



Main Street Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 28, 2026, 9 a.m.

Historic City Hall

117 Jesse Jewell Parkway, Gainesville, GA 30501

Board Members Present: Pamela Williams-Lime, Jill Ledford, Lila Westmoreland, Aimee Hoecker, Andrew Elliott, Connie Rock

Board Members Absent: Claude Tatro, Abigail Guzman

City Staff Present: Nicole Parham

Chair Pamela Williams called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A motion to approve the April 2026 meeting minutes was made by Pamela Williams and seconded by Jill Ledford. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board began discussion with organizational updates and brainstormed potential nominations for the Georgia Downtown Association Awards. Jill suggested Abigail Guzman as a candidate for the Inspired Leader Award, while the Char Stk Building was discussed as a potential nominee in a New Development category. The Times renovation project was also mentioned as a possible nomination opportunity, particularly the redevelopment occurring in the rear portion of the building where the former printing press was located. Several public art projects were discussed as potential nominees as well; however, most have not yet been completed and were not considered ready for submission.

The conversation expanded into broader downtown development ideas, including the desire to see a business incubator or entrepreneurial support space established downtown. Hunt Tower was mentioned as a potential location for temporary pop-up retail opportunities due to its largely unused lobby space. Members discussed how such a space could provide visibility and testing opportunities for emerging businesses and entrepreneurs.

During Promotion updates, the Board brainstormed ideas for a Georgia Downtown Association Conference giveaway package that would showcase Gainesville and Hall County through locally made products and experiences. Potential contributors included NoFo Brewing Company, Feral Print, Quinlan Visual Arts Center, The Favorite Boutique featuring Patty's Pottery, Southern Baked Pie Company, Meathead Charcoal, Rahab's Rope, OCC Pottery, Jaemor Farms, and products from the Hall County Schools Ag Farm, which was recently registered with Georgia

Grown. Members also discussed including experiential elements such as a hotel stay, tickets to a local performance, or a combined hotel and entertainment package.

The Board then moved into Economic Vitality discussions. Potential downtown business training opportunities were briefly explored, including possible partnerships with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and similar organizations. While this topic was not discussed extensively, conversation shifted toward current economic challenges facing local businesses.

Members noted changing consumer spending habits and observed that customers appear less likely to spend money on discretionary purchases. Recent business closures, including Standard Service and Kelley's Tavern, were acknowledged. Jill noted that Carroll Daniel's backlog is increasing, reflecting delays in project financing and development activity. Pamela shared that ticket sales for Arts Council events are down year over year as well.

Andrew shared that The Inked Pig BBQ has experienced challenges due to rising meat costs, prompting the owners to launch a new venture, Midland Revival, which will feature a more diverse menu while retaining some of the restaurant's popular barbecue offerings. He noted that the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission was instrumental in helping secure financing, specifically recognizing Lauren Yoder's assistance. Through the program, he was able to obtain a 10-year business loan at 4% interest compared to an 8% rate offered by his bank. The Board expressed enthusiasm for the new venture, and Andrew shared that loan documents were being signed that day for the new location at 755 Main Street.

Discussion turned toward locally designated historic properties and the importance of preserving them. Andrew noted that the Inked Pig property and its two adjacent buildings are the only locally designated properties in the Midland area. He recalled that a building located behind his property, formerly known as "Blue Angels," had been demolished. Nicole shared that she would follow up with Jessica Tullar regarding the history of the property and report back to the Board. Members discussed the possibility of using Gainesville's locally designated buildings and historic districts as the focus of a Historic Preservation Month project in 2027. The goal would be to share the stories behind these properties, increase public awareness of their protected status, and help prevent future issues related to unauthorized demolition or alterations.

Andrew also shared positive feedback regarding the Park GVL parking system, noting that it has been helpful for customers looking for available parking around the downtown square. Board members generally agreed that, despite some public criticism, the system is meeting the needs of visitors and customers and has been a positive improvement for downtown accessibility.

During the Annual Events report, the Board discussed upcoming First Fridays and Blue Sky Concert events. Andrew suggested exploring ways to improve the event atmosphere and visibility of performances by reducing the presence of larger vehicles within the event footprint, allowing the stage to be seen more clearly from across the square. Nicole also shared her excitement for the Space Splash Spectacular on Saturday, June 13, a Solar System Trail Day combined with water-science-themed activities at Longwood Park.

The Board also acknowledged that the NCAA Division I Women's Rowing Championship was taking place that week at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Members noted that the tourism team was heavily involved in supporting the event and anticipated it would be a successful competition and positive opportunity to showcase Gainesville and Hall County.

The meeting concluded with a discussion regarding future Main Street Advisory Board membership. Potential candidates included Neil Tankersley of Established Design Company, who was noted as a retail-minded individual with valuable insight into downtown business and development, and John Nicholson of The Uniform Shop. Aimee also suggested Moe Lyons of The Record Shop, noting his regular participation in Connections gatherings and active involvement in the downtown business community. Members further noted that he has recently added event space to the rear of his building, demonstrating continued investment in downtown Gainesville.

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.