Downtown Development Authority Meeting

Monday, August 24, 2026, at 6:30 PM

City Hall, 875 Main Street, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

Minutes

I. Call to Order

A. Chair Carl Wright called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
B. Present were Chair Carl Wright, Vice Chair Robert Witherspoon, Treasurer Sarah Hage, Board Member Bobby Singleton, Board Member Thom DeLoach, and Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass.
C. Board Member Michelle Dunbar arrived at 7:12 p.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

A. Treasurer Sarah Hage made a motion to approve the agenda. Board Member Thom DeLoach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
B. Following the Council Report, Treasurer Sarah Hage made a motion to amend the agenda to consider New Business prior to Executive Session and Old Business following Executive Session. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. DDA Regular Meeting Minutes – July 27, 2026: Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass made a motion to approve the July 27, 2026, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes. Board Member Bobby Singleton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
B. Mayor and City Council/Downtown Development Authority Joint Meeting Minutes – August 3, 2026: Treasurer Sarah Hage made a motion to approve the August 3, 2026, Mayor and City Council/Downtown Development Authority Joint Meeting Minutes. Board Member Thom DeLoach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
C. DDA Special Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2026: Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass made a motion to approve the August 10, 2026, DDA Special Meeting Minutes. Board Member Bobby Singleton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments.

V. Director's Report

A. DCA Report – July 2026
   1. City staff support for the DDA is currently in a period of transition. City Manager Maggie Dimov and Tourism Manager Elle Walker prepared the meeting minutes.
   2. Senior Planner Garrett Shan was introduced.
   3. The DDA and City will collaborate on City and destination branding initiatives.

VI. Council Report

A. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass provided an update regarding collaboration between the City and DDA. She highlighted the City Ambassadors' cleanup of the James B. Rivers Memorial area on both sides of Main Street, extending toward Stone Mountain. She also noted that the Ambassadors' role extends beyond cleanup activities and includes engaging with community members and sharing information.

VII. New Business

A. Discussion Item: Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund – Local Project Support / 976 Main Street

1. Elisabeth Richmond presented her proposed redevelopment of the property at 976 Main Street and her request for local support in connection with a $250,000 Georgia Cities Foundation (GCF) Revolving Loan Fund application.
2. Ms. Richmond provided the following information regarding the proposed project:
    a. The building currently contains multiple vacancies, and its current costs exceed its value.
    b. She emphasized the property's importance to the City and the need to prevent the building from becoming an eyesore.
    c. Plans include two short-term rental units on the upper level.
    d. She is seeking commercial tenants that will maintain regular business hours throughout the week.
    e. The project is not of sufficient size to qualify for a historic tax credit.
    f. The long-term plan is to renovate the entire building at one time, with an anticipated construction period of approximately eight months to one year.
    g. Ms. Richmond is working with a general contractor she has used previously and has prior experience operating short-term rentals.
    h. She is exploring short-term financing options because GCF funding would become available following project completion.
3. It was explained that under the Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund program, Ms. Richmond would apply directly to GCF, while the DDA's role is to determine whether the proposed redevelopment is consistent with its downtown development strategy and whether to provide local support for the project.
4. The DDA Attorney discussed potential risk associated with supporting the application should the borrower fail to repay the loan. The Attorney advised that GCF relies, in part, upon the DDA's local assessment and support of the applicant and project and indicated that he considered the associated risk acceptable.
5. Board Member Thom DeLoach made a motion to approve local project support for the Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund application for 976 Main Street. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion Item: Consideration of Support for DD RLF Initial Project Assessment / Pre-Application
1. Tucker Blair presented plans for FUEL Espresso and Smoothie Bar.
    a. Mr. Blair provided the following information regarding the proposed business:
        i. The business is planned to operate seven days per week from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., offering breakfast, lunch, and early dinner selections.
        ii. Coffee will be a specialty of the business. Mr. Blair noted that only one other coffee shop currently operates in the City and that it is located on the opposite side of the railroad tracks.
        iii. The establishment will not serve alcohol.
        iv. Take-home dinner options are planned.
        v. The business intends to provide curbside delivery to customers' vehicles and utilize third-party delivery services, including DoorDash and Uber Eats.
        vi. The business is prepared to begin the permitting process and anticipates opening in mid-December.
        vii. Mr. Blair has previous experience with vegan smoothies under the FUEL brand.

viii. The business anticipates initially employing approximately 12 individuals, with employment potentially increasing to approximately 15–20 employees.

ix. The requested loan amount is $175,000.

2. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass made a motion to approve support for the DD RLF Initial Project Assessment/Pre-Application. Board Member Thom DeLoach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Discussion Item: DDA Training Opportunities

1. The Board discussed training opportunities for City staff supporting the DDA.
2. Board Member Thom DeLoach made a motion to approve DDA funding for DDA 101 and Main Street 101 training for the Community Development Director and Tourism Manager, as well as the Notary Public Commission for the Community Development Director, at an approximate total cost of $294. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion Item: September Workshop in Hartwell, Georgia

1. Chair Carl Wright discussed the upcoming training opportunity in Hartwell, Georgia. He noted that he attended a similar one-day training in Carrollton the previous year and encouraged DDA members to attend the Hartwell training.
2. The Board noted that the DDA has $8,000 budgeted for training.
3. City staff will follow up with the Board regarding the workshop date, registration costs, and other registration information.

VIII. Executive Session to Discuss Personnel, Legal, and/or Real Estate

1. Board Member Thom DeLoach made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. Treasurer Sarah Hage seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Board Member Thom DeLoach made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. Board Member Michelle Dunbar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Old Business

A. Board Recommendations for Vacancies Due to Expired Terms

1. Board Member Thom DeLoach made a motion to defer consideration of Board recommendations for vacancies resulting from expired terms until the next meeting. Board Member and Council Member Anita Bass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Appointment of DDA Executive Director

1. Vice Chair Robert Witherspoon made a motion to appoint Thatcher Hart as DDA Executive Director. Chair Carl Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment: Board Member Michelle Dunbar made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Treasurer Sarah Hage seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.