

**Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2021**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, Georgia was held on March 11, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. at Augusta & Co. located at 1010 Broad Street (3<sup>rd</sup> floor). Those members present were Reverend Booker, Jane Ellis, Jack Evans, James Heffner, Stephen King, Ashanti Lilley and DDA Executive Director Margaret Woodard with Legal Counsel Jeb Murray joining via telephone and Commissioner Clarke not present. Guests and observers were DDA Office Manager Roxanne Walls, Brad Usry and Cedric Johnson of the Augusta-Richmond County Coliseum Authority, HB Brantley of S.P.A.C.E<sup>TM</sup> Venues Group (a division of H.J. Russell and Company), Joe Hotchkiss of The Augusta Chronicle and Bennish Brown of the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mr. Evans called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. He thanked the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau for allowing us to use their meeting space due to COVID restrictions. Mr. Evans welcomed new board members Ms. Lilley and Rev. Anthony Booker.

Mr. Johnson, Mr. Usry and Mr. Brantley were introduced for the James Brown Arena presentation. The PowerPoint presentation given by Mr. Brantley included site analysis, site isometric, floor plans, event floor plans and renderings. It will be available on-line Friday at [newjamesbrownarena.com](http://newjamesbrownarena.com). The board also viewed a video. Preliminary cost estimates are \$228 million. The market analysis showed that over a 30-year period that a project of this nature will generate \$436 million in new spending, \$208 million in new sales tax and 400-plus jobs. The board thanked Mr. Johnson, Mr. Usry and Mr. Brantley for the presentation and all three left the meeting.

Mr. Heffner presented the meeting minutes for September 2020. With no additions or corrections, Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve the September 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Heffner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Heffner presented the meeting minutes for November 2020. With no additions or corrections, Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve the November 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Heffner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Heffner presented the meeting minutes for December 2020. With no additions or corrections, Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve the December 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Heffner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Heffner presented the meeting minutes for February 2021. With no additions or corrections, Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve the February 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. King seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In the Treasurer's Report, Mr. Heffner presented the February 2021 financials. The balance sheet as of February 28, 2021 includes the following: total checking/savings in the amount of \$862,312.64 which includes (operating) checking in the amount of \$86,594.24 which is

comprised of some restricted funds; accounts receivable (SPLOST) in the amount of \$8,000.00 is for the James Brown Journey partnership with the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau; total assets in the amount of \$1,440,333.64; accounts payable in the \$8,000.00 which is the invoice to be paid for the James Brown Journey partnership; accrued liabilities in the amount of \$76,937.58 for salaries to be paid back for prior quarters; deferred inflow in the amount of \$775,490.15 which is unspent SPLOST funds for Riverwalk; total liabilities and equity in the amount of \$1,440,333.64.

The Profit & Loss Budget Performance (DDA Operating) Report for February 2021 reflected no income to report for the month. There were no out of the ordinary expenses as all were anticipated according to budget. It does reflect a deficit but hope that with some recent changes that took place in Congress over the last couple of days there may be some other options to be able to close that gap.

The Profit & Loss Budget Performance (Consolidated) Report for February 2021 included income in the amount of \$100.00 which is not actually income but is to recognize SPLOST deferred revenue as spent for Riverwalk improvements with an expense in the amount of \$100.00 which was paid out for that project. All other expenses reflected were on the operating report.

Ms. Ellis made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Heffner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Woodard announced that "The Faces of Downtown" won an Addy award. This is an Augusta-based award and will now go regional. She updated the Board on the following:

**Economic Restructuring:**

- Annual reports underway and include new businesses opened/closed, net job creation, private investment and available properties.
- Vance's Dessert Bar is about to open and Ms. Woodard will keep board members posted on upcoming ribbon cuttings.
- Currently working on available properties inventory and retail inventory.
- Ms. Ellis recently completed available properties on the Walton Way corridor that connect downtown with the new Kroger site.
- Mr. Levison was in town last week and he has leased Shared Space to a communications company. They have signed a one-year lease and will keep the same model.
- Cutis Baptist Church is on the market for sale. Mr. Parker Dye is representing that property and has received interest for mixed-use.
- We are working with a 5,000SF office user, an Atlanta-based restaurant and a general contractor from Iowa who is in town and wants to purchase a building for a regional office in Augusta. All three are active prospects.
- Customer Journey Reports for 2019 and 2020 will remain in board member notebooks. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021 will be available in April for review.

### **Design:**

- Riverwalk Arches - Resubmitted for bid.
- Façade Grants – Two have been received for committee review when projects completed and certificate of occupancy obtained: 510 Greene Street (market-rate apartments) and 990 Broad Street (Taco Cat).
- Georgia Cities Loan Application - Closing for 401 Greene Street will be scheduled when certificate of occupancy is received.

### **Promotion:**

- New DDA Website - There are 18 pages of copy completed and can be viewed via link sent to Board. Mr. Cline is working on finishing up content.
- “Come See Downtown Augusta” Campaign - Ms. Woodard and Mr. Evans met with Mr. Joe Edge to start fundraising. Mr. Edge wants to “tweak” it from a customer perspective.
- Downtown Events Task Force – Ms. Woodard is on the task force which meets weekly. They are working on guidelines to get all events up and running safely in the city. The Augusta Market has been approved. The event plan for Iron Man was received this week. First Friday is putting together a plan as well as a James Brown Birthday event. Arts in the Heart will be a downsized version and will be promoted under another name.

### **Organization:**

- “Lunch & Learn” with Augusta University – Held on February 12 with Ms. Woodard, Mr. Evans, Commissioner Clarke and Mr. Brown in attendance with AU students to find out what it would take to keep them here after they graduate. The top three were not enough internships to do while in school, not enough good paying jobs to go to once they graduate and transportation is an issue. We also need to “up our game” with social media for awareness of events. We are planning to do another “Learn & Learn” with a different topic.
- The 2020 audit is underway.
- DDA/Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau will present at a May tourism conference in Savannah, GA on the importance of partnerships.

### **Other:**

- Board training reminder to register if have not done so.

Ms. Ellis made a motion to accept the Director’s Report as information. Mr. Heffner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

In Chair’s Remarks, Mr. Evans stressed that we need to organize, engage and be competitive with other cities. Other items included the following:

- There will be no April board meeting but committees will meet in April. Ms. Woodard will coordinate.
- Moving forward minutes and financials will be presented as consent items on the agenda and will be provided in advance to allow ample time for questions/comments.
- Mr. Evans would like to hold a mid-year retreat (June/July timeframe) to look at the 15-year-old rules that govern us, our mission, vision, values and develop a strategy for this board.

Under officer nominations, with our vice-chair position now vacant, Mr. Evans as chair asked Mr. Heffner to serve as vice-chair. Mr. Heffner accepted the nomination. Mr. Evans asked if there were any other nominations from the floor for the position of vice-chair. Hearing none, Mr. Evans called a vote. All were in favor and approved Mr. Heffner to serve as vice-chair.

Under officer nominations, with our secretary-treasurer position now vacant, Mr. Evans as chair asked Ms. Ellis to serve as secretary-treasurer. Ms. Ellis accepted the nomination. Mr. Evans asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Mr. Evans called a vote. All were in favor and approved Ms. Ellis to serve as secretary-treasurer.

Under committee appointments, Mr. Evans made appointments to lead the following committees:

Economic Restructuring	Ms. Ellis
Design	Mr. King
Promotion	Ms. Lilley (To lead focus on social media strategy.)
Organization	Mr. Heffner (To lead government relations to focus on official agencies on which we should engage/partner and provide us with an assessment of the areas where we are most aligned with other agencies.) Rev. Booker (To help with community aspects such as non-profits, faith-based organizations and individuals in the community that we need to align with and use as a resource.)

Mr. Evans will be working with each one and getting thoughts on how this work might be approached and will report back in April, which will be a committee focused month, for activity and recommendations.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Heffner made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Ellis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Evans adjourned the meeting at 9:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Ellis, Secretary-Treasurer