

**Athens Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, August 12, 2026
2:00 p.m.
ADDA Office, 250 W. Broad Street**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Bishop, David Bradley, Drew Dekle, Kelly Girtz, Mike Hamby, Jason Leonard, and Andrew Ratcliffe

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

1. **Approval of Minutes** – Kelly Girtz motioned to approve the minutes from May 13, 2026, and June 3, 2026, and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed.
2. **Public Input** –Michael Ruppensburg thanked the ADDA for advancing the College Square project and praised the bond-funded approach to accelerate delivery. He urged action on Downtown homelessness following a failed ordinance, commending Mayor Girtz and Commissioner Hamby for working on a potential solution and encouraging the ADDA to publicly advocate, to organize the broader Downtown community (including workers, not just owners), and to coordinate with partners like the Chamber, UGA, and the Classic Center, given the economic impact. He also spoke about the likely sale and redevelopment of the Cillie's/Wuxtry building, noting the risk to longtime businesses, and suggested the ADDA explore relocating affected tenants into vacant Georgia Heights retail space—potentially via a lease arrangement—to activate the corridor and retain key businesses. Overall, he called for proactive, coordinated efforts to improve Downtown conditions and support economic vitality.
3. **Directors' Report**

Planning and Outreach

- A. **Signal Source** – David Lynn introduced Gabe Pica, a Downtown business owner, to the board. Pica discussed the issues with cellular connectivity during large events and introduced the company called Passpoint. Passpoint would offload cellular traffic to Wi-Fi networks. This technology would help with cellular service while also providing potential revenue for Athens. The technology can be installed on light poles, parking garages, or the top of buildings.
- B. **Bus Kiosk, E. Washington St.-** The board revisited a previous idea to repurpose the bus kiosk near City Hall (across from Tweed). The board asked staff to push the concept forward.

- C. **College Square Update** -The College Square project has largely completed underground work and moved to above-ground elements. Crews are working around the clock in two 12-hour shifts to install pavers, stadium seating, limestone bases, and lighting. All eight mast fixtures are in, acorn lights are being installed with power connected, and PD cameras have power awaiting installation. Drainage was reworked and grading adjusted to address prior issues. A delay in white paver shipments means temporary pavers will be used for initial opening and swapped out between football games once the shipment arrives. Shade sails are expected to arrive around the August 24th. Coordination with the Fire Chief led to shortening a planter by about four feet to maintain access, with a trial run planned after installation. Georgia Power has significant work slated, with some related recovery expected early next year; the contractor will return to repair any impacts. With the fourth change order, total changes are about \$570K, bringing the project total to roughly \$7.07M. A soft opening is targeted for the first football game on September 5, 2026, with substantial completion currently projected for mid-October. Furniture will be installed after punch-list items are resolved.
- D. **CEP Resolution** – In June 2026, the Mayor and Commission approved \$300,000 for the CEP program for FY2027. The ADDA staff reviewed all applications for funding requests and David Lynn shared the recommendations with the board. Kelly Girtz motioned to approve the recommendations and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed.

Business Services

- E. **North of the Arch** – The ADDA has partnered with the UGA Office of Government Affairs since 2017 to host North of the Arch for first-year UGA students. This year the event will be on August 21, 2026, starting at 2pm. The event has grown from 21 to 37 participating businesses.
- F. **Downtown Open Container Zone** – The Athens-Clarke County Manager, Bob Cowell, has asked the ADDA to scale back the proposed open container zone for this football season and implement it as a pilot, only for the last three games of the season. The Open Container Zone pilot would tentatively be on the October 6 Mayor and Commission agenda.
- G. **Downtown Holiday Lights** – Christmas Elves plan to begin light installation in September, in order to finish by Thanksgiving. This year, lights will be installed on Clayton Street (Hull Street to Thomas Street), College Avenue (Broad Street to Hancock Avenue), and the parking deck outdoor stairwell on College Avenue. Central Services will also do their usual installation as well as West Washington Street.

- H. **Park Mobile Parking App** - Downtown Athens Parking Services (DAPS) team began replacing meters with ParkMobile signage on July 28, 2026. For the first two weeks, DAPS will give a warning before a ticket is issued to a violator. Our entire parking team worked efficiently and effectively transferring more than 800 parking spaces from meters to ParkMobile in less than a week. It was a huge effort by the whole team. Shortly after the installation, many signs were stolen and vandalized. There have been four police reports made and multiple subjects have been identified.
- I. **Parking Deck Equipment** – Linda Ford told the board that our parking project would be looking at deck equipment. Currently, the decks have a couple of lanes that cannot take cash, and the equipment is repaired in Germany. The Court House Deck is in the same situation, so ACCGov is also looking into new equipment.
4. **Financial Report** – Linda Ford reported that parking revenue ended FY26 \$400,000 higher than the previous year. July 2026 ended at \$313,625, which is lower than July 2025 due to the large number of broken meters.
5. **Executive Session** - none
6. **Suggested Future Agenda Topics and Announcements** –Members discussed whether to livestream meetings; consensus leaned against livestreaming due to resource demands, while affirming that meetings remain open to the public, and that non-disruptive filming is allowed. A request was raised to remove a problematic bench near multiple businesses due to health and safety concerns: staff noted prior escalations and hope for action in coordination with pending right-of-way camping policy decisions. Tree maintenance and planting were deferred to a forthcoming ACCGov and ADDA MOU. Meanwhile, a relocated tree will add shade near Costa Park, which has seen landscape improvements. Lastly, updates on an Athens Music Office.
7. **Adjourn** – Drew Dekle motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kelly Girtz seconded. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 3:04pm.

Jason Leonard, Board Chair

Linda Ford, Director of Business Services

David Lynn, Director of Planning and Outreach