

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FOREST PARK  
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM  
February 25, 2021  
5:35 P.M.

**Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Angelyne Butler called the Downtown Development Authority meeting for February 25, 2021 to order at 5:35 P.M.

**Present**

Chairwoman, Angelyne Butler; Nachae Jones: Ed Taylor; Lois Wright; Eliot Lawrence – joined at 5:37 PM.

**Also Present:**

Mike Williams, City Attorney  
Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director  
Bruce Abraham, Economic Development Director  
James Shelby, Planning, Building & Zoning Director  
Caity Hungate, City Planner  
Danita Hamid, Economic Development Assistant  
Jonathan Gelber, KB Advisory  
Stan Reecy, KB Advisory  
Niti Gajjar, Katerra  
Julia Alcorn, Katerra

**Absent:**

Vice Chair, Steve Bernard; Eric Stallings

**Discussion: Livable Centers Initiative Study**

James Shelby, the Planning, Building, & Zoning Director provided the board some background information about the Livable Center Initiative Study.

Last year the City of Forest Park received a \$150,000 grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission to study the Main Street Overlay District. The focus of the study is to update the design guidelines from the original Main Street LCI. In addition to updating the design guidelines, the current LCI study will provide a marketing study for the area.

James Shelby also introduced Niti Gajjar of Katerra to the board. Niti Gajjar is one of the consultants working with the Planning, Building, & Zoning Department to complete the LCI study. Also introduced to the board was Jonathan Gelber and Stan Reecy of KB Advisory.

Niti Gajjar provided an update on where they are with completing the LCI Study. It is a 7–8-month process and they are about halfway through their assessment. Niti Gajjar noted that an existing conditions study has already been completed and KB advisory has completed their market and real estate

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analysis, which has been shared with city staff. Currently, the focus is on determining the needs and priorities of the area and providing recommendations based on those needs and priorities.

Niti Gajjar told the board that by the end of the summer they will be producing an LCI documents, which will include a five-year action plan and long-term recommendations for the area.

Jonathan Reecy conducted a Q&A style discussion with board members.

Jonathan Reecy asked, "What do you think is great about Downtown Forest Park that you want to see persevered or amplified in the area?"

- Lois Wright said that she thought the Downtown Forest Park area was really a downtown at one point, but when Forest Parkway was built, it became the main business corridor. Lois Wright explained that they just wanted the area to look good and provided Hapeville, East Point, College Park, and Riverdale as examples.
- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler added that they wanted what you would see in any typical downtown: thriving businesses and restaurants, people walking, and life happening in downtown. Chairwoman Angelyne Butler said they are closer than ever before to seeing that happening.

Jonathan Reecy asked, "When did the character of downtown start to change for the worse?"

- Lois Wright said that she has been a resident since 1997 and it has always been the same, so it had to have been before then. Eliot Lawrence added that the area was growing in the 60's and 70's but he is not sure when it started to go downhill.
- Eliot Lawrence also explained that the city has been starting on the project for years by removing buildings and leveling ground to make way for the future.

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Jonathan Reecy asked, "What has been the role of the DDA in the acquisition or demolition of property in that area?"

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler stated that the DDA was resurrected in the last two years, but the Development Authority has been around longer. Chairwoman Angelyne Butler added that she believes prior leadership did not see the area as a priority, but with the new leadership, there is some momentum to make changes in the area.
- Lois Wright added that the Development Authority has some projects under contract. There will be housing on Main Street and a Zaxby's coming to the corner of College Street and Main Street.

Jonathan Reecy asked, "What tools are in the DDA's toolbox to make these things happen?"

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler noted that they had funding in their toolbox and were open to utilizing any incentives in their toolbox. She also stated that the DDA had the desire to make things happen, which was the most important.
- Lois Wright added that the Development Authority also had funding and the two boards could put their funds together to make things happen.

Jonathan Reecy asked, "Can you tell me what sources of funding the DDA has access to?"

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler explained that Bruce Abraham could speak more to their funding, but there was TAD funding available.
- Mike Williams explained that both the Development Authority and Downtown Development Authority receive annual bond fees from several tax abatement transactions, which is coming in for the next 20 years. He added that the City also receives PILOT payments for those transactions, which goes into the general fund for the City but could go towards development.

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Jonathan Reecy asked, "What properties does the DDA owned in the downtown area?"

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler explained that the Development Authority is the entity that owns property.
- Lois Wright added that the Development Authority owns some land, a few strip malls, and some buildings that need to be torn down.
- Ed Taylor said a list that showed all the properties owned by the Development Authority would be more helpful. Lois Wright said she could have one sent to them.

Jonathan Reecy asked for an explanation about the difference between the Downtown Development Authority and the Development Authority.

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler explained that each board has its own separate projects and functions, but there is some overlap in the jurisdictions of the DDA, DA, and URA.

Jonathan Reecy asked, "What are three to five things that you would spend money on if Elon Musk or Bill Gates came to you with 10 million dollars and said he needed to be spent by Midnight?"

- Lois Wright said she would spend it on housing, tearing down dilapidated buildings, restaurants, and creating new businesses.

Jonathan Reecy asked "Would the DDA be open to selling or leasing property at a below market rate to development partners if they agreed to let you control what was there"

- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler explained that selling below market value makes it appear as if they are taking a hit, but they still get the taxes for the businesses.

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Jonathan Reecy asked, "What is the downtown of your dreams."

- Nachae Jones commented that a strong art district is desired. Chairwoman Angelyne Butler and Lois Wright agreed.
- Chairwoman Angelyne Butler added that the City of Hapeville was a great example of a thriving downtown with a good art district.

Danita Hamid, the Economic Development Assistant, encouraged the board members to complete the survey she sent out earlier in the week, which was related to this discussion.

James Shelby, the Planning, Building, & Zoning Director, also encouraged everyone to complete the survey and added that the purpose of this discussion was for Jonathan and Stan to hear what the board members thought would improve the downtown area so that they could include it in their marketing analysis.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 P.M.

CITY OF  
**FORESTPARK**