleye

Staff/Attorney Present:

Maceo Rogers (Director of Economic Development); Rhonda Appleby (Economic Development Specialist/Staff Liaison); Susan P. Langford, Attorney at Law – Butler Snow, LLP

II. Approval of the agenda

Mr. Hardy motioned to approve the agenda as written. Ms. Booker seconded the motion. **Approved unanimously, the motion carried.**

III. Board Elections

Mr. Farmer motioned to maintain the current board officers as stated: Sonia Booker as Chairperson, Marc Hardy as Vice-Chairperson, Jeremy Farmer as Treasurer, and Rhonda Appleby as Secretary. Mr. Hardy seconded the motion. **Approved unanimously, the motion carried.**

IV. Economic Development updates

Mr. Rogers provided the following updates:

- A visioning community engagement meeting for the Commons Project will be held on January 30, 2023 at 6:30 pm at City Annex Building. The engagement meeting will detail information regarding the Commons Development.
- ATL Aerotropolis Brokers Reception will be held on January 20, 2023 at Pittsburgh Yards from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The reception will be opened to Realtors, Brokers, and Developers. Catalytic development sites from East Point and neighboring cities will be showcased.
- Met with a potential prospect who was looking at purchasing the land site adjacent to the CVS store on Main Street. The prospect may acquire bond financing from the DDA. The prospect was in communication with the owner of the site and should make a final determination by the end of March 2023. A proposed three (3) to four (4) story mixed-use project is slated.

- The renovation project at 2881 Main Street was progressing into a restaurant (“Eat My Biscuit”), a commercial space, hair salon, and office space for an accountant firm.
- A grand opening ribbon was held for D-Pak Fitness Center located at Headland-DeLowe Drive.
- Talked with Councilpersons of Ward C and D regarding their appointments to the board.
- Mr. Rogers and Ms. Appleby is in the process of coordinating the annual Small Business Symposium that will take place on either April 27, 2023 or May 4, 2023.

V. Old Business

Ms. Booker inquired about the status of the website. Mr. Rogers replied that he and Ms. Appleby would create a presence for the board on the city’s website. Ms. Booker suggested for staff to forward future notices of downtown and networking events to the board.

Attorney Langford suggested that staff order nametags for the board members to wear at networking events.

Mr. Rogers informed the board of the city’s monthly downtown business meetings held at Kupcakerie.

Mr. Hardy expressed his concerns of the board not being privileged or engaged in pertinent meetings or conversations regarding downtown development. He felt that due to the board being a quasi-governmental board, they should have more in-depth knowledge of upcoming projects before the projects become public. Mr. Rogers stated that the Economic Development Department would keep the board abreast of happenings or events in the downtown area; however, most projects are confidential to staff only before becoming public.

Mr. Hardy inquired about the board’s budget. Ms. Appleby stated that the money in the current budget has been allocated to operating board expenses, such as attorney fees, insurance, transcription services, etc. Mr. Rogers then explained the city’s budget process. Mr. Hardy felt that board should have more authority in the allocation of funds to the DDA.

Mr. Hardy inquired about the status of the checking account. Ms. Appleby replied that as of date, the Chairperson and Treasurer have not signed off on the bank’s signature card. She went on to state that she would follow up with the city’s Finance Director regarding the status of opening a checking account for the board. Mr. Farmer and Ms. Booker stated that they would be available to sign off on the signature cards.

Ms. Booker asked Attorney Langford if the board should look into having a board strategy plan. Attorney Langford replied that the board should look into how much the city funds the board. She went on to state that most authorities raise money through bond issuances. In addition to the initial bond fees, some authorities institute an annual fee for bond issuances. DDA’s website should contain references to what type of financial services the board offers. Attorney Langford also stated that the board should look into

city-funded programs (i.e., Downtown Revolving Loan Fund program) where the board could generate administrative fees as well as oversee the program.

Mr. Hardy asked Attorney Langford if she would look into fee-generated projects for the board. Attorney Langford stated that for starters, the board should tour the downtown area with a new mindset and ask “what would make downtown more attractive to residents and future businesses.” From there, she and the board could create a specific program that they would present to the city to fund. The board should also look into collaborating with state development authority programs. Ms. Appleby stated that in the past, the board looked into those particular programs; however, the board did not have an attorney on staff. Due to this, the board decided to table the programs until an attorney was hired.

Mr. Hardy stated that the proposed board retreat with other boards, City Manager office, and council was very necessary. Ms. Appleby stated her difficulties in coordinating a retreat with a large group of people. She stated that it would be easier to coordinate a retreat with the DDA only and invite speakers. Attorney Langford suggested that the DDA propose their own retreat and invite other entities. Ms. Booker felt it was a good idea to research how other cities operate their programs. As Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Booker suggested that she and Mr. Hardy take the lead in creating programs that may lead to funding. She went on to suggest that they both meet with Attorney Langford with the suggested programs.

VI. New Business

Ms. Booker inquired about a transcriber for the board meeting summaries. Mr. Hardy suggested a software program to record the meetings. Ms. Appleby stated that, due to record keeping laws that govern boards, all minutes must be composed in writing. Mr. Hardy then stated that he might have a transcriber in mind. Ms. Appleby also stated that she would look into hiring a transcriber.

III. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting properly adjourned at 6:33 pm following a unanimous adoption of a motion made by Ms. Booker, seconded by Mr. Farmer.
Approved unanimously, the motion carried.

Summary properly recorded by:

Rhonda Appleby

(Rhonda Appleby, Recording Secretary)