

**Georgia Downtown Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Virtual
October 22nd, 2024**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024. The board met in Macon, Georgia. President Hopkins called the meeting to order at 11:03am.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Emily Hopkins, Aundi Lesley (virtual), Jason Ford, Velinda Hardy, Abigail Strickland, Taylor Smith, Kendrick Ward, Jeffrey Fowler, Qaijuan Willis (virtual), Tonya Parker, April Norton, Abbey McLaren, Cassidi Kendrick, Lequrica Gaskins (virtual)

The following GMA/GDA Staff Members and Partners were in attendance: Renée Coakley, Cindy Eidson, Clark Stancil (virtual), Leigh Burns (virtual), Scott Purvis, Ellen Hill, Sharon Collins, Sadie Krawczyk (virtual), Jon McBrayer

Review and Approval of Minutes: September 24th board minutes were motioned for approval by Velinda and seconded by Tonya. No further discussion. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

Review and Approval of Financial Report: Looking at the board page. The showcase your city boxes and swag is on the report. The professional services other had a few expenditures. Exhibit revenue included electrical power and extra meals, travel and entertainment for Renée references conferences, and the awards for the award ceremony.

CDP – There is a charge for certificate program exam fees that has carried over based on a wrong code. There is a small amount that will show on the next financials until that is resolved.

Emily called for a motion to approve the July financial statement. April motioned and Taylor seconded. No further discussion. All voted in favor to approve.

Renée went over a “day-to-day” financial spreadsheet. Looking at the board page – \$49,850 for membership dues.

Expenses were discussed for Regional Meetups. We exceeded silent auction numbers from last year. We are a little over budget in a few areas that can be reviewed.

Taylor asked if membership is up because of more members or the restructuring of fees. It is really looking like because of the restructuring.

Conference revenue is up considerably. For expenses, some areas went over budget but mostly because of the meal cost and equipment rentals.

CDP is over projected budget for 2024 for revenue!

These reports are available upon request.

Discussion Items: 2025 Budget Presentation

2025 budget proposal was presented. That is the reason for the \$10,000 contingency line. Discussed using Submittable as a host for signups. This is a balanced budget. Proposed budget is available upon request.

Action Items:

- 2025 Meeting Dates – Available upon request. Taylor motioned to approve. Abigail seconded. The schedule was adopted unanimously.
- 2025 Ballot – Amending ballot to add in new names. A motion was made to approve the ballot adding Jasmine Billings if she approves being on the ballot by Taylor. Abigail seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- Advocacy Agenda – See below. A motion was made by to approve the 2025 GDA Advocacy agenda by Taylor and Abby seconded the motion.

GDA Advocacy Agenda

Purpose: The official purpose of the Georgia Downtown Legislative committee is to *educate elected officials about the impact of downtown development and to keep the membership abreast of bills in the state legislature, laws, government requirements, and other issues that affect favorable downtown development.*

Next Steps:

- Update Rack Card with 2025 Info
- Legislative Letters
- Attend Cities United Conference- “Get in Front of the Officials”

2025 GDA Advocacy Topics

1. Office of Downtown Development

- a. Additional funding for personal to serve Georgia Downtowns
- b. Reestablishment of Design Studio- Partnership w/ UGA, SCAD, Georgia Tech

The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) unwaveringly supports the Office of Downtown Development and Georgia Main Street program as the signature program for community development and revitalization in Georgia’s historic downtowns. Furthermore, GDA supports additional funding for the Office of Downtown Development for the reestablishment of the Design Studio, in partnership with the University System of Georgia.

2. Historic Tax Credits

- a. Currently allocating 2027 Credits- Capped at \$30 million per year (Sunsets in 2029)
- b. Deal Closing Fund

The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) has identified the Georgia Historic Preservation Division's Tax Credit Program as a transformational rehabilitation incentive for historic properties, that promote economic development, encourage heritage tourism, and support the sustainability and vitality of historic downtowns. The continuation and increase of these credits is supported by GDA. Likewise, GDA supports alternative funding programs to fill any "gaps" created, if this program sunsets in 2029.

3. Housing

- a. Proximity to Downtown
- b. 2nd Story Residential
 - i. How do we entice Development? Rural Workforce Housing Initiative (RWHI)?

The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) supports policies and programs aimed at addressing the National Housing shortage. Furthermore, the Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) prioritizes policies and programming that enhances the overall total number of housing units in close proximity to downtowns. These units bolster the overall health and economic viability of downtowns. Programs such as the Governor's Rural Workforce Housing Initiative (RWHI), can be modified to support these activities.

4. Tourism- Hotel/Motel Tax

- a. How can these monies be targeted to Main Street/DDA type projects?
- b. Partnership w/ Explore Georgia
- c. DMO (OR) Downtown Development Authority (Language Addition)

In 2023, Georgia travel and tourism generated a \$79.7 billion statewide economic impact and supported more than 463,400 jobs, an increase of more than 20,000 jobs over the prior year. The tourism industry also generated a record \$5 billion in state and local tax revenues. The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) supports legislation that expands usage of Hotel/Motel Tax monies to support downtown development projects via a Downtown Development Authority or Main Street Program.

5. Truck Weights

- a. Support Federal Legislation increasing Interstate Truck Weight limits
- b. GTIB Funding?
- c. Increase Container Capacity by Port Authority- 800 New trucks per day

The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) staunchly rejects any proposed increases to truck weight figures on both state and locally managed routes. Public Safety, overall walkability, and small business development are all negatively impacted by heavy trucks using roadways that pass-

through communities' historic downtown cores. Alternatively, GDA supports any federal legislation aimed at increasing truck limits on the Interstate Highway System.

6. CPACE

- a. GDA Education
- b. Lobby for Grease Traps & Fire Suppression Systems to be allowed uses.

The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) vehemently support additional funding mechanisms, such as CPACE, that can be utilized for downtown development projects. These types of funding programs can improve financial viability of these projects, ultimately leading to more sustainable development and redevelopment efforts of downtowns across the state.

Committee Reports:

- Executive Committee (Internal Operations) – Emily Hopkins – update committee roles for Secretary and Treasury
- Education & Training – Jeffrey Fowler
 - Committee Update – Gave a CDP sign up report. Revenue is above budget and expenditures are under.
- Marketing & Membership – Abigail Strickland
 - Social Media 3117 Facebook, 1019 Instagram, 3027 LinkedIn, 166 paid memberships
 - Showcase Your City Boxes – Request for more boxes.
 - Membership Emails/Newsletter - Quarterly
- Legislative – Taylor Smith
 - Committee Update - See Advocacy Agenda
- Policy & Procedures – Abbey McLaren
 - Committee Update – interested members getting plugged in

Business Manager Report: CDP Registration. Renée will not be in Canton for CDP. Regional Meetups for spring - Macon, Avondale Estates and Griffen. Cities United is Jan 24-27. Save the date cards will be going out soon. GMA convention dates are June 20-24. General discussion was held about table tops and booths at the conventions.

Other Business: Scott – 2 retail workshops, 1 is in Gainesville today, November 19th in Statesboro. Ellen no update on director search – hoping to have it by the first of the year. GMS is finalizing the training calendar. Getting ready for assessment processing. Sharon Collins already went over the dates for conventions. John plugged his conference in March. FEMA has a training opportunity for Economic Development upcoming. If you are an ECG or an EMC for grid resilience. Application is open. Cindy mentioned that Larry met with the Rural Development Committee was to support refunding the GCF at \$9 million. Sadie has a few applications for Georgia Placemaking Collaborative. Young Gamechangers application is online. Georgia Forward is having an event discussing power generation November 14th. Leigh gave an update about opportunities all over the state. Fox in the Box has a new virtual version. All Access Program will be kicking off. Clark appreciated the partnership and congratulated the board on

progress. Emily Recognized Kendrick on her last in-person board meeting. We do have some gifts and thanked her for her service.

Adjourned 12:29