

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING**  
**200 Burnt Mountain Road**  
**Jasper, Georgia 30143**  
**MINUTES**  
**Monday, April 28, 2025 @ 5:30 PM**

Members Present:

Amy Leake-Chair  
Parish Lowrie  
Marty Callahan  
Jack Dunn  
Brian Rittenberry  
Pam Watkins  
Dr. Folsom Proctor, III

Members Absent

N/A

Guests in Attendance:

Dr. Robert Keller  
Steve Lawrence  
Kay Lawrence  
Karen Proctor  
Chris Leake  
Kim Goldener  
Josh Davis

Press

Mari Livsey-Know Pickens  
Dan Pool -Pickens Progress

**Agenda item:** Call meeting to order and Approval of Agenda      **Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

**Discussion:**

Mrs. Leake, seeing a quorum, called the meeting to order at 5:34pm. Mr. Jack Dunn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Adoption of Agenda:** Mrs. Leake requested to amend the agenda to remove the 03.24.2025 meeting minutes and move those to the next meeting and add an Executive Session.

**Conclusions:**

Mrs. Leake called for a motion to adopt the amended agenda. Mr. Parish Lowrie made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

**2025 Budget Update:** Mr. Marty Callahan provided a budget for review and asked if there were any questions and/or discussions. Mr. Parish Lowrie stated as I understand it the \$22,000 from the city has not been distributed yet, is this correct? Mr. Marty Callahan stated yes, that is correct. Yes, in our meeting last week we discussed a few things about items that the finance department has not moved into our account. Mr. Parish Lowrie asked if we have a specific timing for when this will be put into the downtown development budget. Mr. Marty Callahan said not at this time I do not have a date. We're going to be fine with our downtown budget based on our sponsors contributions and vendor fees. Mrs. Leake asked if there were any more questions as it pertains to the budget. If there are no other questions or discussions, we will move forward with old business.

**OLD BUSINESS**

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**Agenda item:** Consideration of Hemlocks quote/contract      **Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Jason with Hemlocks Landscaping was presented to answer any questions you may have about his quote/contract. The quote includes annual maintenance of the flower beds, crepe myrtles and bushes. Crepe Myrtle trees are pruned annually on an as needed basis. Flowers and bushes are

maintained bi-weekly and include the plants and installation. During the drier seasons the watering has been a collaborative effort between the city and Hemlocks Landscaping. Mr. Sonny Proctor, MD asked about the old sprinkler system and if it worked. Jason stated that as far as he knows the system was inoperable and that he did not work on it. The Hemlock Landscaping agreement/contract is \$7,800 = \$3,000 for bi-weekly maintenance and \$4,800 for plants and installations in the flower beds twice a year. Discussed recommendations for plants that could survive better in the fall and winter months. Watering of the plants, especially in drier months, creates some issues since there are limited watering options.

**Conclusions:**

Mrs. Leake called for a motion on the 2025 Hemlocks Landscaping Agreement/Contract. Parish Lowrie made a motion to approve. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

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**Agenda item:** Discussion of Peripheral Lighting

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** This has been an ongoing project since 2018. We currently have a quote for the peripheral lighting from Universal Concepts is \$10,715 annually. Unfortunately, Lori from Universal Concepts was not able to be here tonight. Mr. Jack Dunn stated that we are having issues with the lights and do not have a maintenance agreement in place. Discussed developing a formal business/property owner easement/agreement for allowing lights to be placed on their property.

**Conclusions:**

Mrs. Leake called for a motion on the Peripheral Lighting Agreement/Contract. Mr. Jack Dunn made a motion to table. Mr. Parish Lowrie provided a second. Motion to table item carried unanimously.

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**Agenda item:** Social Media Update

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Unfortunately, Ms. Libby McRae was unable to attend this meeting due to a conflict. Mrs. Leake read some of her performance highlights. The social reach 4,800 which was an increase of 37%, page visits were 1,600, and a 359% growth in engagement. We gained an additional 3% of followers. She posts on average twice a week and answers questions that come through Facebook. This is her third year with us and is pretty well versed in knowing how to answer the questions, if she can not handle the questions she is sending the questions to Marty and Pam.

**NEW BUSINESS**

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**Agenda item:** Perrow Park

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Mrs. Leake discussed the committee that was created in 2015 by the former Mayor Weaver, which was called the Downtown Alliance Committee. The meeting was held in Alpharetta where Kimley-Horn provided the scope of work. Councilmember Jim Looney spearheaded the committee. The committee consisted of the following members: Amelia McIntyre, Sonny Proctor, Jack Dunn, Marty Callahan, Todd Payne, Rick Jaspers, Jim Looney, Brandon Douglas, Robert Keller, Scott Gordon, Tim Holvert, Donna Torres, Jerry Nechtaval, Denise Duncan, and me, Amy Leake. Also, Clark Stansel from UGA was a part of this committee. The city bought the property back from the DDA in 2020. This project has been in process for 10 or 11 years now. We received a request from Dr. Robert Keller to be able to speak in front of this board. I will give him a three-minute time frame for this request.

Dr. Robert Keller, CEO for the Atlantic Coast Conservancy, stated that at the request of Councilmember Jim Looney, his company engaged the design firm of Clark Patterson Lee at the cost of \$25,000 to begin work on what would become known as Perrow Park Project. During the design phase a citizens advisory committee was formed and with suggestions from this committee Clark Patterson Lee delivered a

completed project along with a timeline. With the completed plan in hand the Atlantic Coast Conservancy submitted a grant application to the Georgia Outdoors Stewardship Program and procured pledges of support from various entities in the amount of \$1 million dollars. The last input on Perrow Park from the citizens advisory committee was to vote for the demolition of the historic Perrow Clinic in March 2022. Four of the original citizens advisory committee members are currently on the Downtown Development Authority Board and only one of those serves on the City of Jasper Perrow Park Advisory Committee now. In September 2022, six months after we approved the demolition of the clinic it was announced that the City of Jasper had engaged a new firm Goodwin, Mills and Cawood, LLC to duplicate the park design completed earlier by Clark Patterson Lee at an additional cost of \$15,000. This was done with no input from the earlier citizens advisory committee and that committee was never to convene again. In 2023, a grant proposal was submitted under the second iteration of the Perrow Park design. This was done with no community stakeholder input. The second iteration of Perrow Park was designed by Goodwin, Mills and Cawood, LLC and accompanied a grant application to the Appalachian Regional Commission which was subsequently approved. In an email correspondence with the City of Jasper's Deputy City Manager Kim Goldener put forth as follows: The awarded funding was predicated on fulfilling the components of the park as submitted for funding through the application and those elements were taken from the original steering committee's work. Currently a third iteration of the Perrow Park design has emerged, and any input on this design was provided by a committee composed of only elected officials and city employees. The composition of the committee was the result of a misinterpretation of the suggestion made by a regional development group the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission "to follow the procurement process of securing engineering architectural services" when questioned about the progress of the third iteration an elected official stated the plan is 60% completed and cannot be changed. Even though there are substantial differences that exist between the second iteration that was submitted with the grant application and third iteration as it now stands. My hope and desire is to present information to the DDA of the initial design plan, a timeline of the progress of that plan with input from the citizen stakeholders and the cessation of outside input with the current planning process. I humbly ask for the support of the DDA, especially, since there are four of you on that original committee, in the reanimation of that citizen advisory committee to facilitate the final design application for Perrow Park. Thank you for your time.

Mrs. Leake – Thank you, Dr. Keller, we appreciate that very much. Any questions from the board? Next I would like to invite Kim Goldener to clarify any questions or to provide her report on Perrow Park.

Kim Goldener – Thank you for having me this evening. Yes, I can give you an update on Perrow Park. The plans are 99.5% complete. There are still a few details that GMC is working through. We hope to be able to go to bid sometime in the latter half of May which means that we would hope to have bid packages back to the council for approval at the July council meeting. The groundbreaking is tentatively planned for August, with hopefully some major work going on. Between the in-kind work that the city crews would be doing to help prepare with some of the demolition work, things that we can do to add to our in-kind work, so that we can meet that matching requirement of the a million dollars and also, these are things that we can do so that we are not having to pay a contractor for that can get the park ready. Does anyone have any questions? I think most of you know that I started in September 2021, so anything that happened before I'm not super familiar with other than what Councilmembers, Proctor and Looney have shared. I know the hard work that has gone on. There was a group of people that felt strongly about our community, about our city, about the vision and had awesome ideas for a piece of land downtown and about what it could be and thankfully put that idea on paper so that we could run with it. I know that Green Suttles brought the Appalachian Regional Commission(ARC) over in December 2021 I went to that meeting with then Mayor Steve Lawrence and Green had taken Britney Pitman who was with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) over to look at the land and you know hey we have this idea we think it's right for the ARC Investment because one had not been made in Pickens County before and so we moved on with process. I'm not sure how the idea to go after the ARC funding came about. I really do not know, just when I was hired Perrow Park was given to me to go ahead and keep trucking. So, as you know in 2022 it was roughly the summer, we had to reached out to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission to ask for assistance with putting together the RFP for architectural engineering services and their recommendation as Dr. Keller has said is that we needed to

have a committee of elected officials and staff to procure architectural engineering services. That was it as far as the committee goes whether it was right wrong or whatever the situation is, once we got the actual award through the environmental assessment, the cultural assessment that we had to do as a result of the Cherokee Nation commenting on our plans. In late 2023 we were finally cleared to go and so GMC took the initial drawing that they had done and we were actually able to finally start talking about moving from the conceptual into the actual construction plans and that is where we have gone from that point. I am happy to answer any questions. I don't think the city means or ever meant to offend any type of group that has put forth a great effort to make sure that a plan moves forward and that a dream of so many people would come to fruition. It's certainly not my intent at all, I don't really know what else to say.

Mrs. Leake – Thanked Ms. Goldener and asked the board if they had any questions for Kim as it pertains to the DDA involvement.

Kim Goldener – I left off probably the most important think, I apologize. This is Phase I which was the phase that the application was submitted for at that time and we were considered a transitional county which meant that's it was a 50/50 match with ARC at the time and may still be was a maximum of a \$1 million match. So, it would be a million dollars from SPLOST funding and we're actually a little over that, so we are at \$2.4 million. We'll see what happens when bids start to come in. So there may be a greater investment that needs to come from the city on that which is why that in-kind match work, things that we can do ourselves, are so important to the budgeting of this project. This is Phase I and we have required things that we have to do that will get us the economic impact of tourism. The two items or areas that are being supported by the ARC are primarily the bathrooms and an event space including a stage and parking. Stormwater is another thing that we have to account for, and we want to do that now so we will not need to tear up a bunch of stuff in the future. There are a lot of things that may come with future phases.

Sonny Proctor, MD – Asked Kim to touch on the selection process that was used in selecting the engineering firm. Kim provided a brief synopsis for the process.

Parish Lowrie – Asked if this was something that we are acting on something related to this today or is it just and informational update?

Mrs. Leake – This was just an informational update and what the timeline looks like as we move forward. This is not a DDA initiative, this is a City of Jasper initiative.

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**Agenda item:** Introduction of Community Engagement Manager

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Mrs. Leake asked Brandon Douglas to provide information on the Community Engagement Manager position and to introduce Ms. Carly Glaze as our new Community Engagement Manager. This position reports to the Deputy City Manager, Kim Goldener. One of the Main Street program requirements is to have this type of position as we pursue obtaining our Main Street designation. We are potentially on track to obtain our Main Street Classic designation. Carly will be working approximately 20 hours per week on DDA items. Carly provided some information on an initial assessment that she will need from each DDA board member and will need them returned to her by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

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**Agenda item:** Update on the Main Street and DDA Planning Session

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Sonny Proctor, MD provide some additional information on the Main Street and DDA Planning Session.

Mrs. Leake discussed the planning session for June 9<sup>th</sup> and feels that this could encompass 2025 year and then have a separate planning session later in the year for 2026 year.

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**Agenda item:** Update on Downtown Live Vendors

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Ms. Pam Watkins provided an update on the vendors for the upcoming downtown live on May 10<sup>th</sup>. We have five (5) food trucks signed up and approximately 17 vendors. The deadline for paying is May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We have space for twenty (20) vendors comfortably.

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**Agenda item:** Recognition of DTL Sponsors

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

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**Discussion:** Marty Callahan provided an update and recognized all downtown live sponsors. Our main sponsors are City of Jasper, Atlantic Coast Conservancy, State Farm Agents, Piedmont Hospital and Tutton Chrysler Dodge Jeep RAM of Jasper.

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**Agenda item** Executive Session - Personnel

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

Mrs. Leake called for a motion to enter the Executive Session at 6:36pm. Mr. Parish Lowrie made a motion to enter the Executive Session. Mr. Marty Callahan provided a second. Motion to enter Executive Session carried unanimously.

Mrs. Leake called for a motion to adjourn out of the Executive Session at 6:45pm. Mr. Parish Lowrie made a motion to adjourn out of the Executive Session. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to adjourn out of Executive Session carried unanimously.

Next DDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2025, at 5:30pm.

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**Agenda item** Adjourn

**Presenter:** Mrs. Leake

**Conclusions:**

Mrs. Leake called for a motion to adjourn at 6:47pm. Mr. Parish Lowrie made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jack Dunn provided a second. Motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

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Amy Leake, Chairwoman

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Marty Callahan, Treasurer/Secretary