Athens Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 9, 2026
2:00 p.m.
ADDA Office, 250 W. Broad Street

MEMBERSPRESENT: Jeff Bishop, Drew Dekle, Mike Hamby, Jason Leonard, and Andrew Ratcliffe

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Ford, Diana Jackson, David Lynn, Blake Ogden, Rachel Swartz, and Allison Wright

1. Approval of Minutes – Jeff Bishop motioned to approve the minutes from August 12, 2026, and Drew Dekle seconded. Motion passed.

2. Public Input – none

3.Community Reports – none

4.Directors'Report

Planning and Outreach

A. College Square Update – Diana Jackson updated the board on the construction of College Square. Installation is in progress on fiber and camera installation, kiosks, tables, umbrellas, and planters. High-top tables are to be installed after a final site walk; movable bistro tables will be brought in once the cameras are operational. The board also discussed paver grates, replacing plantings, and construction-access rules to help protect the new brickwork. . Jackson said that the pedestal for the Byzantine Man was rejected because it was delivered with a crack in it, but should be ready by the ribbon cutting, along with the planters and other punch list tasks. The board discussed whether businesses should be allowed to reinstall permanent café railings and considered movable options, including high-top tables and ropes. David Lynn said that the Commission will need to determine how alcohol will be managed in College Square, whether there will be an open container zone and how special events will operate within the square. Drew Dekle suggested a list of procedures for the Square so construction companies know how to properly access the square.

B. Broad Street Crossing – David Lynn expressed that now that College Square is wrapping up, the board should think about how to prioritize the next phase. The last T-SPLOST referendum allocated $1.5 million to continue the project across Broad Street with the raised pedestrian table. Diana Jackson suggested that we approach Transportation and Public Works to make the crosswalk a scramble, like at Baxter and Lumpkin Street intersection as a cost-effective option.

Business Services

C. Magic on the Square/Downtown Holiday Stroll – Linda Ford proposed organizing a downtown holiday open house, since merchants currently tend to hold separate events and there has not been a consistent, inclusive business association. Merchants have responded positively, and this year's event would take place on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, with the date potentially changing in future years to fit the football schedule. Ford recommended hiring Camille Hayes, who has experience with marketing and local events, to coordinate participating merchants, and arrange the promotion. Jeff Bishop motioned to authorize the directors to move forward with the Holiday Open House and Drew Dekle seconded. Motion passed.

D. Downtown Open Container Zone - Linda Ford updated the board on the progress of the Downtown open container zone pilot. The police department has is looking at how they would manage the zone, and the manager's office asked the ADDA to wait until next year. Jeff Bishop asked if the police explained how they managed Jam for Cam. Ford said that Jam for Cam is interested in expanding their event and that will also give the police and fire department more experience.

E. Athens Music Economic Development Strategy -The board discussed an Athens music and economic development strategy and hiring Mala Sharma, a consultant with experience establishing music offices and advising other cities. They emphasized that Athens already has substantial music-industry assets and resources, so the goal would be to better connect and market what exists rather than start from scratch. Linda Ford suggested that the ADDA ask Sharma for a more detailed proposal and price. Andrew Ratcliffe motioned to have staff follow-up with Sharma for a proposal and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed.

F. ParkMobile Parking App – The board discussed the ParkMobile transition, vandalism of parking signs, and encouraging downtown employees to use the voucher program to park in the decks.

G. Parking Management Agreement and Parking Ordinance –Jason Leonard added this additional topic that was not on the printed agenda. Attorney Blake Ogden explained that the parking ordinance, already passed by the Mayor and Commission, broadens the authority for parking enforcement to include pay-by-plate and mobile-app systems, while also covering residential parking. He said it does not require individual signs in every space. Ogden also explained to the board that the proposed amendment to the ADDA parking management agreement would transfer ownership of the Washington Street Deck back to ACCGov, now that the Washington Deck bonds have been paid off. The ADDA would continue to manage parking under the agreement, with added language for pay-by-plate and mobile app systems. Drew Dekle motioned to approve the restatement and amendment to the parking management agreement and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed and will be presented to the Commission in October 2026 for approval.

5. Financial Report – The parking revenue was down for July and August 2026 mostly due to the ParkMobile transition, and only giving warning tickets.

6. Announcements and Suggested Agenda Topics for Following Month's Meeting – Drew Dekle asked that the ADDA reassess free parking on Sunday and ACCGov employees parking on the street. Also, the bench at Clocked that had been requested to be removed has not been removed as of this meeting.

Andrew Ratcliffe discussed how he helped the ACC Police with the recent assault case that happened downtown and on City Hall campus and expressed late-night safety concerns, including predatory behavior, and the need for more effective enforcement and increased foot patrols. The Board also discussed enforcement related to public intoxication and disorderly conduct and considered sending a letter to local officials and law-enforcement and judicial leaders about downtown safety concerns, look at strengthening Section 1-1-5 of the Official Code of Athens-Clarke County Government, and how to help bars crack down on fake ID usage.

7. Executive Session – none

8. Adjourn – Andrew Ratcliffe motioned to adjourn the meeting and Jeff Bishop seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:46pm.

Next Meeting: October 14, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

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Jason Leonard, Board Chair Linda Ford, Director of Business Services

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David Lynn, Director of Planning and Outreach