

Athens Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
2:00 p.m.
ADDA Office, 250 W. Broad Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bradley, Drew Dekle, Kelly Girtz, and Jason Leonard

OTHERS PRESENT: Blake Aued, Linda Ford, Diana Jackson, David Lynn, Greg Sowell and Rachel Swartz

1. **Approval of Minutes** - Kelly Girtz motioned to approve the minutes from the December 2025 meeting and Drew Dekle seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Public Input** - none
3. **Directors' Report**

Planning and Outreach

- A. **College Square Construction** - David Lynn introduced Diana Jackson. Diana Jackson is the project manager of the College Square Project. Jackson explained the phasing schedule proposed by Sheridan, including the installation of water barricades and chain link fencing. The first phase also includes access for emergency crews and utility work. Sheridan will have an office in the Fred Building to allow for quick response and communication. Sheridan has visited all the businesses in College Square and provided contact information with the goal of providing clear communication. There will also be a large information board with a QR code linking a website for the project. The goal is to leave the areas directly in front of the businesses open during construction until they get to those areas in the phase. They will be working around the businesses' hours of operation as much as possible. Jackson noted that even though the work will be done in phases, the warranty for the project will start when all the work is completed. Greg Sowell stated that we are waiting for final insurance documentation and when that comes in, construction will be allowed to begin.

Kelly Girtz motioned to authorize Board Chairman to sign all final documents for the College Square Project after approval from Greg Sowell and Diana Jackson. Drew Dekle seconded. Motion passed.

After all documents are signed and dated, Diana Jackson will issue the Notice to Proceed.

- B. **Costa Park Update** - David Lynn told the board that the directors met with Dan Coenen, and Harold Rittenberry at the Costa Park to determine placement of a donated Rittenberry sculpture called *Emissary*. Costa Park is near completion and the board will look at a time for a dedication event in the Spring to allow for the sod and landscaping to mature. David Lynn showed the board pictures of the park's construction progress.
- C. **Public Art MOU (Rittenberry sculptures)** - The ADDA received a generous art donation from Sally and Dan Coenen of Harold Rittenberry's *Byzantine Knight*. Smith Planning Group (SPG) completed a rendering of their suggestion for its placement in College Square. SPG recommended placing it in front of Empire South and Arden's Garden. More details will be worked out for constructing the base for the sculpture. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drafted between Athens-Clarke County, the ADDA, and the artist to detail future maintenance and care.

Business Services

- D. **Downtown Holiday Lights** - The Holiday Light project was very successful, and the ADDA received a lot of positive feedback. Keith Lunsford with Central Services and Christmas Elves want to start earlier this year. Circuit boards and some other electrical upgrades will be done prior to the holidays.
- E. **Eco-Stations Public Art** - Will Eskridge will be designing art for the Eco-stations. Solid Waste has \$10,000 to spend and the ADDA will manage the art installation for them. The art that Will Eskridge did for the last set of street banners was so well received that he sold the banners and was able to make a \$2000 donation to several non-profits in Athens.
- F. **Right-of-Way Use Ordinance** - Kelly Girtz explained that recently the Commission passed an updated right-of-way use ordinance that defined the right-of-way as the property lines of the private businesses. With the exception of special events, one cannot sit or lie in the right-of-way. The ordinance included provisions for enforcement and storage of personal items. In the past, items had to have a 72-hour waiting period before items could be removed from the right of way, and the new ordinance cuts the waiting period to 24 hours. The Athens Area Homeless Coalition is looking into lockers placed in secure areas to allow for proper personal storage. Drew Dekle asked if the ordinance was actually enforceable as written and Kelly Girtz stated that it was enforceable. Girtz recommended asking Deputy Chief Harrison Daniel to come speak to the Board next month.

- 4. Consider and Approve Agreements regarding North Jackson and Dougherty Street** - Attorney Greg Sowell provided a final development agreement for the Dougherty/Jackson Street/Core project. ACCGov voted on the agreement and passed. He also reiterated that the ADDA's participation is as a conduit for the land exchange. The Core property has been appraised and will be appraised at the time of the transfer of funds. The cash value will be deposited in an escrow account that the ADDA will supervise. That money will be drawn to start the construction of the 200 parking places of the 425-space deck. For the remainder of the deck construction, Core will finance and ADDA will make payments from the revenues of parking services. The term will be 180 monthly payments or 15 years. The public parking deck will be finished before the adjacent private development.

David Bradley asked if there would be anything built to provide direct pedestrian access to cross the street. Kelly Girtz emphasized that this deck would be partially used for more long-term parking, and that event parking will be encouraged to use the College Ave. and Washington St. decks. Greg Sowell said that within the footprint of the Core property, they have committed to several pedestrian improvements, open/green space, and also the Jackson Street Art Walk.

Kelly Girtz made a motion to authorize the board chairman execute the final development agreement for the Core project and David Bradley seconded. Motion passed.

- 5. Executive Session - none**
- 6. Financial Report** - Finances are on track to make \$600,000 additional income this year. Halfway through and parking revenue has increased about \$300,000 since the increase in parking rates.
- 7. Suggested future agenda topics and announcements** - Asking Deputy Chief Harrison Daniel to the next meeting, grant for security cameras
- 8. Adjourn** - David Bradley motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kelly Girtz seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 2:50pm.

Jason Leonard, Board Chair

Linda Ford, Director of Business Services

David Lynn, Director of Planning and Outreach