

**Athens Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026
2:00 p.m.
ADDA Office, 250 W. Broad Street**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Bishop, David Bradley, Jason Leonard, and Andrew Ratcliffe

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Ford, Diana Jackson, David Lynn, Wes Ryals, Greg Sowell, Rachel Swartz, and Allison Wright

1. **Approval of Minutes** – Jeff Bishop approved the minutes from the Feb 2026 meeting and David Bradley seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Directors' Report**

Planning and Outreach

- A. **College Square Update** – SPLOST Project Manager, Diana Jackson, updated the board regarding the construction on College Square. The project is currently 17 days ahead of schedule because Public Utilities Department (PUD) agreed to line the sewer and not dig it up. Sidewalks are demolished and they were able to save existing pavers to use elsewhere as needed. They have also demolished an old water line and backfilled with high-quality soil imported locally and replaced it with a new eight-inch water line. PUD also installed three, quarter-inch taps, and pressure tested the system and connected everything to the meter boxes. They are currently working on the storm water structures at Broad Street where they found an old blind box (no manhole) storm drain that will be demolished. New storm drains will be installed and will relocate the meter box that is in front of Arden's Garden. SPG and Jackson are working with the ACCGov Police Department to integrate the requested cameras in the square. Jackson said Georgia Power has decided last minute that they want to redo the tops of the underground power vaults because they don't meet their current specifications. Jackson challenged Georgia Power as to whether or not it's an appropriate top for a vault in a public square, but SPG said Georgia Power was not going to allow for any modifications. Currently it is a 5x10 foot grate. It will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements but will not allow for a cohesive look. SPG presented Georgia Power with some options from a reputable company that manufactures vault covers, but it is not likely they will want to change covers. The Board will reach out to some contacts and see if they can reach a design compromise.

Jackson also went over the draw schedule for the construction payments. The first drawdown request will be for approximately \$438,000 at the end of March 2026.

Wes Ryals with Smith Planning Group asked the board for an addendum to the initial contract to enable SPG to continue to provide construction administration. SPG is asking for an additional \$51,151.

David Bradley motioned to approve the addendum to the SPG construction management contract and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed.

- B. **Costa Park Update** –David Lynn reported that the Costa Park should be finished by the end of next week. The SPLOST team asked that a ribbon-cutting ceremony be scheduled after the grass and landscaping have time to mature. The engineering firm, WLA, and Keyes Williamson have volunteered to maintain the park as a service project for the firm.
- C. **CEP Funding Requests** – David Lynn shared that the application period ended for FY26/27 CEP funds. There were thirty-four applications requesting a funding total of \$353,220. Final recommendations will be given once the Mayor and Commission set the program budget.

Business Services

- D. **Downtown Tree Inventory and Assessment** – The board engaged arborist, Chris Hughes, with Brookwood Tree Consulting to audit tree conditions in the downtown district and create a downtown tree inventory and assessment. Hughes worked with the ACCGov arborist on this project. The audit was completed in January. Chris also provided a detailed evaluation of each tree in the downtown district. The existing population has an adequate range of diversity with Chinese elm being the most prevalent. There are 63 trees in poor condition and two dead trees. There are 28 open wells. Hughes also suggested canopy pruning, nutrition and pest treatments.
- E. **Real Time Crime Center Grant** –Linda Ford updated the board that Nick Barker with the police department is working with Kilwins to incorporate Kilwin’s outdoor cameras with the Real Time Crime Center.
- F. **Park Mobile Parking App** – As Downtown Parking Services (DAPS) moved forward with AIMS; it was apparent that the app could not support the complexity of Downtown’s parking systems and was unwilling to make changes to the app in any way. While working with AIMS, staff reached out to Knoxville, Tennessee’s parking director and learned that they had recently switched from IPS parking meters to ParkMobile. In almost a year, Knoxville has seen a 20% increase in revenue. ParkMobile will pay for all the signage and implementation. ParkMobile charges \$.45 per transaction and an additional \$.05 fee per credit card transaction. Jeff Bishop would like to see the fee negotiated. David Bradley motioned to move forward with ParkMobile contingent on staff and attorney review of the contract. Andrew Ratcliffe seconded. Motion passed. The tentative schedule is to begin implementation the second week of May (after UGA

Graduation) and have the app implemented for the entire Downtown by August.

G. Location Analytics Software – Linda Ford reported that Placer.ai demoed their location analytics software, looking specifically at Athens and how we would use the product. Their dashboard would provide data such as pedestrian counts by time period and/or geofenced area, number of Downtown residents, unique visitors to downtown, total visits Downtown, and point of origin of Downtown visitors. Clients use Placer.ai to provide data for prospective and current businesses, demonstrate economic impact and return of investment of the downtown district, provide data to event planners, determine the number of visitors to a specific area and time frame, and length of stay downtown by visitors. Placer.ai is an annual subscription-based service that requires a one-year contract at \$1250/month.

Jeff Bishop motioned to move forward with Placer.ai once staff and attorney have reviewed the contract. Andrew Ratcliffe seconded. Motion passed.

3. **Financial Report** –Linda Ford reported that parking income in still up by about \$352,000 for the year. Ford also reminded the board that the Washington Deck debt will be paid in full at the end of this fiscal year. There was a discussion about when the Washington Deck is paid off, the funds would be used for payment of the new deck on Hoyt Street.
4. **Suggested future agenda topics and announcements** –Linda Ford said the April meeting will be on the third Wednesday, and the board should look at their calendars for a Board Retreat sometime in May. David Lynn reminded the board that on March 24th at 1:00pm Stephanie Caple of Savannah will be talking about their Urban Camping ordinance. Andrew Ratcliffe would like to begin to discuss having a Music Office in Athens like they have in Savannah, Texas, and other communities.
5. **Adjourn** – Jeff Bishop motioned to adjourn the meeting and Andrew Ratcliffe seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Jason Leonard, Board Chair

Linda Ford, Director of Business Services

David Lynn, Director of Planning and Outreach