MINUTES OF KENNESAW DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)
April 11, 2025
7:30 AM

Present	Chair Mark Allen Vice Chair David Lyons Secretary Mary Jo Groeneveld Lexie Newhouse Ian Coats

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

KDDA Chair Mark Allen called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.
Members present: Mark Allen, David Lyons, Lexie Newhouse, Mary Jo Groeneveld, Ian Coats
Members absent: Nimesh Patel, Leslie Patton
Staff present: Luke Howe, Miranda Taylor, Jamie Wingler (legal)

5. New Business

A. Consideration of incentive application from Highpoint development at 2681 S. Main Street (Lacy Phase II)

This item was taken out of order, out of respect for the presenter's time. This item was considered following the Call to Order.
Elliot Van Dyke from Highpoint presented a general site plan review of the Phase II project on South Main Street. Highpoint is seeking approval of an Inducement Resolution supporting Economic Development Revenue Bonds with a maximum principal amount not to exceed $60,000,000 to finance all or a part of the capital project in the Central Business District. Elliot shared that the commercial pad shown on the site plan will be subdivided as a separate parcel and will not be subject to the bond; this will allow that parcel to generate increased tax revenue throughout the life of the project. All remaining portions of the site plan are included in the pro forma for the bond. Elliot reviewed the proposed PILOT payments and abnormal costs, which were included in the agenda packet. The bond and PILOT payments are structured over a 15-year period, creating approximately $7.5M in abatement to help offset the abnormal costs incurred for the project.
Ian Coats inquired about the anticipated use of the non-restaurant commercial pad and whether there were plans to accommodate electric vehicles and bicycles, as he feels it is important to create a space that encourages people to get out of their cars and walk downtown. Elliot advised the ideal tenant would be a neighborhood retail user, such as a coffee shop or small fitness studio, and shared that they do have plans to install several EV charging spaces and bike racks in the garage/parking area.
David Lyons asked for clarification about the proposed pedestrian improvements and whether the crosswalks are raised along with the median. Elliot shared that there is a raised median planned but that the crosswalk will not be raised; this will create extra

pedestrian protection with a flat crosswalk within a raised median area. David also asked if Highpoint was willing to participate in the Flock Camera system that KPD administers, and Elliot agreed that they would be amenable to participate.
The board asked Luke Howe for a staff recommendation; Luke indicated that staff recommended approval of the inducement resolution. This will be beneficial to support the type of development we want to see in this area of downtown.
Lexie Newhouse noted that CoStar recently released a report stating that Kennesaw was one of the areas in the metro region with the slowest adoption of apartment projects of this type, and she was happy to see a project of this quality proposed for downtown.
Elliot shared a proposed timeline for the project. Highpoint is presently working LDP documents and anticipates this to take about 90 days. After that they will move on to closing with a Purchase Sale Agreement and Bond Documents, likely in December or January.
David Lyons made a motion to approve the Inducement Resolution and authorize the chair and secretary to sign the documents as required. Ian Coats seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with a vote of 5-0.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Draft minutes - 3.14.25 meeting

The board reviewed the draft minutes from the March 14, 2025 meeting. Lexie Newhouse made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mary Jo Groeneveld seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Financial Report

A. Financial Report as of 3.31.25

Miranda Taylor read the financial report, with an ending cash balance of $109,003.03. David Lyons made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Lexie Newhouse seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Review open invoices

The board reviewed one open legal invoice, and David Lyons made a motion to approve the invoice for payment. Ian Coats seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of RFP response for Drinks at the Depot event (tabled from March 14, 2025 meeting)

The board discussed the proposed "Drinks at the Depot" event and the RFP response for event management services. The board determined that, due to the changing landscape of events like our former beer festival (which we were trying to rebrand as a "Drinks at the Depot" event), it no longer seems feasible to host an event like this. The board and staff have devoted a lot of effort to an event with minimal return. The board would like to move away from the beer festival/drinks event format for now and explore other options for a signature event. Based on the suggestion to move away from a drinks-themed event, David Lyons made a motion to reject all proposals received from the RFP process. Ian Coats seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0. Staff will work with the Clerk's Office to notify the respondent.

6. Main Street Program Updates

A. Discussion of KDDA Facebook page and effective social media communications

KDDA currently has a Facebook page that is underutilized. As such, engagement is low and ineffective. The Downtown Kennesaw social media pages have consistent engagement and are a much more effective tool for sharing downtown-related information, and staff can request that any KDDA specific information be shared on those channels. The board discussed and felt it was appropriate to cease use of the KDDA page and instead use the downtown social media accounts when needed. Mark Allen made a motion to delete/unpublish the KDDA Facebook page and use the Downtown Kennesaw social media pages as needed. David Lyons seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. 2024 Main Street Community Impact Report

Miranda Taylor reviewed the annual Community Impact Report from Georgia Main Street for Downtown Kennesaw. Miranda also shared that we have been certified as an Affilate Main Street program and are no longer a start-up program. Ian Coats asked if we received a similar report for 2023, and indicated he'd like to see a comparison to see if there is an upward trend in downtown activity. Miranda will prepare a comparison report and send to the board. This item was for informational purposes and no action is required.

C. Review and adopt a vision statement for Downtown Kennesaw

Miranda Taylor presented 3 proposed vision statements to the board for review and adoption. Having an adopted vision statement is one of the requirements of our Main Street program. The vision statement should outline our proposed direction for the future and guide our steps as we continue to develop downtown. The board liked statements #1 and #3 on the proposed vision statement list. Ian Coats asked about adding language to one of them to indicate that we value diversity and that downtown is for all people. The board discussed it and felt that updating the language in statement #3 to "vibrant and welcoming" would meet this request. Statement #3 is directly related to feedback received from our public visioning sessions on what our program priorities should be over the next 3-5 years.

The proposed vision statement reads: "To become a vibrant and welcoming downtown that responds to the needs of the community by focusing on entertainment options, business recruitment, and beautification projects."

David Lyons made a motion to approve vision statement #3 with the updated verbiage. Ian Coats seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Public Comments

Tracey Viars commented that it is an exciting time in downtown Kennesaw! She is happy to see all that is happening downtown. She likes the direction the board took on the event discussion and agrees it is time to explore other options. She thinks the board should focus on how to strengthen their relationship with the Kennesaw Downtown Merchants Association and downtown businesses for events like the former beer festival.

8. Board Comments

Ian Coats reminded the board that the Big Shanty festival is this weekend, and encouraged board members to wear their new name tags to represent KDDA if they are out and about this weekend at the festival.

Mary Jo Groenveld discussed the Farmers Market - the opening market day is May 5. She will be out of town, but Donovan has volunteered to help with setup and vendor load-in for that day. Ian also volunteered to assist. Miranda will set up a time to touch base with all involved the week prior to be sure everything is covered.

Lexie Newhouse offered thanks to staff for the thoughtful preparation and presentation of the inducement resolution for the South Main development project.

David Lyons agreed with Tracey Viars's comments that it is an exciting time downtown! He thought the recent Loverboy concert at the amphitheater was a great event, and he was glad to see so many people out enjoying downtown. He also advised the board that the Eaton building was sold this week at an auction that was open to the public, and he will be glad to see movement on this key building.

9. Economic Development Director Comments

No Economic Director comments at this meeting.

10. Executive Session

No Executive Session required.

A. Pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A. 50-14-3, the KDDA could, at any time during the meeting, vote to close the public meeting and move to executive session to discuss matters relating to litigation, legal actions and/or communications from the City Attorney as provided under O.C.G.A. 50-14-2(1); and/or personnel matters as provided under O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (4) and/or real estate matters as provided under O.C.G.A 50-14-3(6).

11. Adjourn

With no further business, Ian Coats made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mary Jo Groeneveld and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:29 am.

A. NOTICE: Any person who desires to appeal any decision from this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and for the purpose may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. The Agenda is designed to make more efficient use of the KDDA's time. It is not designed to curtail discussion or input. If you need special accommodations to attend or participate in our meetings, please contact City Hall at least 24 hours in advance of the specific meeting you are planning to attend.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]