



# LAWRENCEVILLE

## GEORGIA

### DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES

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Monday, April 13, 2026  
5:00 PM

Council Chambers  
70 S. Clayton St, GA 30046

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#### **Call to Order**

Chairman Merritt called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm after recognizing a quorum.

#### PRESENT

Board Member Victoria Jones  
Board Member Jen Young  
Board Member Joanie Perry Ward  
Board Member Jim Nash  
Board Member Jeremy Higginbotham  
Board Member Lee Merritt

#### ABSENT

Board Member Chris Adams

#### Other Attendees:

Barry Mock  
Paula Foil

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda made by Board Member Perry Ward, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

## **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2025

Motion to approve the Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2025 made by Board Member Higginbotham, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes for November 10, 2025

Motion to approve the Downtown Development Authority Executive Session Minutes for November 10, 2025 made by Board Member Higginbotham, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

3. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2025

Motion to approve the Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2025 made by Board Member Young, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

4. Approval of Executive Session Minutes for December 8, 2025

Motion to approve the Downtown Development Authority Executive Session Minutes for December 8, 2025 made by Board Member Young, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

## **Downtown Development Business**

5. April 2026 Downtown Development Authority Treasurer's Report

Board Member Perry Ward, Treasurer, presented the April 2026 Downtown Development Authority Treasurer's Report to the Board.

Motion to approve the April 2026 Downtown Development Authority Treasurer's Report made by Board Member Jones, Seconded by Board Member Nash.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

## 6. Approval of Chairman Attending Strategic Leadership Visit

Motion to approve the cost of Chairman Merritt's attendance to the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce Strategic Leadership Visit to Tampa, Florida in the amount of \$5,171.80 for flights and registration made by Board Member Higginbotham, Seconded by Board Member Perry Ward.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

## 7. Retail Curating Final Report

Chairman Merritt presented the Retail Curating final report.

Thanks to Board Member Jen Young for working on this and coordinating with Terra Alma. 100+ slides and lots of information included in the final report. This report has sound and valuable information.

Visitors within a 10-minute drive to Lawrenceville include ESRI segment groups: up and coming families, flourishing families, and diverse horizons.

Seventy percent of downtown visitors drive from within a 20-minute drive to Lawrenceville. This area includes Snellville, Loganville, I-85, and Dacula. They are up and coming families, flourishing families and boomburbs. They are coming downtown for festivals, restaurants, events, etc.

How are other successful cities are doing this? Some Downtown Development Authorities do an incubator offering for start-ups. We could consider it for the hotel space. We could also support this in another way with our Downtown Development Authority properties. Most business owners are wanting restaurants in their buildings. The program would benefit startups and they would be at the location for a limited time. Board Member Jones mentioned the entrepreneurial center as a good location as well.

Areas of the Downtown could include:

- Art District
- Downtown Square
- Entertainment District
- Lawn

There is a gap between the Lawrenceville Arts Center and the Depot District. We could add temporary art, special lighting etc. to create a connection between downtown and the depot district.

We have signage, but they gave some other ideas regarding signage.

Parking - we have enough parking, but we need to increase awareness. The City is doing this already. The City is also currently creating color coding for parking, but we need to be more obvious about the parking options.

Food is still the biggest economic engine. They said we could have more food in our area and people are asking for more options. Recommended more entertainment and items for pets.

MPI index - showed that restaurants need to deliver to homes. Lean into tech enabled convenience, experience led placemaking, and items for pets. Do not have just shopping. Power category is athleisure, uniforms, health locations, nutrition, and day spas.

Rents are at the top of the market. We cannot rely on random tenants. We lack everyday anchors.

Next step is connecting Terra Alma to business owners, landlords, etc.

They could also advise us on the Downtown Development Authority properties as well.

8. Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Lawrenceville for Lightnin Rental Parcel

40 acre assemblage - we own a couple of the parcels already, we bought them from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The City purchased the Lightnin Rental facility. We need to own it so we can redevelop it. It is 20 acres and we will forward all proceeds from the sale of the property to the City.

Motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Lawrenceville regarding the Lightnin Rental Parcel made by Board Member Jones, Seconded by Board Member Nash.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

### **Mainstreet Business**

Jasmine Jackson, Mainstreet Director

Facade Grant items -

1) VFG Mauricio LLC - owner of D'Floridian. Located at 373 North Clayton Street - the plan is for this to be a dog grooming salon.

They are wanting to put in new windows, repainting the outside, and to remove the driveway signage.

The owner is working with Planning & Development regarding the permits. This property goes all the way to Born Street. It impacts lots of the area near the Depot.

Motion to approve the façade grant in the amount of \$5,000 to VFG Mauricio LLC to be used towards windows, repainting the outside, and removing the driveway signage made by Board Member Higginbotham, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

2) Fishery Fitness - 452 Eaton Street - upgrading their garage doors. Proposing to install full view garage door.

Motion to approve the facade grant in the amount of \$5,000 for Fishery Fitness located at 452 Eaton Street to be used towards upgrading their garage doors made by Board Member Nash, Seconded by Board Member Higginbotham.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

3) Carlos Cisneros/Strange Taco Bar

Located at 225 West Crogan Street. The new owner is proposing to enclose a section of the front patio to create more indoor space. They would also add additional landscaping.

Motion to approve the facade grant in the amount of \$5,000 for Carlos Cisneros/Strange Taco Bar located at 225 West Crogan Street to be used towards enclosing part of their front patio and additional landscaping made by Board Member Merritt, Seconded by Board Member Perry Ward.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

3 more requests in the pipeline, but no applications have been received as of yet.

Event season began with the Lawrenceville Boogie this past weekend. The event included three stages and car show. There was great interaction with the community. The recent event at the Lawrenceville Arts Center that was presented by the City of Lawrenceville was sold out within two weeks.

DTL Conquest - now 2-day event

Concert announcements are coming up soon.

Legacy Leaders Applications are open until April 20.

### **Other Business**

No Other Business

### **Citizen Comments**

No Citizen Comments

### **Executive Session - Real Estate**

Motion to enter into Executive Session made by Board Member Merritt, Seconded by Board Member Jones.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

Motion to exit Executive Session made by Board Member Merritt, Seconded by Board Member Higginbotham.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

Real Estate Items Discussed: 8; Votes Taken: 4

### **Final Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Board Member Merritt, Seconded by Board Member Young.

Voting Yea: Board Member Jones, Board Member Young, Board Member Perry Ward, Board Member Nash, Board Member Higginbotham, Board Member Merritt

### **Minutes Signature**

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**Lee Merritt, Chairman**

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**Barry Mock, Secretary**